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Balancing tourism development and nature protection across national park borders – a case study of a coastal protected area in Norway

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In this article, we illustrate how the various responsible management actors have solved coordination challenges in order to balance nature protection and tourism development within and outside a coastal national park in Norway. While the inter-municipal board is responsible for land use decisions within the park, the municipalities fulfill this role in adjacent areas. This division of responsibility implies coordination challenges due to two different institutional systems of land use planning. Applying theory about local networks and social learning, we highlight how the responsible actors coordinate in order to strike a balance between protection and tourism development. We have identified two key individuals who have served as bridge builders, the head of the National Park Center and the National Park manager. These actors have contributed to interactive learning, coordinated protection interests and encouraged tourism development within and outside the National Park border.

Keywords: coastal national park management; municipal planning; coordination; tourism; Norway

1. Introduction

National parks and other protected areas are popular tourism destinations with increasing visitation interest (Balmford *et al.* 2015; Puhakka and Saarinen 2013). However, most of the infrastructure development projects related to tourism activities in protected areas take place in areas adjacent to national park borders (Eagles and McCool 2001). This situation implies an obvious challenge in consistently coordinating management of the areas inside and outside of the protective border because of different institutional systems of land use planning. In addition, the relationship between land use planning for non-protected areas and environmental protection provisions remains conflict-ridden and dominated by two contrasting paradigms (Lundmark and Stjernström 2009; Kleven and Emmelin 1999). On one side, the planning paradigm aims to change land use and the environment by striking a balance between different interests within a political rationality. On the other side, administrative rationality involves bureaucratic control based on scientific knowledge regarding environmental protection. This paradigm is particularly apparent in Norway, where protected areas are more or less wilderness areas excluding permanent settlements inside the protected boundaries.

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In several countries, nature conservation policies are moving in new directions, with protected areas increasingly being viewed in a wider regional context (Mose 2007; Hammer *et al.* 2012), for instance, as tools for tourism development (Puhakka and Saarinen 2013). Hammer *et al.* (2016, 19) emphasize that the majority of European parks “are no longer nature reserves but have the character of living or working landscapes.” To a certain extent, Norwegian protection policy has been undergoing similar changes in recent years (Haukeland, Grue, and Veisten 2010). Since 2010, responsibility for managing a number of national parks and other large protected areas has been delegated from the county governor (the state representative in the Norwegian counties) to inter-municipal boards. These boards consist of local politicians from the concerned municipalities, primarily local mayors and county politicians. A locally based national park manager, appointed by the county governor, acts as secretary to the board. Within this context, there is increasing awareness of the great value of protected areas for the tourism industry (NHD 2012).

In recent years, several new national parks and other large protected areas have been established in Norway, resulting in approximately 17% of the country’s mainland coming under protected status, particularly inland and mountainous areas (Statistics Norway 2012). Interestingly, there exists an ongoing trend of national parks being established along the coast with larger population concentrations nearby and quite intensive user pressure from tourism and other interests. This trend poses new challenges for management and planning, not only within the borders of the protected areas, but also in the adjacent areas.

The aim of this paper is to highlight coordination challenges in balancing tourism development and nature protection inside and outside a coastal national park. More precisely, we examine the management strategies inside and outside the boundaries of *Ytre Hvaler National Park* in the southeastern part of the *Oslo Fjord area* in Norway (Figure 1). This analysis particularly focuses on how the value of protecting nature is balanced with the significance of tourism development. In the light of the aforementioned trends, the article highlights how the inter-municipal board for *Ytre Hvaler National Park* and *Hvaler municipality* (the authority responsible for land use planning, Table 1) have succeeded in coordinating nature protection and tourism development within and outside the boundaries of the Park.

