

Between The Fjord and The Future: A Conflict in Urban Land-Use Planning



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Abstract

Norway is widely perceived as a global frontrunner in environmental responsibility and sustainable development. Yet, tensions arise when national green ambitions translate into local land-use decisions shaped by competing values and aims. This thesis explores such a conflict on Askøy, an island near Bergen. Despite several objections and years of local resistance, a proposed sustainable urban development project called *Kildn* has been dominating the municipal planning debates. *Kildn* is promoted by the developers “as a new way of thinking” to become the world’s first zero-emission cruise harbour and fjord metro hub. However, the project is planned to be built on Askøy’s last untouched coastline, raising concerns about nature conservation, local identity and democratic participation. To explore how this debate unfolds, the study applies a critical planning perspective and analyses how different actors – including politicians, citizens, and developers - discursively construct their aims and mobilise support through texts, discursive strategies and engagement with social practices in multiple public arenas. Through a qualitative discourse analysis of interviews, social media, and documents, the research formed a nuanced and in-depth understanding of how underlying power and contextual dynamics shape the knowledge, legitimacy and influence of the discourses within the planning process. The findings reveal that planning is far from a neutral or purely technical process. Even in a democratic, consensus-oriented society with embedded participatory practices like Norway, hidden power dynamics and contextual dynamics determine whose voices are heard and whose knowledge is perceived as legitimate. However, the study also shows that marginalised groups can influence planning debates by organising strategically, building alliances, demonstrating dedicated leadership and creating visibility across various platforms. This thesis highlights the need for urban planners to recognise how discourse and power operate within complex contexts to shape planning outcomes, and to develop more inclusive decision-making processes that respond effectively to public value conflicts.

Keywords: sustainable urban development, land-use conflict, critical planning, discourse analysis, power dynamics, participation, public values, social mobilisation

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Prologue: Torn between City and Nature

Since 2018, I have lived in the two largest urban centres of the Netherlands: Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Throughout these years, I have enjoyed the vibrant *city life*, including visits to various museums, theatres, and nightclubs, stumbling upon surprising galleries and cafés, discovering many small parks and hidden benches, and hanging out with friends who lived nearby or people I randomly met. However, alongside this growth in lively recreational opportunities, something else has grown within me: a desire to occasionally escape the urban busyness. Although I truly value city dynamics, its fast pace and concrete aesthetics can make me feel rushed and depressed. Spending time in nature is, on those occasions, the only remedy. Realising how much I treasure natural environments and understanding what they mean for people’s health, well-being and broader ecosystems, I decided to dedicate my studies to connecting urban and natural environments. I have been focusing on protecting and expanding urban green spaces, raising citizens’ awareness of biodiversity and sustainability issues, and exploring innovative solutions to current unsustainable and environmentally destructive practices.

To get inspired by example, I moved in 2025 for a few months to the city of Bergen, in Norway. Bergen is Norway’s second biggest city in the province of Vestland, with almost 300,000 inhabitants (Bergen Kommune, 2024). The city is enclosed by mountains and fjords, creating an interesting field of tension between urban and natural landscapes. Over time, Bergen became my “green and happy place”, where I experienced a balance between concrete and green environments. Nevertheless, I discovered that this balance is not self-evident and subject to constant, hidden conflicts.



Figure 1

Pictures of Bergen, Norway

Note. Photos taken by me in 2025.

Chapter 1: Introduction

It is not an arbitrary choice to pick Norway as my prime location for exploring inspiring practices for nature protection and sustainability. Common narratives and global sustainability assessments position Norway as a frontrunner in environmental responsibility, balancing economic welfare with advanced climate and environmental policies and innovations (Strand, 2024; Tenorio and Gomez-Baggethun, 2024). For instance, the country was a pioneer in introducing a carbon tax as early as 1991 and banning fossil fuel heating in 2020 (Tenorio and Gomez-Baggethun, 2024). Norway itself also proclaims ambitious future climate goals. The country aims to be fossil-free by 2050, emphasising renewable energy sources and energy efficiency (Sovacool, 2017). So far, Norway has achieved a high share of renewable resources, with hydropower supplying about 88% of the national electricity production (Climate Change Performance Index, 2024). Next to this, the transport sector is highly electrified: electric cars now account for over 90% of new car sales, and public transport companies aim to be emission-free by 2028 (Climate Change Performance Index, 2024; Ruter, 2019).

On an international level, Norway made sustainable commitments in the Paris Agreement, the Agenda 2030 SDG Framework, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Agreement, and donated substantially to the Green Climate Fund (UNFCCC, 2015; Nieminen and Laitinen, 2025; Welin, 2020; Barton and Venter, 2024). Besides this, the country falls under the Nordic Action Plan (2021-2030), guiding a green transition or *green shift*, envisioning to become “the most sustainable and integrated region in the world” around 2030, by means of using innovation and smarter resource uses to grow the economy without damaging the environment (Nordic Council of Ministries, 2021; Tenorio and Gomez-Baggethun, 2023).

Norway’s environmental responsibility is supported by its perception of nature as an integral part of its identity (Anker, 2016). Norwegians treasure a culture with active and regular use of the outdoors and proximity to natural areas (Grau-Ruiz et al., 2024). According to the Norwegian Environment Agency (2014), residents should be able to access hiking areas within 500 meters. *Friluftsliv* is a central political, social, and cultural value in Norway, representing free access to all uncultivated public and private land for Norwegians to experience physical activities in diverse natural environments. This value is legalised under a 1957 Act of Parliament, providing three public rights: the ability to roam freely across the countryside, camp temporarily overnight, and gather wild foods such as berries and fish, with only a few small limitations. These rights stem from the long-standing Norwegian traditions of living off the land, as well as political efforts from the early 20th century aimed at enhancing well-being and mitigating the negative effects of urbanisation and industrialisation (Gurholt and Broch, 2017).

However, during my stay in Norway, I started observing a contrast between the country’s perceived high environmental standards and everyday realities. I noticed that many Norwegians around me did not seem particularly concerned about their resource consumption and unsustainable practices. For instance, in most buildings and houses, lights and heaters were rarely switched off and taking a flight to Oslo for a day trip did not raise any eyebrows among locals. I spotted several oil drilling workplaces, and it stood out to me that people spoke frequently about the success of their oil industry.

These cracks and ambiguities of Norway’s “green” image and practices are also underlined in academic literature. Firstly, scholars point out the *Norwegian Double Standard* – as strong environmental policies are implemented in Norway, while simultaneously environmental burdens are offshored to other countries, mainly by becoming one of the top global exporters of oil and gas. The oil industry triggers societal and political sensitiveness, as the petroleum industry, largely

owned by the state, aided in transforming the poor fishing country into the owner of the largest sovereign global wealth fund. The country has accumulated so much wealth from oil that, theoretically, its population could sustain itself for three years without working (Welin, 2020). This economic strength places Norway among the top three countries in terms of GDP per capita on the European continent (Eurostat, 2023). However, the price that Norwegians pay for this wealth accumulation is measured in extensive carbon emissions, as though Norway represents a small portion of the global population, its oil production is linked to around 0.7% of worldwide fossil fuel emissions. This results in a per capita emission level that is nearly 100 times higher than the global average (Welin, 2020).

Besides this, Norway's image as a great protector of natural environments has also been disputed the recent years in Norwegian public debates. These debates were sparked by an article from the Norwegian Public Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), titled "Norge i Rødt Hvitt og Grått" ("Norway in Red White and Grey"), which revealed in January 2024 that Norway had lost 208 km² of natural land to land clearing and building – a phenomenon referred to as *nedbygging* over the past five years (Støstad et al., 2024). This amounts to an average of 79 m² per minute (Barton and Venter, 2024). This loss includes several areas with red-listed species, high levels of biodiversity and carbon storage (Landbruksdirektoratet, 2025).



Figure 2

Image which highlights a selection of the 44,000 interventions that have been carried out across Norwegian nature.

Note. Image from the article "Norge I rødt, hvitt og grått" (NRK, 2024) by Norge i Bilder.

This article revealed the totality of the bit-by-bit destruction of nature by means of mapping all national instances of nature loss over the past 5 years by using AI-generated maps from Google's Dynamic World project. The publication spread a shockwave throughout the country, becoming one of NRK's top ten most-read online news stories ever in a few days. By May 2024, the article had been viewed over a million times – an impressive number when you consider Norway's population of around 5 million people. In addition, it received around 2,000 mentions in other newspapers, triggered thousands of emails to the journalists, influenced policy changes, and was discussed multiple times across all major Norwegian TV and radio broadcasts. Remarkably, even

a Christmas calendar book was published based on the story (Støstad et al., 2024; Nyborg Støstad, personal communication, 2025)

On a national scale, these debates over Norway's bit-by-bit destruction of nature have increased over the last years and are mainly related to renewable energy infrastructure. A striking example is the widespread opposition to wind farm developments in Norway. There is recurrent opposition of residents due to the perceived environmental impacts on landscapes and the visual intrusion of the wind farm infrastructures on places they feel emotionally and culturally connected to (Mundaca et al., 2018; Ólafsdóttir and Sæþórsdóttir, 2019). Therefore, these conflicts over resources and land use are not merely material or tied to physical landscapes, but centre around non-physical dynamics. According to Turner (2004), they are inherently social and rooted in moral concerns, making it essential to consider their historical, ethical, and normative dimensions, such as place attachment and community identity.

1.1 Problem Statement

The NRK article highlighted the debate between building and developing infrastructures versus preserving natural landscapes. This debate is especially present in urban areas, as while urban areas drive economic prosperity, infrastructure developments and are heterogeneous hotspots for sociocultural developments, they simultaneously exacerbate sustainability challenges and land-use conflicts, touching social inequalities, environmental degradation, and biodiversity losses (Deppisch and Yilmaz, 2021). Cities are not simply physical spaces, but complex constructs continually shaped through constant social action and interaction of actors within various networks who invest in material projects and assign meaning to places (Lelong, 2014; Healey, 2007). This ongoing process often leads to fierce contestation over valuable urban spaces, particularly green areas, where various stakeholders mobilise their resources and influence to steer spatial decisions and secure their interests (Ernstston et al., 2008).

Transforming landscapes into industrial zones disrupts the connection of local communities to their environment, revealing a friction between competing interpretations of sustainability: the green shift advocating for technological solutions to climate change, versus the preservation of cultural and ecological landscapes (Nienimen and Laitinen, 2025). In Norway, this contestation over interests concerning ecological spaces in urban areas is mainly played out in debates over land-use decisions at the municipal level. Compared to other European countries, Norway has a uniquely decentralised planning system. During the 1980-1990s, the county implemented a new approach of decentralisation, providing more responsibilities and autonomy to local authorities, by for instance empowering them to manage education (Baldersheim, 2009). Local governments are responsible for managing around 83% of the national territory under the Planning and Building Act, and there is no national agency that oversees the development planning (Landbruksdirektoratet, 2025; Helset Eide, 2024). However, these local planning processes frequently lead to conflicts, injustices, exclusions, as urban planning agendas are often driven by powerful private developers and public actors who effectively share their ideas through position power, legal networks, and media access, while marginalised voices remain unheard (Ernstston et al, 2008; Lefebvre, 1992). In response to these challenges, local groups organise opposition to protect their interests, influencing spatial decisions through protests, advocacy, and public discourse (Borch et al., 2023; Linnerud et al., 2022; Tarrow, 2015).

It can be concluded that these conflicts are highly complex; however, a shared problem in all these cases is that urban land-use conflicts reveal deep tensions between competing values,

identities, and power structures among various stakeholders, complicating efforts to achieve sustainable and just urban development (Nieminen and Laitinen, 2025).

1.2 Research Aims and Relevance

To better understand the rising number of land-use conflicts in Norway, this thesis investigates how these conflicts are discursively constructed within local planning processes. Traditionally, land-use planning has often been approached through instrumental perspectives, framing it as a rational, technical, and top-down process aimed at achieving predefined goals (Faludi, 1973; Chadwick, 1971; Scott, 1998). However, these perspectives tend to overlook the political nature of planning, including how power, knowledge and legitimacy are constructed within planning activities. Building on critical planning theories, this thesis instead regards planning as a socially constructed practice shaped by underlying goals, power relations and interests of political and private actors (Hajer, 1995; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Flyvbjerg, 2002). Discourse is one central way in which these hidden dimensions are revealed, as it defines the legitimate actors, knowledge and power in the decision-making of the planning process (Schiewer, 2013).

While the importance of discourse in shaping urban conflicts has been recognised (Hajer, 1995; Shirazi, 2023), we have a limited understanding of how actors use specific discursive strategies to position themselves, mobilise support, and influence urban development decisions. This gap is particularly relevant in the Norwegian context, as these conflicts are prevalent across Nordic countries and are expected to intensify with the expansion of required sustainable developments. However, insights from this study could also serve other countries with similar decentralised governments and ambitions for sustainable development that lead to local land-use concerns (Sovacool et al., 2022).

This thesis does not aim to generalise across all land-use conflicts but rather uses a single in-depth case to unpack the discursive mechanisms and hidden power dynamics that often remain under-analysed in planning studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In doing so, it contributes to research gaps on more nuanced studies of the nature of land-use planning conflicts, particularly in terms of recurring patterns, underlying dynamics, and the actors involved, as noted by scholars (Sovacool et al., 2022; Van de Grift and Cuppen, 2022). Moreover, understanding how discourse can enable or marginalise specific groups is relevant in broader contexts, as environmental injustices in urban development often disproportionately affect marginalised communities (Deppisch and Yilmaz, 2021). This stresses the importance of studying proper contextualisation of sustainable planning initiatives to avoid top-down approaches that overrule local concerns (Clausen et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study contributes to academic debates on planning, discourse, and power by analysing how urban planning unfolds in practice, using the Kildn project in Askøy as a case study. Rather than focusing predominantly on formal procedures, the aim is to uncover how conflicting values and aims are performed through discourse to shape local planning. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for creating inclusive decision-making processes that respond effectively to diverse social contexts (Mitlin, 2021). The next section will introduce the empirical case study, followed by tailored research questions that guide the analysis.

1.3 The Case Study: Kildn, a Source for Conflict?

As land-use planning conflicts are fought out on a local level in Norway, this study focuses on a municipal land-use conflict to achieve the aforementioned study objectives.