2. Theoretical review: decentralization, local networks and learning as tools for coordination

Conflicts regarding traditional national top-down conservation policy have fallen primarily into two categories. The first one relates to human use versus conservation, and the second involves questions of who should have decision-making power over the areas, the local community or the national state, a question linked to center-periphery conflict (Ilsley and Richardson 2004; Overvåg, Skjeggedal, and Sandstøm 2016; Lundmark and Stjernström 2009). The introduction of inter-municipal boards in Norway aims to decentralize responsibility for nature conservation management as a tool for reducing conflicts (Lundberg *et al.* 2013; Falleth and Hovik 2009; Hovik and Hongslo 2016). The local management model may also facilitate coordination with the municipalities’ land use planning adjacent to protected areas, because local politicians serving on national park boards also have a responsibility for land use planning. However, such coordination relies on several factors. First, it depends on whether the board retains an actual maneuvering space. The board is expected to comply with the regulations set down by the national government’s nature protection agencies, so a key question emerges: how

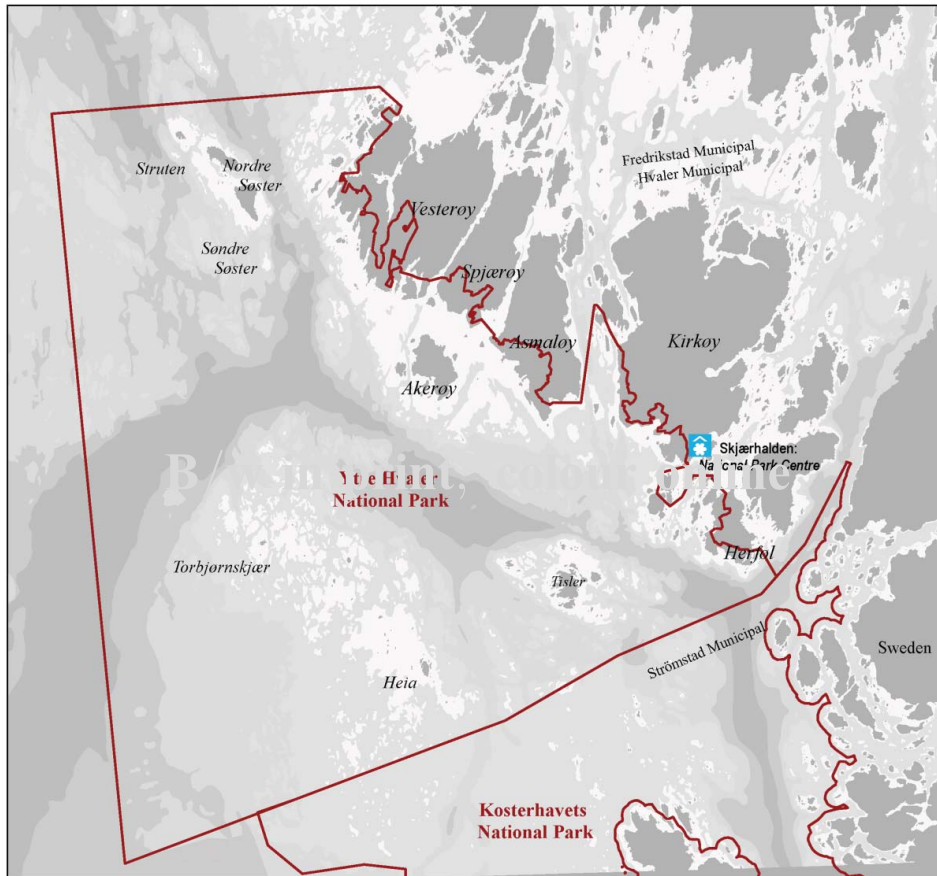


Figure 1. Map of Ytre Hvaler National Park and surrounding areas (source: Norwegian Environment Agency).

much leeway do regulations actually provide when it comes to tourism development? Because the county governor appoints the national park manager acting as secretary for the board, there may be a conflict of interest. In essence, this individual is supposed to have legitimacy locally within the board as well as with the county governor.

Table 1. The main management actors for Ytre Hvaler National Park and the adjacent land areas.

	Legal basis	Responsible for land use plans and decisions	Preparing plans and land use decisions	Approving plans
Ytre Hvaler National Park	Nature Diversity Act	The National Park board (consists of politicians from the municipal councils and the County Council)	The National Park manager	National Government
Adjacent land areas	Planning and Building Act	The municipal councils	The municipal planners	The municipal councils

90 Second, success in coordinated management may depend on close contact and
cooperation between the different responsible actors and other stakeholders (Rydin and
Falleth 2006; McCool 2009). Internationally, co-management has been launched as a tool
for achieving wider social participation and improving conflict resolution when
95 managing protected areas (Zachrisson 2009; Plummer and Fennell 2009). Co-
management can be understood as a model in which the state cooperates and shares
power with other participants, both public and private, who have interests in the area
(Zachrisson 2009; McCool 2009) suggests that partnership is an important instrument for
gaining a legitimate balance between tourism and protection. Such partnerships seek to
100 allow all relevant participants to contribute with knowledge and resources, to create less
conflict, and to gain a greater mutual understanding of each other's views and social
interests. Norway has chosen a decentralized national park management model, where
municipalities with local politicians play a major role, but where the private sector and
local interest groups have not been given greater power, in line with the principle of co-
105 management. These interests are supposed to be involved through reference groups and
other forums of participation; however, research indicates that they have limited actual
influence (Hovik and Hongslo 2016).