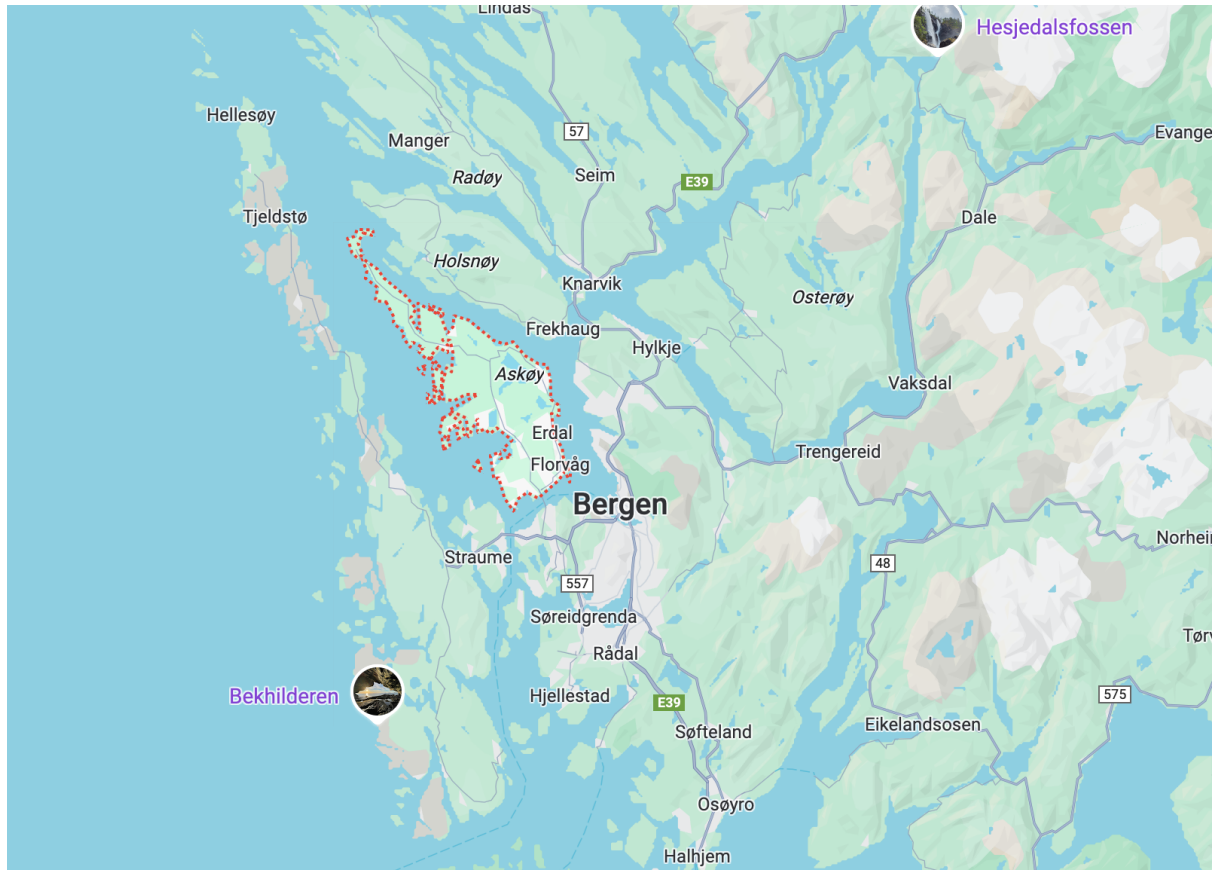


Figure 3

Map of Bergen and surrounding municipalities, including the island of Askøy

Note. Screenshot of Google Maps, retrieved on April 24, 2025 (Google, n.d.).

Askøy is a relatively small island municipality with around 30,000 inhabitants, connected to the city of Bergen by a bridge (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2024). At first glance, it seemed a quiet, calm, peripheral place to me, overshadowed by the urban dynamics of Bergen. However, over the past four months, the issues on Askøy have become far more intriguing than I initially expected. A seemingly local land-use planning conflict drew my attention and revealed complex layers of political tension, value clashes, and civic engagement. What first appeared to me as a technical planning issue turned out to expose deeper societal questions about how we balance development with nature, who gets to shape the future of a place, and how public values are negotiated in urban planning practice.



Figure 4
Picture of Askøy' resident guiding me around in Eidsvika
Note. Photo taken by me in March 2025.

It is March 20, 2025, when Helge Sivertsen, a resident of Askøy, guides me along the rocky, untouched coastline of Eidsvika. The area is enclosed by the marshes and forest of Træssmarka between the villages of Marikoven and Follese on the southwest of Askøy (see Figure 5 for a map of the area). It is a site well-known among locals as it is widely used for recreation, whether it is for hiking, walking the dog, rock climbing, swimming during summer, or as a popular site for school excursions (Nordstrøm, 2024).

As we walk, he pauses at a quiet bay and points across the water. “Here,” he says, “is where developers want to build massive infrastructure for *Kildn* (meaning ‘source’ in Norwegian). The project aims to become the world’s first fully zero-emission cruise port, envisioned as a central hub for regional fjord metro, fjord tourism and cruise ship docking in Vestland.”



Figure 5

Area of Træssmarka and Eidsvika bay on Askøy

Note. Image retrieved from website of Helge Sivertsen, n.d.

Every 12 years, Vestland municipalities agree on a land-use plan for the next term. As this year, the Municipality of Askøy needs to decide on the land-use plans for the upcoming years, all eyes are on the bay of Eidsvika, which could potentially transform into an urban harbour area, opening the door for Kildn to be realised (Interviewee 19, 2025). Typically, the municipality of Askøy issues a tender for possible land-use developments to be considered in future planning. However, in 2021, the private development company Tertnes Holding – a Bergen-based business group involved in construction, industry, real estate and investment activities (Tertnes Holding, n.d.) – performed a unique move by directly presenting their proposal for the area around Eidsvika to the governance institutions (Interviewee 7, 2025). Since then, the project has been revised and scaled down, with an updated version submitted in 2023 (Interviewee 5a, 2025).



Figure 6

Visualisation of the Kildn project

Note. Image prestend by Tertnes Holding on their website, (Tertnes Holding, 2025a).

According to the proposal of Tertnes Holding, Kildn will be a central gateway for emission-free sea transport for residents of Askøy and surrounding municipalities in Vestland, utilising more than 20 emission-free fast ferries which will shuttle throughout the fjord waters. Next to this, the hub will function as a cruise stop and vibrant tourism centre from which tourists can begin their visits throughout the region. Furthermore, additional workplaces, hotels and restaurants will make Kildn an attractive development location (Tertnes Holding, 2025b).

The proposal for Kildn has drawn widespread attention and opposition due to its scale, especially for a small municipality like Askøy, and the confusion surrounding its plans. The word “cruise” has sparked strong local reactions, while the use of the natural land of Eidsvika has mobilised environmental groups and citizens into a group called “Eidsvikas Venner”, who are worried about ongoing nature loss. Unusual for Askøy standards, the project has survived five years of local opposition, even after negative comments from regional and national institutions (Interviewee 18, 2025).

1.4. Research Questions

Following the study objective to investigate the interplay between conflicting aims and power dynamics that are discursively expressed in a complex land-use planning context, the following research questions will guide the case study analysis:

How are conflicting discourses around the Kildn project constructed and shaped by power dynamics in the land-use planning process?

1. How do different actors construct their aims and mobilise support through discourse?
 - a. How does the developers’ discourse use text, discursive strategies, and social practices across various arenas?
 - b. How does the opposition’s discourse use text, discursive strategies, and social practices across various arenas?
2. How do contextual planning, political, economic, social, cultural, and geographic factors shape the power relations between these discourses?

1.5 Outline Thesis

To answer these research questions, this thesis begins with a literature review situating the study within key academic debates on land-use planning, followed by a theoretical framework outlining concepts of participatory planning, discourse, power and context. Next, a methodology chapter presents the qualitative approach used to capture the case’s complexity. This is followed by a combined results and analysis chapter, which shows empirical findings through a structured exploration of the land-use planning process, the discursive practices of the main actors, and the contextual dynamics shaping the discursive powerplay. These findings are then interpreted in a discussion chapter linking them to broader theoretical frameworks and debates. The thesis concludes with a summary of the main insights, study limitations, and future research suggestions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Before studying land-use planning dynamics in practice, this literature review will first explore general academic debates on land-use planning conflicts. Subsequently, rather than focusing on traditional technocratic planning studies, it introduces a broader spectrum of planning approaches, beginning with participatory practices, and further addressing more radical approaches and the role of opposition in planning processes. This academic expansion positions the study within a critical planning perspective, opening the stage for questioning the role of discourse and power in shaping urban planning conflicts within a complex context.

2.1 Land-Use Planning: Balancing Conflicts

Planning literature covers an interdisciplinary field of practices and theories. Therefore, this study will regard a broad definition, viewing planning as the development and design of a place (Hofer and Kaufmann, 2022). In general, planning literature has always been filled with contradictions and tensions, and it is the task of planners to balance these. Over the past decades, land-use planning has gained specific interest as it is one of the most important arenas in which the dimension of the global United Nations vision for sustainable development is played out (Owens and Cowell, 2011). Traditional planner scholars such as Campbell (1996) highlight that sustainable development is a constant conflict between aims for economic progress, ecological preservation and intergenerational equity. Later scholars added dimensions to these goal conflicts, such as “liveability” – referring to the quality of everyday life of people living in a certain space (Godschalk, 2004). Within the literature regarding these conflicts, some scholars replace the concept of “aims” within a less technocratic conceptualisation, referring to “values” as underlying public and private norms, principles and standards that drive conflict in a political and social context (Herzog et al., 2023). While the concepts of goals and aims are related yet academically distinct, both will be used interchangeably during the literature review and analysis of this study.

2.2 Participation in Planning

Classic planning theories regard the practice of planning as a technocratic process, highlighted by scholars within the fields of procedural planning, systems theory and modernism. These disciplines perceive planning as a predominantly top-down and instrumental practice, performed by perceived neutral experts, who make the most efficient decisions based upon objective knowledge and data (Faludi, 1973; Chadwick, 1971; Scott, 1998). Other scholars criticise this approach, regarding planning as a democratic and participatory process, shaped by various actors, powers, values and socio-political contexts (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Hofer and Kaufmann, 2022). This latter perception will be applied in this study, as it offers space for a more in-depth and pluralist analysis. Departing from the perception of planning as a non-technocratic process, but continuously socially produced and relational (Herzog et al., 2023), much planning literature refers to participatory and communicative processes. A participatory process is defined as one in which several actors, perceived as subjects in the participation, shape the planning outcomes (Hofer and Kaufmann, 2022). Public participation has gained widespread acknowledgement in political planning practices, and several instruments to stimulate this, such as legal frameworks, urban policies and supporting programs have been implemented (Gaventa, 2006; Hofer and Kaufmann, 2022). Nevertheless, the participatory character of these latest planning practices is debated, as some say that planning remains a practice of professionals outside society, who despite reaching out to citizens through communicative actions, do not necessarily empower all actors in decision-

making (Miraftab, 2009). Others add to this, that by just creating participatory structures, there will not necessarily be more inclusion (Gaventa, 2006). This can be explained by the widespread recognition of the permeation of power dynamics which shape the political participatory planning process, constructing who gets a voice and who gets not (Hillier, 2002; Brownill and Carpenter, 2007; Hofer and Kaufmann, 2022). Participation spaces are thus defined in this line of literature, as not neutral and with boundaries for in- and exclusion of actors (Gaventa, 2006).

2.3 Opposition to Planning

As a response to expose and reveal these structural underlying power imbalances embedded in planning institutions and practices, later radical planning traditions, such as insurgent planning, have recognised the role of marginalised groups that shape urban planning through informal and everyday practices. This planning approach reframes participation as resistance and empowerment, led by those who are often excluded from official planning processes. Many scholars of this tradition focus on planning in the Global South, where there are various examples of the creation of housing and neighbourhoods outside formal decision structures (Miraftab, 2009). Nevertheless, this informal shaping of planning practices can also be observed in the Global North, in which literature on opposition to urban development's highlights the essential role of social movements as drivers for changing power relations in planning (Gaventa, 2006). In general, social movement studies have recently gained traction within sustainability sciences and planning studies, defining the process as the engagement of individuals, groups, or organisations acting as voluntary and intrinsically motivated change agents, uniting around a shared cause to drive improvements (Grinspun et al., 2022). Especially urban environments have become a strategic arena for conflicts over productions, experiences, and power due to cross-sectoral linkages, the bringing together of diverse actors, and the accessibility of marginalised groups to raise their voices (Castells, 1983). These conflicts can reveal underlying social and political issues and have the potential to bring about significant changes in political power and urban public services (Pickvance, 2003). Various debates exist on how to understand urban opposition actors and their strategies (Aidukaitė, 2016). Studies focusing on the role of leaders in social movements often proclaim that the initiation and success of movements depend on “key individual activists” who act as catalysts of change and are critical for sustaining and growing social movements (Gulliver et al., 2023; Onyx and Leonard; 2010). However, next to these inherent traits of movement leaders, other studies emphasise relational aspects with community members and external stakeholders in defining the leaders' mobilisation success (Fulmer, 2018; Nienaber et al., 2015). Fostering change in complex problems is rarely done by individual actions but is always dependent on larger networks, social relations, and community support (Gulliver et al., 2023; Van Ostaijen and Agger, 2022). As emphasised by Emirbayer and Goodwin (1996), collective action is ingrained and shaped by these relational networks or “structural environments”, which embody socio-structural, cultural and socio-psychological contexts. The latest radical planning traditions which recognise the substantive influence of social movements, emphasise planning as a radical, political and transformative practice. Social movements are perceived to create new political imaginaries by contesting power relations through informal and symbolic practices. Participation is therefore not regarded as an invited space controlled by institutions, but as an act of breaking formal procedures, challenging dominant power systems, and envisioning alternative futures (Miraftab, 2009).

In sum, this literature review has illustrated how planning is fundamentally a practice of balancing conflicting goals and values. While early planning theories were rooted in instrumental, technocratic approaches, later debates emphasise participatory practices. However, critical scholars question the inclusive nature of these processes, stressing the role of power in determining who gets to participate and who gets not. Radical planning traditions such as insurgent planning, alongside literature on social movements, challenge institutionalised participatory structures by highlighting influence of informal and opposition practices. To further analyse these dynamics, the following theoretical framework will offer tools to unpack the elements in the participatory urban planning processes.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Following the abovementioned debates, this thesis positions itself within a critical planning tradition that questions technocratic processes and includes the influence of discourse, power, and context of various (in)formal actors on planning processes. Building upon planning theories that are constantly socially produced and relational (Herzog et al., 2023), the following paragraph will outline theoretical concepts that guide the analysis. Through the combined use of a conceptual framework of aims, actors and arenas with discourse analysis, this study aims to uncover how hidden power, and contextual dimensions shape a participatory land-use planning process.

3.1 Analysing Participation Through the 3A³ Framework

Departing from a constructivist perspective that acknowledges participation as a socially constructed and dynamic process, in which actors, aims and arenas continuously shape and are shaped by their broader context, this study will draw upon the conceptual 3A³ Framework of participation by Hofer and Kaufman (2022), displayed in Figure 7, as basis for analysing the participatory planning process of the Kildn case.

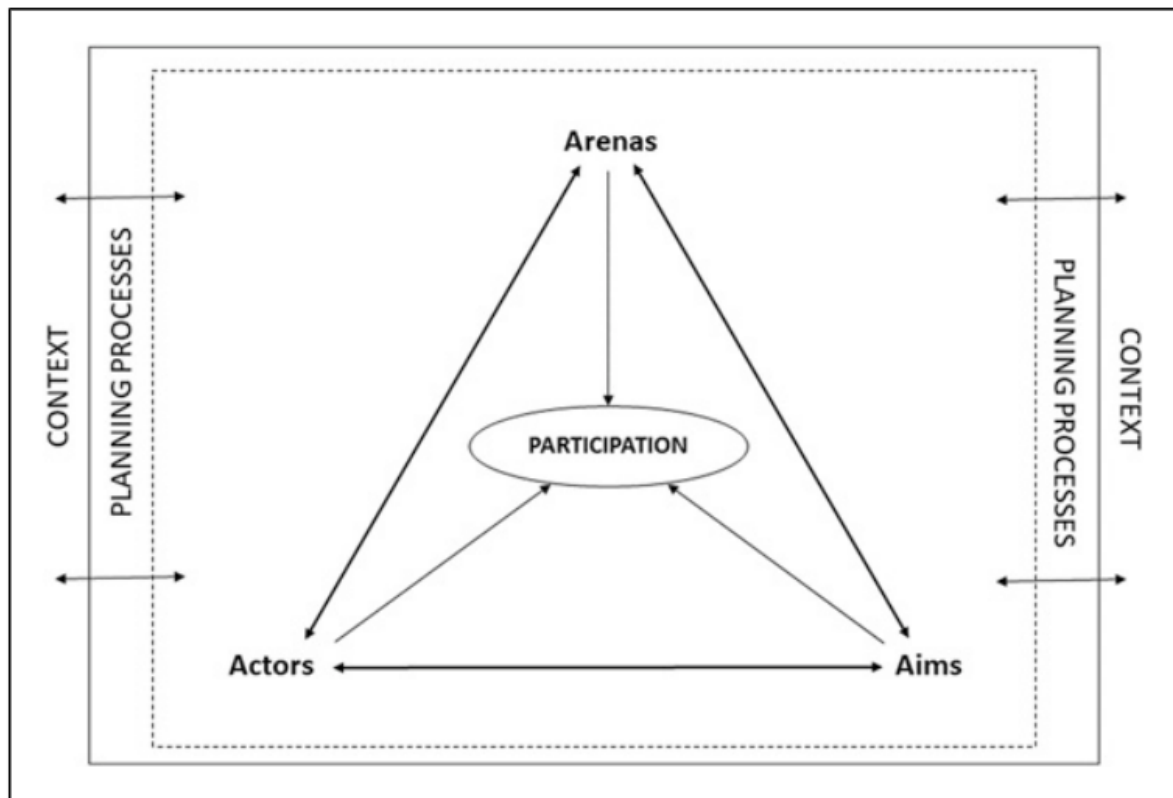


Figure 7

The 3A³ framework of participation

Note. From *Actors, arenas and aims: A conceptual framework for public participation* (p.360) by Hofer and Kaufmann (2022). This figure illustrates the conceptualisation of public participation as a dynamic interplay between actors, arenas, and aims. The framework highlights that participation is influenced by contextual conditions and interactions across these three dimensions.