Regardless of the formal organization model, networking and cooperation can be seen
as necessary preconditions for legitimate and coordinated decisions about the use and
protection of land and natural resources (Rydin and Falleth 2006; McCool 2009; Graham,
110 Amos, and Plumtre 2003). Researchers have analyzed the preconditions for coordinated
action and overcoming institutional fragmentation using the theory of bridging networks
(Rydin and Falleth 2006). This theory asserts that participants with different knowledge
and values can achieve more by working together than by operating on their own. Such
networks are also regarded as more innovative than bonding networks where the
115 members are more similar in terms of social backgrounds, interests and value
orientations. This innovative quality results from the fact that bridging networks and
'weak' links provide greater access to knowledge, tools, and other networks (Granovetter
1973; Rydin and Falleth 2006). However, proper bridging network functioning requires
the existence of some kind of common arena, a certain interdependence between the
120 various participants (Schmitter 2002), and the attendance of key individuals who serve as
a link between participants with little in common (Rydin and Falleth 2006).

Zachrisson (2009) applied the theory of learning and collaboration in her study of the
management of the Laponia World Heritage Area in Sweden. Referring to Daniels and
Walker (2001), she distinguishes between 'first-loop,' 'second-loop,' and 'third-loop'
125 learning. These terms are also related to the literature on adaptive co-management
(Berkes, Armitage, and Doubleday 2007; Armitage, Marschke, and Plummer 2008).
'First-loop' learning involves only incremental changes in the management practice,
whereas 'second-loop' implies that the participants gain a greater understanding of other
people's opinions, values, and perspectives. 'Third-loop' learning is related to a change
130 in value systems, which is essential in enabling the different participants to achieve
consensus on a shared vision or strategy. This type of interactive learning requires close
and continuous cooperation and networking among the involved participants. Interactive
learning has much in common with network theory, where the importance of having a
shared knowledge base is emphasized in order to achieve collective action (Rydin and
135 Falleth 2006).

In light of these theoretical considerations, this article will illustrate how the
responsible management actors have, so far, managed to solve the coordination
challenges related to conservation and tourism development within and outside the

140 boundaries of *Ytre Hvaler National Park* in Norway. Furthermore, we will identify key conditions and barriers in balancing the two interests. In particular, we will consider the role of local networks, key individuals acting as bridge builders and interactive learning. Further, we will illuminate the extent to which the local management model has led to the integration of tourism development and conservation in *Ytre Hvaler National Park*. We will also discuss coordination with *Hvaler municipality* and its responsibility for land use planning in the areas outside the nature protection border.

145

3. Ytre Hvaler National Park, Hvaler municipality and the tourism industry

3.1. Ytre Hvaler National Park

150 *Ytre Hvaler National Park* was created in 2009 in accordance with the Nature Diversity Act (NDA). The protected area consists mainly of marine areas, amounting to 354 km². The protected land covers only 14 km², limited to the shoreline (Figure 1). Most of the land areas along the coastline thus are regulated by municipal plans according to the Planning and Building Act (PBA); as a result, there exists a strong necessity to coordinate tourism development and nature conservation across the protected area's borders.

155 The National Park lies mainly in the municipality of *Hvaler*, but a small portion rests in the neighboring municipality of *Fredrikstad* (Figure 1). In this article, we focus only on the municipality of *Hvaler*.

The land areas and the archipelago have only a small number of buildings and no major technical installations; as such, they are relatively free of interference compared to other coastal areas in the region that host scores of second homes (cabins) and marinas. This rather untouched area results from the *Oslofjord* Recreation Council's (*Oslofjordens friluftsråd*) longstanding efforts to safeguard the *Hvaler* archipelago for outdoor recreation activities through private property acquisitions and easement agreements. This work has created an important foundation for the establishment of the National Park.

160

165 *Ytre Hvaler National Park* was established simultaneously with *Kosterhavet National Park* on the Swedish side of the national border, and the two parks constitute a larger contiguous sea and archipelago area. The two parks celebrated with a joint opening ceremony on 9 September 2009. From 2008 to 2012, a joint Interreg project was also established, entitled, 'Our Common Heritage.' The collaboration consisted of four sub-projects, one of which focused on sustainable tourism, and another dealing with joint management, particularly of marine areas. Developing the two national parks into sustainable tourism destinations has been an important objective. Meeting this goal has involved the creation of courses with local tourism organizations as the target audience.

175 *Hvaler* and *Fredrikstad* municipalities have two political representatives each on the inter-municipal board, and the mayor of *Hvaler* serves as the chair. The *Østfold* County Council also has a political representative on the board (see Table 1). The National Park manager is appointed by the county governor of *Østfold*, but is located locally at *Skjærhalden* in *Hvaler* (see Figure 1). *Skjærhalden* is the municipality's main center, where the municipal hall is also located. A National Park Center has been established in central *Skjærhalden*, and the head of the Center also holds a part-time position as the head of business affairs at *Hvaler* municipality; hence, there is little physical distance between the key individuals who have operational and administrative responsibility for the Park and the municipality members responsible for the adjacent areas (Table 1).

180

In order to secure broader participation in the management of national parks, a reference group was established with different local and regional stakeholders in 2015.

185 Though it would also be appropriate to form an administrative forum (*administrativt kontaktutvalg*) between the national park board and the municipalities in order to achieve better coordination, this forum has not been established formally for *Ytre Hvaler National Park*.

190 3.2. *Hvaler municipality and tourism*

190 In the summer season, recreational boating is popular within and outside the National Park borders. The area is used intensively for many purposes, and new forms of outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism activities are on the rise, such as kiting, diving, and kayaking. *Hvaler's* coastal zone is of great value to outdoor recreation in local, regional, and national contexts, as 1.5 million people can reach these areas within approximately two hours by driving (Skeie 2011).

195 **Q2** *Hvaler* has a large number of second homes (in total 4,650), most of which are privately owned and located along the coast. In comparison, there are about 2000 private houses in the municipality, and around 4200 permanent dwellers (Hvaler Municipality 2011). The population thus multiplies by several times during the summer months when the cabins are in use, and these second homes constitute the dominant form of tourist accommodation in the municipality.

200 There are 55 private cabins located within the National Park borders, and during the conservation process, management exerted a great deal of effort clarifying protection regulations concerning upgrades to existing second homes and motor traffic licenses. Many also visit *Hvaler* and the National Park by boat, and during the summer, there is a buzz of large and small recreational boats in the archipelago. Many also come on day trips by car, and parking spaces have become scarce due to the number of people who also drive to their summer cabins. However, there is no systematic knowledge about the number of visitors to the Park or their characteristics.

210 4. Methodological approach

215 In order to illuminate the research aims, we use a multiple case study approach described by Yin (2003). We have conducted six qualitative in-depth interviews with five key individuals holding the main management responsibility for *Ytre Hvaler National Park* and municipal land use planning in the adjacent areas. More specifically, the following were interviewed: The National Park manager, the chair of the National Park Board (who is also the mayor of *Hvaler* municipality), the chair of the National Park Center (who also happens to be the head of business affairs in *Hvaler* municipality), a representative of the county governor's environmental protection department, and the head of the planning department of *Hvaler* municipality. Protected areas in Norway are poorly staffed compared to similar countries (Lindberg 2001), as are the planning agencies in many of Norway's small municipalities. This tiny workforce is reflected in our case study, where our five informants take on the entire responsibility for the National Park's management and land use planning on the municipal level in *Hvaler*. Two of our key informants possess more than one formal role, and they are therefore interviewed both as representatives for the management of the National Park and as accountable individuals in *Hvaler* municipality. Despite the relatively small number of respondents, we have achieved a satisfying analytical representation (Yin 2003).