This framework is designed as a concrete tool to observe the functioning of participation in planning, by analysing the ‘Actors’ (who have a say in the participation process), the ‘Aims’ (why

the framework will be complemented with a critical discourse analytical lens, including concepts of power and discourse.

3.2 Power and Discourse Analysis

Scholars such as Flyvbjerg (1998) and Gaventa (2006) emphasise the role of power as a fundamental driving factor shaping the participatory planning process. According to them, power determines what is regarded as legitimate knowledge and participation; thus, which voices are heard, and which are not. The concept of power is broadly defined and often related to space by traditional theorists such as Foucault (1972) and Lefebvre (1992). Drawing upon the work of Foucault, Flyvbjerg (1998) perceives power as knowledge and thereby, what is seen as rational and knowledge. Power is manifested in discourse, which is defined in the groundwork of discourse analysis by Foucault (1972) as more than just words; it refers to the systems of meaning that shape how we understand, communicate, and act in the world. Discourse constitutes the framework in which knowledge, power, and social practices are constructed. In this understanding, power operates through discourse, producing and regulating knowledge in what defines what is the “truth” within a given context (Foucault, 1979). One key Foucauldian concept relevant to this study is subjectification, which describes how individuals and groups are formed as subjects within discursive systems (Foucault, 1982). In recent years, discourse analysis has received increased interest in urban planning studies. Scholars in this discipline argue that discourse plays an active role in shaping political dynamics as it can create meanings and symbols that can shift power balances, neutralising tensions or provoking political conflicts (Hajer, 2002). Foucault’s tradition focuses on practices and actions – “what is done to operationalise knowledge” – as these reflect underlying power relations in planning processes (Shirazi, 2023). From Foucault’s thinking emerged several discourse studies; nevertheless, all underline that defining social reality – making one discourse dominant – is a powerful act with serious consequences for social practices and therefore, social change often depends on the ability to reshape discourse (Della Porta, 2014). While Foucault’s work opened a theoretical understanding of discourse and planning, he did not provide a ready-made methodological framework, as his evolving definitions of discourse make direct application difficult (Shirazi, 2023). However, his concepts were embedded in later frameworks of discourse scholars. For instance, Fairclough’s (1992) model of discourse analysis explores three interconnected levels: the text itself (different types of written, spoken and visual materials), the discursive practices (production, distribution and reception of text), and the broader social-cultural practices (situational and institutional context, culture and society). Fairclough’s model can therefore be used to understand how meaning is constructed by actors in concrete communicative events, from policy documents to media articles and public conversations, whilst studying its interactions with broader societal discourses. In this study, I will use Fairclough’s model as the primary analytical structure, however, I will also incorporate Foucauldian concepts – particularly the link between discourse, knowledge and power to deepen my understanding of how urban planning discourses legitimise certain imaginaries while marginalising others.

Concluding, by combining the 3A³ framework with a critical discourse analytical perspective, this study develops a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of power, conflict and value formation within the land-use planning process on Askøy. This integrated analysis allows for exploring both the visible structures of participation and the underlying discourses that shape it.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter first provides an overview of my positionality, followed by a description of the research design and the methods used to address the research questions. Subsequently, the approach for creating a design of the research findings will be explained. Finally, additional methodological considerations, such as trustworthiness, the use of Artificial Intelligence, and study limitations, will be discussed.

4.1 Own Positionality

This research is conducted from a constructivist perspective, implying that meanings are constructed by human beings through their engagement and interpretation of the world based on their historical and social experiences and background. This approach takes a relativist ontological premise and a subjective epistemology (Cresswell and Poth, 2017). Therefore, I acknowledge my active, subjective role in interpreting the data and my positionality as a narrative constructivist. As such, I attempted to engage in continual reflection on the role of my own position in shaping my argument and narrative construction. First of all, I am aware that my Dutch background and non-Norwegian cultural identity resulted in both advantages and limitations regarding the study. A possible advantage was my outsider positionality to the case, which aided in observing and documenting the interaction between the case actors from a certain distance of cultural formations. This position might also have made it easier for some to share information. On the other hand, the cultural differences might have created a sense of distance between me and the involved actors, potentially limiting trust and openness. Furthermore, as I do not speak Norwegian, the language barrier did hinder communication and understanding sometimes as certain interviewees had difficulties finding English words for their expressions. Secondly, I acknowledge that I was influenced by my own biases and social-democratic background. A personal bias which might have influenced the results is my academic background in environmental and sustainability sciences, and somewhat leftish political ideology. However, I tried to use my natural curiosity and openness to regard all discourses of the various interviewees equally, whilst reviewing their responses with similar criticism. Thirdly, I discovered that I became an indirect actor in the planning discourse. By conducting several interviews and indirectly sharing information with interview participants, by analysing texts and interpreting discourses, I entered the discourse around Kildn. As critical discourse analysis underlines, researchers are not neutral observers, but co-constructors of meaning (Fairclough, 1992). My presence may have influenced how actors reflected on their aims, roles, strategies and experiences. By emphasising my position, I would like to emphasise the politics of knowledge production and challenge the illusion of objectivity. Lastly, I am aware that my role as a researcher may have influenced participants' responses. I have tried to mitigate this influence by reflecting on my positionality and results with other case experts and by using a triangulation of methods. Despite all considerations, given my background in complex sustainability challenges and urban development, I wished to bring an informed, interdisciplinary, and critical perspective to the study. During my qualitative data collection, I aimed to stay curious, open, and explorative to create a narrative that matters and reflects the issues openly.

4.2 Research Design

This study follows a qualitative single case-study design, enabling a broad exploration of the case and diverging interests, whilst exploring in-depth the discursive dynamics in the planning of the Kildn project. The choice for an in-depth case study reflects a constructivist research design,

aimed at understanding how context-specific meanings, aims and power relations shape planning processes. This study does not aim to produce universal or generalisable claims about land-use conflicts. Instead, it seeks to offer a situated, analytical insight into a specific planning case, with the goal of contributing to broader theoretical and social reflections rather than predicting outcomes in other contexts (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Given the complexity of the conflict, a multi-method approach was applied, incorporating semi-structured interviews, social media analysis, and document review. The study process followed recursive cycling – an iteration of induction and deduction in data collection and analysis (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). However, the case-study research was primarily inductive, aimed to generate insights from empirical data while engaging with existing theories. The particular case on Askøy was chosen as firstly, it reflects general national tensions and land-use planning debates in Norway. Secondly, it is included in a larger European Union (EU) research project (Pro-Coast, n.d.), which gives it academic legitimacy and expert support. Thirdly, the case has received considerable attention in local and regional media and is well-documented in public materials, making it suitable for analysing conflicting discourses. Finally, the case is ongoing, allowing the research to capture evolving discourses and planning outcomes.