225 The interviews were conducted in December 2012 and January 2013. Each interview lasting between one and two hours. We then performed a follow-up interview with the

230 National Park manager in October 2016. The follow-up interview sought to gain updated
information about the situation in the area. A semi-structured interview guide was used in
all interviews. The study's research problems were framed into specific questions while
leaving space for other aspects to emerge (Kvale 2006). All interviews were audiotaped
and transcribed. Most of the questions in the interview guide were posed to all of our
235 informants, but some were adjusted due to the participant's specific field of
responsibility. All of the interviews focused on how tourism and nature protection have
been balanced both within and outside the protected border. We also sought information
about experiences with the inter-municipal board and cooperation and coordination
between the board and *Hvaler* municipality, which is responsible for land use planning.

240 In addition, we reviewed key documents related to both the administrative system of
the National Park and the PBA, including the management plan draft for *Ytre Hvaler
National Park*, conservation regulations, reports and minutes from relevant board
meetings, and municipal plans for *Hvaler*. We also considered news coverage about the
National Park in the local press.

245 5. Empirical results

5.1. Local management of *Ytre Hvaler National Park*

The board has considered a number of applications for exemptions to national park
regulations regarding a wide range of issues, such as additions to existing second homes,
pier construction requests, and motor transport uses. A key point in the interviews is that
250 great emphasis has so far been placed on dealing properly with single case procedures,
and the board has spent a great deal of time on coming to informed decisions and on
achieving consensus. The participants pointed out that the National Park manager plays
an important role in preparing the case prior to the board meetings. The interviews
revealed that the politicians in the board have great confidence in the manager even
255 though she is formally employed by the county governor. This confidence results from
both her strong professional integrity and the fact that she originates from and lives
locally in *Hvaler*. The National Park manager expressed that she does not feel tied-up by
the county governor's service instructions, and she commented that she has the flexibility
to maneuver within the scope of conservation objectives. Her local position also provides
260 opportunities for close communication with other local actors, a fact that she expressed in
the following way:

265 I am not only representing the county governor; I also feel local. And maybe this leads to a
better dialogue, a better contact than if I had been positioned in Moss (the town where the
county governor is located) and been regarded as an outsider. That's my feeling of the
situation.

Our respondents viewed the following as major strengths for cooperation: the sharing of
workplaces with the *Norwegian Nature Inspectorate* and the *Norwegian Archipelago
Service*, as well as proximity to the National Park Center and municipal hall. The
proximity allows for close contact and frequent communication between the various
270 actors responsible for key management issues at the National Park.

The municipality must also process various applications regarding upgrades to second
homes, construction/expansion of piers, and motor transport in the National Park. In such
cases, participants have established a practice where the National Park manager meets
with the relevant staff in *Hvaler* municipality before the board processes the case. This

275 practice assists in coordinating procedures and highlighting relevant issues. The
municipal master plan for *Hvaler* points out the need for coordination in such cases, and
it expresses a desire to align the municipal plan with the nature conservation agency's
practices as much as possible (Hvaler Municipality 2011). However, contact between the
municipality and the National Park manager/board has not been institutionalized as a
280 formal forum, which is encouraged by the national environmental authority.

The interviews revealed that the National Park board believes its mission to be
facilitating the conservation area for visitation and nature-based tourism activities. In this
regard, the board perceives its role as a collaborative partner for those who want to use
the area; in essence, facilitating outdoor recreation and tourist visitation are central
285 issues. The interviewees noted other important roles, such as providing information about
the Park and desired activities, as well as establishing limits for acceptable use within the
framework of the regulation. At the same time, the politicians on the board have not
actively taken the initiative to promote tourism in the National Park; nor has the National
Park manager.

290 The head of the National Park Center appeared to be the strongest ambassador for
park tourism. He pointed out that there has been a paradigm shift in the Norwegian nature
conservation management regime in terms of the relationship between tourism and
conservation. This shift has been an important starting point for the creation of the
National Park in *Hvaler*:

295 I believe that the two dimensions, nature-based tourism experiences and conservation,
represent somewhat of a paradigm shift in Norwegian nature management. This was
particularly clear in our case, as the conservation and use were important preconditions for
establishing a park in the first place. If we had only had conservation as our motive, we
would hardly have gotten any marine national park at all.