4.3 Research Methods

The following paragraphs will outline the triangulation of methods used for data collection and analysis to answer the research questions. To provide an overview, Table 1 shows which methods were taken to acquire data for each research question:

Table 1
Overview of data methods used to answer each research question

Research Question	Research methods
How do different actors construct their aims and mobilise support through discourse?	Stakeholder mapping; Semi-Structured Interviews; Social Media Analysis; Document Analysis; Direct Observations
How do contextual planning, political, economic, social, cultural, and geographic factors shape the power relations between these discourses?	Semi-Structured Interviews; Social Media Analysis; Document Analysis

4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

To capture the broad understanding and complex interplay of actors, discourses and contexts, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a varied group of actors as the main source for data collection.

4.3.1.1 Interview Sampling

In total, 26 formal in-depth interviews and 11 informal street interviews were conducted between March 11 and April 25 in 2025. Informal talks occurred with random passengers at various locations in and near Bergen, such as in stores, in the sauna, during a train ride and at a conference in Oslo. These informal interviews happened spontaneously as when I raised my study

topic in conversations, many people seemed willing to share their opinion over the project. For formal interviews, purposive sampling was used to select actors who had a direct involvement in the Kildn project and land-use planning process or had expressed public opinions about the project. These purposive interviewees were contacted by email or phone, with a reference from researchers of the EU-Horizon Pro-Coast project (Pro-Coast, n.d.). These researchers have been closely involved with the case for a long time and have built strong relationships with the key actors. Snowball sampling was done to get in contact with hard-to-reach actors and people perceived as influential within the specific network. The sampling process resulted in a varied group of actors which represented different sectors and interests, offering an interdisciplinary lens, allowing validation of dominant discourses, and providing a rich understanding of the roles, relationships, perceptions, aims, values, strategies, resources and contexts that shape and are shaped by the case. Table 2 gives an overview of the included formal in-depth interviews.

Table 2

Information of conducted formal interviews, including interviewee roles, dates and locations

Interviewee	Role	Date	Location
Eidsvikas Venner and Naturvernforbundet			
1a	Leader Eidsvikas Venner and Naturvernforbundet Askøy	March 11	In-person, café in Bergen
1b	Leader Eidsvikas Venner and Naturvernforbundet Askøy	April 2	In-person, Kleppestø harbour, Askøy
2	Member Eidsvikas Venner	March 20	In-person, walk in Eidsvika
3	Member Eidsvikas Venner	April 9	Online, Microsoft Teams
4	Spokesperson Naturvernforbundet Norway	March 25	Online, Microsoft Teams
Kildn Developers			
5a	Developer Tertnes Holding	April 3	In-person, office Tertnes Holding B.V.
5b	Developer Tertnes Holding	April 3	In-person, office Tertnes Holding B.V.
National and Regional Government			
6a	Spokesperson Statsforvalteren	April 24	Online, Microsoft Teams
6b	Spokesperson Statsforvalteren	April 24	Online, Microsoft Teams
7	Spokesperson Fylkeskommune Vestland	March 13	Phone call
Askøy Municipality			
8	Mayor Askøy municipality	April 11	Online, Microsoft Teams
9	Local politician Høyre	March 20	In-person, interviewees' office in Kleppestø centre, Askøy
10	Local politician FrP	March 26	Phone call
11	Local politician AP	March 19	Online, Microsoft Teams
12	Local politician MDG	March 24	Online, Microsoft Teams
13a	Local politician INP	April 4	Online, Microsoft Teams
13b	Local politician INP	April 4	Online, Microsoft Teams
Local Residents			
14	Marikoven resident	March 19	Online, Microsoft Teams
15	Marikoven resident	March 19	Online, Microsoft Teams

Other Case-related Actors			
16	Spokesperson Port of Bergen	April 4	Online, Microsoft Teams
17	Spokesperson Rodne Fjord Cruises	April 15	Phone call
18	Local Askøy journalist	April 14	Online, Microsoft Teams
Academics and Experts			
19	Case-Expert, Pro-Coast leader, and Sociology Researcher	March 3	In-person, café in Bergen
20	Case-Expert, Pro-Coast leader, and Sociology Researcher	March 13	In-person, university park
21	Researcher Discourse Analysis	March 24	In-person, café Humanities Faculty
22	Researcher Urban Geography	March 13	Online, Microsoft Teams
23	Researcher Urban Planning	April 23	In-person, interviewees' office at the university
24	Researcher Investigative Journalism	April 10	In-person, café Media City Bergen
25	Greenpeace Activist	March 14	Online, Microsoft Teams

4.3.1.2 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was verbally obtained for all formal interviews. Participants' verbal consent is documented in the recordings, which are available upon request. The consent addressed whether the interviewee agreed with the interview recording and the usage of the results for research purposes. Besides this, it informed the participants of the study's purposes and data management. Furthermore, most interview data is anonymised and de-identified, except for information of the developers, the leader of Eidsvikas Venner (Jan Nordstrøm) and the mayor of Askøy municipality. These public figures have given consent for their identification. Interview data is securely stored on my personal computer and will be permanently deleted after August 2026, in accordance with data protection guidelines.

4.3.1.3 Interview Practicalities

Most interviews were held online due to time constraints. In general, most interviews lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes. In-person interviews were conducted with key actors at locations where they felt comfortable - for example, at the Eidsvika bay with a member of Eidsvikas Venner, and at the office of Tertnes Holding with the developers. All online interviews were recorded using Microsoft Teams, which also automatically generated transcriptions. In addition, handwritten notes were taken, which were later documented in Word files.

4.3.1.4 Interview Design

Before most interviews, an interview guide was developed based on the interviewee's role and background, as well as the research objectives and key concepts from the theoretical framework (see Appendix A for the various interview guides). As the interviews were semi-structured, the guide served as a basis structure next to which there was space for flexibility and exploration, causing regular deviations from the pre-determined set of questions. General recurring content was addressed, including the actor's relationship to and perspectives on the Kildn project, their values and aims, their perceptions of and influence on the planning process, the strategies and actions they undertook to engage in the debate, their views on other stakeholders,

and the broader contextual influences they perceived as shaping the project. MOM-test questions were used to let interviewees refer to past experiences, as these help to identify concrete, real-world examples rather than hypothetical or abstract opinions. By focusing on actual past behaviours, this technique reduces social desirability bias and enhances the reliability of data (Fitzpatrick, 2013; Charmaz, 2014). This offers more grounded insights into how actors have constructed discourses in practice.

4.3.1.5 Interview Data Analysis

After each interview, a summary between half a page and one page was written about the main interview insights. These summaries were stored in a Google Drive file and later manually coded, using an inductive approach, through which recurring themes, patterns, narratives, and concepts were identified in comments. Recurring and outstanding insights were documented in a separate Google Drive file, which highlighted the analytical categories and themes. The theoretical framework and core research concepts informed the interpretation and iteration of the induced themes. In addition, the discourse in relevant documents and social media texts was used to sharpen and validate the coding analysis. Regular discussions with the Pro-Coast researchers and my thesis supervisors helped to validate the emerging findings, strengthen the consistency of the coding process and highlighted personal coding biases. In later writing stages of the study, interview transcripts were consulted back for specific quotes.

4.3.2 Social Media Analysis

To examine the emergence and development of the discourse of Kildn opponents, a social media analysis was conducted. Social media data was gathered from the private "Friends of the Earth – Eidsvika, Bergen" Facebook group (Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.), which has approximately 1,500 members and hundreds of posts over the past 5 years. Only posts directly referring to the Kildn project and posted between January 2025 and March 2025, were included. Posts were selected based on their relevance to the research themes and which generated a "most relevant" status on Facebook due to several reactions. Focus was also laid on the responses of members to the posts. Relevant posts were translated using the automatic translation function of Facebook and downloaded as PDF documents for thematic coding according to the research themes. Likewise, as with the interviews, the coding of the social media happened manually and thematically, distinguishing recurring themes and highlighting insights in a separate Google Drive. Informed consent was given by Facebook group leader Jan Nordstrøm to use general data from the private Facebook group. All social media data was fully anonymised and no personally identifiable information was included. Where relevant, direct quotes are anonymised or paraphrased. Due to ethical and legal privacy reasons, original Facebook posts are not included as an appendix.