300 The National Park Center leader was an important actor in the creation of the Interreg-
cooperation with the *Kosterhavet National Park* in Sweden, where sustainable tourism
was put on the agenda. As part of the Interreg-cooperation, 20 tourism businesses
operating in conjunction with *Ytre Hvaler National Park* have received training in
serving as hosts in a sustainable and attractive tourism industry. The training and labeling
305 of enterprises with a connection to the National Park is also an explicit goal in *Hvaler's*
municipal plan. Because he was also the head of the business affairs of *Hvaler*'s
municipality, the head of the National Park Center had extensive contact with business
actors in the municipality. The *Hvaler Business Forum* recently was established in order
to strengthen the relationship between the municipality and local businesses. He also had
310 contacts with other municipal departments, not least of which was the planning agency
where he previously worked and actively contributed to revising the municipal plan.

The interviews revealed that the Interreg-cooperation with *Kosterhavet* has impacted
how the managers relate to tourism and other uses of the Park, and that participants from
the municipalities, county council and county governor have learned much from the
315 cooperation. The interviewees underscored that *Ytre Hvaler National Park* differs greatly
from other national parks in Norway due to its status as a coastal park. Thus, they pointed
out that the generalizability of their experiences is limited. As such, the cooperation with
and the knowledge gained from collaborating with the adjacent Swedish park has been of
substantial value.

320 So far, there have been few conflicts linked to the board's decisions. However, there
have been growing requests to organize concerts and other large events in the National

Park, which is sometimes regarded as controversial. The chair of the National Park board pointed out one example where the local management model may have a different perspective based on their utilization of local knowledge. In one case, the board decided to approve a larger family event and concert in the Park, but the county governor appealed. Through dialogue between the applicant and the National Park manager, they agreed on a compromise where the actual event would be scaled down, a solution that both the board and the county governor could accept, resolving the conflict.

5.2. Municipal planning of the areas adjacent to the National Park

Hvaler municipality has several plans according to the PBA, which serves as a guideline for management outside the National Park. The central plan is the *Hvaler Municipal Master Plan 2011–2023*, which also includes sea areas (Hvaler Municipality 2011). The land use section of the municipal plan reflects strong conservation interests related to biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape; these elements are not just related to the Park, but include larger parts of the municipality. The relatively new instrument includes 'zones requiring special consideration' (*hensynssoner*). Since 2008, the guidelines have been used actively to safeguard these concerns. However, the municipality has not established a separate buffer zone to the National Park, as allowed for by the PBA from 2008. Interviewees expressed this decision as a conscious choice, noting concerns that such a zone in practice could become an extension of Park borders.

The municipal master plan for *Hvaler* emphasizes the importance of nature- and culture-based tourism as well as the need to develop the municipality as an attractive tourist destination in connection with the National Park. One objective in the plan states:

The potential in Ytre Hvaler should be managed in a way that can trigger new prioritized initiatives within nature- and culture-based tourism (Municipal Master Plan for Hvaler 2011, 12).

An area has been set aside for hotels and various forms of tourism facilities close to the Park including facilities for mobile homes/campers, hotels with conference centers, cabin rentals, a water park, an aquarium, a playground, sailing clubs, and nature adventures. Participants noted that the National Park is easily accessible from this area. Nonetheless, in the planning process, there has been relatively little awareness of how the areas adjacent to the National Park should be used, except for allowing additional parking near gateways to the Park.

The interviewees indicated that there are differences in opinion regarding the development of tourism and conservation of the areas adjacent to the National Park. Whereas some believed that one must have particular regard for the natural value of the Park, others held the opinion that it is precisely these areas' proximity to the Park that provides excellent opportunities to develop the tourist industry. Opinions also differed regarding the role of the National Park's board in the municipality's processing of development applications and plans in the areas outside the park according to the PBA. Locally, we noted a widespread attitude that the board should stick to matters relating to the National Park only and not interfere in planning processes outside the park borders. The following quote from the National Park manager is illustrative:

We (the board) do not deal with the areas outside the Park at all (...). The conserved area is protected, but beyond that, it is *not protected*. *We should not interfere there*.

The head of the National Park board is a strong proponent of such a view. However, the informant from the county governor asserted that the board should play a role in the processing of plans and applications concerning the areas outside the park. The legal basis for such an approach is the NDA § 49, which discusses 'extraneous activities which could cause harm inside a protected area.' The county governor's environmental department is concerned about the development of areas adjacent to the National Park. It also has a strong formal role in municipal planning, with the right to submit objections to plans that may conflict with national guidelines.

So far, no specific requests have arisen for extensive tourism infrastructure development in the areas adjacent to the National Park, but several informants expect this situation in the future. While some expressed fear of increased development pressure outside the Park, the leading local politicians considered it to be a positive development. The interviews nonetheless show that nature conservation interests are strong in *Hvaler*, even beyond the National Park's borders, which is also reflected in the municipal master plan.

6. Discussion: the importance of networking, learning and local management

The interviews provide a basis for asserting that the board has so far managed to solve the coordination challenges between nature conservation and tourism development both within and outside the National Park boundaries, though there have been some challenges associated with events inside the Park. In addition, there are quite divergent views on tourism infrastructure versus nature conservation in the areas adjacent to the Park. So far, few conflicts have arisen from the decisions taken by the National Park's board, and the importance of frequent dialogue with other actors has been emphasized as important in order to achieve coordination, not least with *Hvaler* municipality, which has the primary responsibility for land use planning outside the Park.

Key conditions for coordinated management are local networks and the willingness and ability to learn from each other. The theory of bridging networks highlights the importance of key individuals who can serve as links between actors who have little in common (Rydin and Falleth 2006). In this context, these diverse actors are traditionally those who promote nature conservation versus those who represent the tourism industry. According to Haukeland (2011), local tourism operators have had minimal influence on the management of national parks in Norway. In this case study, we see that the head of the National Park Center, in his combined role as business manager of *Hvaler* municipality, has been a particularly important bridge-builder between the tourism operators, municipality and nature conservation management. As part of the Interreg-project, he was responsible for training the tourism operators, which enabled them to act as hosts for the National Park. So far, however, there has been no direct contact between local and regional tourism actors operating in the Park and the National Park's board. This finding aligns with a recent study of other protected area boards in Norway, a study indicating limited stakeholder involvement (Hovik and Hongslo 2016). In order to encourage wider participation while balancing nature protection and tourism development, co-management models (Zachrisson 2009; Plummer and Fennell 2009) may hold more potential than decentralization of management responsibility alone.

The National Park manager has a particularly important role in the decentralized management system, and this individual is dependent on having local legitimacy, amongst politicians on the board, and with the county governor. It appears that she has managed to accomplish this balancing act so far. The manager has close contact with

415 other actors responsible for the National Park and adjacent areas, such as the leader of the National Park Center, as well as employees of the *Norwegian Archipelago Service*, the *Norwegian Nature Inspectorate*, and *Hvaler* municipality. Through these connections, she serves as an important bridge-builder between different actors and seems to have built a great deal of trust among different actors. This finding, however, contrasts with another recent study of national parks in Norwegian mountain areas. The previous study showed weak contacts between the board/manager and the concerned municipalities (Skjeggedal, Overvåg, and Riseth 2016).

420 The fact that all of these actors are located close to each other has made it easier to collaborate without an urgent need to institutionalize the networks and cooperation. Recently in Norway, clusters of professionals connected to the national parks have been established in order to avoid further fragmentation in nature management. These networks seem to have been necessary to strike a balance between tourism development and nature protection in *Hvaler*, especially through regular informal meetings to achieve integrated management between the National Park and land use planning for the adjacent areas. A high level of trust among the various actors has been crucial in achieving fruitful cooperation; thus, it represents a key aspect of good governance for protected areas (Graham, Amos, and Plumtre 2003; McCool 2009). The National Park manager's close communication in a face-to-face context with other actors seems to contribute to a high level of trust among the different actors.

435 Close cooperation has also made it possible for actors to learn from each other. The National Park manager has had a particularly important role in spreading knowledge about the biological values in the Park, not least in terms of training the politicians represented on the board. When it comes to dealing with tourism and visitors to the National Park, the interviewees valued the collaboration with *Kosterhavet National Park* in Sweden, because Sweden has put more resources into promoting *Kosterhavet National Park* as a tourist destination. We therefore assume that both conservation and tourism interests have achieved greater (mutual) learning and understanding. The National Park manager has held a particular responsibility for sharing knowledge about nature conservation values, while the leader of the National Park Center has been a key driver of increased understanding of tourism in the Park and its adjacent areas.