4.3.3 Document Analysis

News articles (including local and national newspapers, e.g. NRK, Askøyværingen and Askøy 24), policy documents, government authorities' assessments, local petitions, official objections, blog posts, website pages, and documents presented for public consultation were reviewed to investigate both official documentation and subjective discourses concerning the case. Only documents related to the case and research themes were included. Documents were obtained from various sources, including the document section on the Eidsvikas Venner Facebook (n.d.)

page, municipal databases, open web searches, and through shared contributions of experts and actors in the case. Texts were translated using Google Translate or the automatic translation function of the Chrome Browser and coded likewise the other qualitative methods. An overview of the key documents that were used for the discourse analysis is provided below in Table 3. Public website pages and blogs which can be assessed without permission or subscription are documented separately in the reference list.

Table 3

Documents used for analysis, including document type, source, publication date, main topic and access possibility

Doc. ID	Document Type	Source/Platform	Publication Date	Main topic	Access type
1	Hearing input	Facebook Post Eidsvikas Venner	21 November 2024	Objection Statens Vegvesen	Private (Provided by Pro-Coast researcher)
2	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	15 November 2024	Objection residents from Marikoven	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
3	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	N.d.	Objection Jan Nordstrøm, leader Naturvernforbundet Askøy	Private (Provided by Pro-Coast researcher)
4	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	11 October 2024	Objection of Kystverket	Public (Provided by Pro-Coast researcher)
5	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	29 November 2024	Consultation statement Bergen Municipality	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
6	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	12 November 2024	Consultation statement Øygarden Municipality	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
7	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	19 December 2024	Statement Statsforvalteren including objections NVE, Kystverket, SVV, Forsvarsbygg	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
8	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	12 November 2024	Objection Askøy SV	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
9	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	15 November 2024	Objection Marikoven Industrinabolag	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
10	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	15 November 2024	Input Fjord Tours AS	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality

11	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	N.d.	Input European Cruise Services	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
12	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	N.d.	Input European Fjord1	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
13	Hearing input	Askøy Municipality KPA Hearing Documents	N.d.	Input Askøy- næringsalliansen	Publicly available upon request to Askøy municipality
14	Online booklet	Naturvernforbundet website	6 June 2023	How municipalities can save nature	Public
15	Online newspaper article	Askoyværingen – S.J. Johnstad	27 February 2025	Explanation of the Kildn case ('Er du forvirret? Her får du noen')	Askoyværingen subscribers-only
16	Online newspaper article	Askøy24 – M. Fonn Hafskor	23 February 2025	Recap Library debate (‘Bokstavel ig talt en sirkeldebatt’)	Askøy24 subscribers-only
17	Online newspaper article	Askoyværingen – S.J Johnstad	20 February 2025	Recap Library debate (‘Møttes til debatt: Kildn fikk mye motstand og litt støtte)	Askoyværingen subscribers-only
18	Online newspaper article	Askoyværingen – H.O Aalvik	7 May 2025	Municipal Director advice to drop Kildn (‘Kommunedirektøren vil droppe Kildn’)	Askoyværingen subscribers-only
19	Online newspaper article	Askoyværingen – S.J Johnstad	9 May 2025	Developers’ response to decision Municipal Director (‘Nytt skjær i sjøen for Kildn, men: Vi har ikke gitt opp’)	Askoyværingen subscribers-only
20	Online newspaper article	Askoyværingen – T. Karlsen	16 May 2025	Politicians’ vote second proposal Kildn meeting 15 May (‘Knapt fertall vil beholde Kildn havn i arealplannen’)	Askoyværingen subscribers-only
21	Online newspaper article	Askoyværingen – S.J Johnstad	11 May 2025	Politicians’ stances before vote on May 15 (‘Usikkert om det er flertall for Kildn - dette sier partiene’)	Askoyværingen subscribers-only
22	Online Powerpoint presentation	Tertnes Holding	N.d.	Kildn – paving the future English version	Private (Available upon request to developers)

23	Report	NRK	6 January 2024	Methodology report of the article 'Norge i rødt, hvitt og grått'	Private (Available upon request to Mads Nyborg Støstad)
24	Eidsvika Venner Logbook	Jan Nordstrøm	N.d.	Logbook of all Eidsvika Venner actions 2020-2025	Private (Provided by Pro-Coast researcher)
25	Online document	Askøy municipality website	10 May 2022	Municipal meeting recap of hearing input assessment	Public
26	Online document	Vestland Fylkeskommune	22 November 2023	Minutes of regional planning discussion on Askøy Municipality	Public (Provided by Pro-Coast researcher)
27	Online folder	Facebook group Eidsvikas Venner	27 May 2024	Brochure of objections Eidsvikas Venner against Kildn	Private Facebook post; publicly shared as hard copy
28	Online brochure	Kildn website by Tertnes Holding	21 November 2024	Presentation of Kildn as central hub in Vestland	Public
29	COWI Kildn report	Kildn website by Tertnes Holding	19 May 2020	Short explanation of Kildn	Public
30	Menon Kildn report	Kildn website by Tertnes Holding	January 2024	Socio-economic benefits of Kildn	Public
31	Online and physical brochure	Kildn website by Tertnes Holding	N.d.	Information on Kildn	Public (Hard copy provided by developers)
32	Online map	Askøy Municipality website	N.d.	Map of area plan Askøy 2012-2023	Public
33	Online document	Askøy Municipality website	13 December 2012	Municipal Area Plan Askøy 2012-2023	Public
34	Online report	Askøy Municipality website	25 February 2021	Askøy Municipal Planning Strategy 2020-2024	Public

4.3.4 Stakeholder mapping

A stakeholder map (see Appendix B) was developed throughout the research to identify the main actors, their roles, general stance and main arguments concerning the Kildn project. This map served as a tool to ensure all relevant actors were addressed in the data gathering.

4.3.5 Direct observations

Direct observations of the actors' behaviour, non-verbal communications, attitudes, and presentation of materials were done during interviews, site visits to Eidsvika and Træssmarka, and during general interactions with locals. These observations allowed insights into the implicit tensions among actors, social dynamics and powers, as well as underlying emotions and motivations driving aims and discourses. Striking direct observations were noted in handwritten notes.

4.4 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is essential to qualitative research to ensure the credibility and reliability of qualitative findings, expressed through elements of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ahmed, 2024). In this study, the credibility of the data was established through triangulation – using different data sources and methods to cross-verify the findings – across interviews, media, and documents. The transferability of the results is offered by providing detailed information on the case context, interviewees, sampling strategies, and methods. Dependability is ensured through an extensive methodological description and the creation of a digital logbook in Google Drive on research decisions, including research steps and changes. Finally, confirmability was pursued by checking assumptions and findings with relevant experts and academic supervisors.

4.5 Information Design

As part of the MADE thesis, it is required to develop a design component addressing the metropolitan challenge at hand. Given the limited timeframe, the design is not as extensive as the research analysis. Design is not only about spatial or technical results, but it is also about shaping how technical and complex information is communicated, understood, and acted upon. This creative process can be classified within *information design*; a field which aims to achieve “clarity of information” through the accurate design, production and distribution of messages, which are properly interpreted and understood by the intended public. Information Design relies on a broad set of principles (define the problem; provide structure; provide clarity; provide simplicity; provide emphasis; provide unity) and corresponding guidelines. For instance, to achieve the principle to “provide emphasis”, a guideline to use distinct contrasts is provided. Despite the broad set of principles, the golden rule for information design is that “it depends” and the principles are not set in stone. Each case requires unique analysis and understanding of the information challenge and the quest for finding design solutions that fit the audience and social context (Pettersson, 2010). I aimed to incorporate the principles of information design into a journalistic article. This specific design was chosen, as it offers the chance to translate the complexity of the case into a format which could speak to a broader audience. This format is especially useful for this case for several reasons. Firstly, abstract themes such as power relations, the subjugation of “sustainability” and “green”, and the materialisation of future imaginaries identified in this analysis, can serve as an example to understand common dynamics in planning conflicts beyond this specific case. By using a journalistic format, these complex dynamics can be translated into accessible narratives, making them tangible and relatable for a broader audience, including policymakers, citizens and other experts. This way, the gap between academic insights and public discourse is bridged. Secondly, as municipalities are Norway’s most important land managers, according to experts, local newspapers hold a particular responsibility to communicate about such planning issues (Interviewee 24; Arnesen, 2024). Thirdly, in the case of Eidsvika, opponents of Kildn have repeatedly attempted to reach regional and national media (Interviewee 1b). For instance, posts in the Eidsvikas Venner Facebook group request whether anyone knows journalists at NRK to contact them about the case and gain national awareness (Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.). This reflects a strong local demand to communicate concerns that may resonate more broadly. Lastly, my case research has shown that journalism plays a central role in shaping discourse, creating spaces and formats for certain actors to share information in public arenas. However, local journalists often

struggle to address sensitive aspects of the case due to local reputational concerns (Interviewee 24). Hence, due to my outsider positionality I could raise critical questions that local journalists may avoid, while my academic research findings could provide an in-depth, grounded and independent perspective that can enrich both local and national debates.