440 Our interpretation of the interviews suggests that there has been a certain degree of 'second-loop' learning. According to Daniels and Walker (2001), this type of learning entails the participants responsible for protection and tourism gaining greater understanding and acceptance of each other's values and perspectives. However, it does not appear that 'third-loop' learning has been achieved, which relates to changes in the value systems. In nature conservation management, the principal attitude that human activity is a threat to conservation values seems to remain unchanged. The board for *Ytre Hvaler National Park* has so far focused mainly on nature conservation values, and only marginally on tourism development. No visitor strategies or spatial zoning for differentiated Park use have been developed. Though the management plan draft includes some guidelines, it is not very specific on this issue. In addition, diverging opinions regarding what should be allowed in terms of tourist infrastructure and development in the areas adjacent to the Park suggest limited learning and common understanding among the key actors. Thus, the current situation is not in accordance with 'third loop' learning as Daniels and Walker (2001) define it.

460 The decentralization of authority to the inter-municipal board appears to have contributed to increase the local ownership of *Ytre Hvaler National Park*. The representative of *Hvaler* municipality expressed that the protection regulation is unduly

rigid and strict in several ways, but simultaneously expressed that the board seems to be able to find ‘sensible’ and locally acceptable and adaptable solutions. This goal is achieved by taking local knowledge into account, which is emphasized in the literature on adaptive co-management (Berkes, Armitage, and Doubleday 2007; Armitage, Marschke, and Plummer 2008). The interviewees also noted that it was helpful to have a National Park manager from *Hvaler*, as someone familiar with the local conditions.

There exist different opinions about whether the board should express any opinion on tourism development and infrastructure in the areas adjacent to the Park; locally, there seems to be a perception that the board should not involve itself with municipal planning processes for the adjacent areas. This attitude contributes to a lower degree of coordination for protection versus tourism interests within and outside the protected area. These divergent views relate to two contrasting paradigms: the planning paradigm is characterized by changing land use within a political rationality, while the environmental protection paradigm is characterized by controlling land use within an administrative rationality (Kleven and Emmelin 1999; Lundmark and Stjernström 2009). The decentralization of authority at the National Park has yet to fully bridge these two different paradigms.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Based on our research question, we conclude that the inter-municipal Board of *Ytre Hvaler National Park* and *Hvaler* municipality have been able to coordinate nature conservation values and tourism development inside and outside the protected border thus far. Important conditions for achieving this goal are local networks and social capacities among key individuals. The National Park manager has been essential in emphasizing nature conservation values to local politicians on the board and other actors while also being open to tourism perspectives within the framework of the protection regulation. The head of the National Park Center has also been key, promoting tourism development in and adjacent to the Park. His employment in the *Hvaler* municipality ensured coordination with the municipal land use planning and business strategies. Informal meetings and frequent contact between the key individuals related to the management of the National Park and the municipality have also been important, and the National Park manager and the head of the National Park Center have served as bridge-builders (Rydin and Falleth 2006). The local management model for protected areas and the key actors’ location in *Skjærhalden* in line with the national cluster strategy have supported coordinated management due to proximity and frequent contact, both of which lead to a high level of trust as a result.

Despite the relatively coordinated management of *Ytre Hvaler National Park* and the adjacent areas, there will probably be significant challenges in the future as a result of higher pressure on the area. The importance of key actors has been emphasized, but at the same time, this generates a vulnerability depending on the actual individuals being seated in formal positions. There are also important informal networks, such as the meetings between the National Park manager and the municipal planners. Institutionalization of these networks will make the management more robust and resistant to changes, such as the replacement of key actors, such as the National Park manager and the head of the National Park Center. This latter individual has now retired, illustrating the vulnerability of a tiny management system that relies on the personal abilities of significant actors. Institutionalization of informal networks is in line with McCool (2009), who emphasizes that trust has to include organizational dimensions in tourism planning in protected areas.

510 The divergent opinions of the areas adjacent to the Park seem to require special awareness in the future. Future development projects related to tourism are expected to come in these areas, requiring coordinated municipal planning. A proactive planning approach should aim to meet these pressures coming in the form of applications and plans for tourism projects. We also consider it important to establish a greater level of common understanding regarding the role of the National Park's board in municipal planning processes.

515 We have found few studies that explicitly focus on the relationship between national park management and land use planning for adjacent areas. Based on our own study, however, we can state that a broader planning perspective across separate jurisdictions is necessary. This perspective is essential for achieving an integrative approach to protected areas while fulfilling the objectives of comprehensive conservation in line with Mose *et al.* (2007) and Hammer *et al.* (2016). Institutionalized local networks and competent key individuals are crucial preconditions for balancing protection and tourism development inside and outside national park borders.

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