To translate the complexity of my case into a journalistic story that could appeal to a broader audience, I used an explorative and iterative approach rooted in the principles of investigative journalism. First, to get a better understanding of these principles, interviews were conducted with relevant experts, including a discourse and communication analyst, a researcher on investigative journalism, and a local journalist in Askøy (Interviewee 18; Interviewee 21; Interviewee 24). After this, I defined the article's problem and target audience: I wanted to create a narrative that sheds light on Norway's seemingly "green" transition, one that, in practice, often comes at the cost of valuable natural landscapes. The article aims to make the underlying dynamics tangible for a general audience in Norway and other countries which deal with similar ambitions for a green shift, whilst experiencing local challenges with the implementation. As such, I chose to write a piece which resonates with the opponents' discourse, while also translating underlying abstractions, such as power relations and contested meanings, into accessible and empirically grounded narratives. To ensure the story was relevant and accessible to its intended audience, members of Eidsvikas Venner, Pro-Coast researchers and my academic supervisors were consulted. These discussions served as checks for factual accuracy and narrative clarity and resulted in multiple iterations of the text. Additionally, four professional journalists were contacted in informal talks to assess the journalistic structure and appeal. They offered practical advice (e.g. to choose a "relatable object" as a guiding instrument throughout the narrative) and suggested presenting the story for a Norwegian news broadcast or an international platform such as DeSmog (DeSmog, n.d.). DeSmog focuses on stories that include greenwashing, climate hypocrisy, lobbying and policy failures, issues that are present in my case. Drawing inspiration from several DeSmog articles, I analysed how they operationalised the functional information design principles. This informed my own article's structure and tone. To make the story more accessible and visually appealing, images were selected that support important aspects of the narrative, such as the Kildn proposal brochure and the current natural environment of Eidsvika. These images were chosen to create emotional resonance and provide a visual context for the reader. Next to this, a clear font and a simple layout were used based on Gestalt principles, which explain how humans naturally organise visual elements into meaningful patterns (such as proximity and hierarchy) to guide the reader smoothly through the article.

4.6 Use of Artificial Intelligence

To support the academic writing process, ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025) was solely used for language-related tasks, such as rephrasing, improving grammar and sentence structure, generating synonyms and antonyms, and enhancing writing style clarity and coherence. In addition, Elicit (Ought, n.d.) was used as a supplementary tool to assist in identifying relevant academic sources for the literature review. For ethical reasons, no personal, interview, or sensitive data was shared with any AI programs. These AI tools were *not* used to generate ideas, develop arguments, or formulate content. All theoretical insights, methodological choices, and analytical interpretations were developed independently by me. I declare to remain fully accountable for the thesis's content, and I can orally substantiate all choices and findings.

4.7 Study Limitations

This study has some limitations that cannot be resolved but will be shared to ensure transparency of the research process and biased results. Firstly, as this study employs a qualitative approach, there is an inherent limitation of subjectivity to the research design, challenging interpretation and validation (Ahmed, 2024). Identifying certain discourses is an interpretive act which might be biased by my background as a non-Norwegian, pro-environmental, politically left-leaning researcher. My positionality has probably influenced the selection of sources, the selection of interview subjects, the focus of interview questions and the lens through which material was analysed. Secondly, the research project covered a tight period of four months, including eight weeks for data collection and analysis, which narrowed the possibilities for research depth and exploration. Thirdly, this study is focused on a single case, therefore reducing the generalisability of the results. Fourthly, the language barrier caused translations to be needed for Norwegian documents, social media content, and interview transcriptions, which might have hindered the accuracy of findings. Besides this, the fact that most interviews were held in English has limited the depth and nuance of the expressions. Fifthly, the lack of clear documentation on when specific aims, values and meanings were formulated or altered throughout the planning process, created difficulties in studying how discourses evolved over time and were shaped by specific moments in the planning process. This has also limited the ability to extensively observe how discourse perspectives were created or transformed in interactions, and it has limited observing the impact on political decisions. Sixthly, as the final decision over the project was not yet defined while writing the study, the causal impact of the discourses on planning outcomes has not been studied. Seventhly, access to all relevant actors was limited. While I conducted interviews with key stakeholders, several voices were missing, including those of local fishers, climbers, priests, politicians of several political parties, and many companies and people in favour of the project. Finally, informal relationships and personal incentives, which play a major role in small communities and discourse formations, were difficult to identify. These hidden positionalities have most likely shaped the narrative presented in the study.

All in all, following a constructivist perspective, this study applied a triangulation of qualitative research methods to develop a nuanced understanding of the case on Askøy. To communicate the findings, information design techniques were used.

Chapter 5: Results and Analysis

In the next paragraphs, results and thematic analyses of the collected data will be given. Starting with a description of the land-use planning process in Askøy, the chapter will continue with a presentation of other political, economic, social, cultural and geographic contextual factors in which the process is embedded. After this, the shared and conflicting discourses of the key actors will be analysed by identifying their aims, relation to the Kildn project, discursive strategies in various arenas, and linkages to broader social practices. Lastly, the chapter will provide an analysis of the observed interplay between context, power and knowledge that shapes the land-use planning process over Kildn.

5.1 The Land-Use Planning Process

The rumours around Kildn did not start at an arbitrary moment in time, as the municipal plans of Askøy have been under development over the past years, opening space for adjusting previous land uses to stage new urban developments. The municipal plan is Askøy's most important governance document and consists of two parts: the community plan and the area plan (*KPA*). The latter determines how land in the municipality will be used, managed, and developed for the next term (Askøy Kommune, 2025d). Every 12 years, the municipalities in the province of Vestland need to agree on a land-use plan for the next term. Askøy municipality is currently developing a new KPA for 2024-2036. In 2016, the planning for the 2024-2026 period started, with the ambition to tackle the main challenge of the growing pressure of population growth by coordinating housing, business and infrastructure development (Askøy Kommune, 2017). Next to this, Askøy's municipal plans are guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and take public health as a cross-cutting concern (Askøy Kommune, n.d.-b). Given Askøy's island geography and extensive coastline, coastal planning is another key consideration. Norwegian law already imposes strict building regulations along the shore, and the municipal plan explicitly emphasises protecting nature, landscape, and public access to the sea, highlighting the need to avoid unnecessary construction in these zones (Document 34, 2021; Interviewee 6a, 2025). Public participation has played a central role throughout the planning process for the next municipal area plan so far. During the initial phase in 2016, the municipality received 380 public comments on their first proposals. Another round of input was collected in 2020, with 150 additional contributions. All input was assessed by the municipal director and presented for political review. During the planning process, there are moments when feedback is invited, typically when a draft is up for consultation (Askøy Kommune, 2025c). A crucial moment came in fall 2024 when the draft plan for the next municipal KPA was released for public consultation and inspection. This plan included the first proposal of Kildn. The draft plan triggered a strong public response: over 500 comments were submitted, alongside formal objections from multiple actors, including regional and national authorities. All feedback has been under review. Objections must be resolved before the plan can proceed, and if the plan is significantly altered as a result, it will be republished for another round of consultation. Once finalised, the plan goes through political consideration, first by the Committee for Technology and the Environment, and finally by the municipal council (Askøy Kommune, 2025c).

5.1.1 Planning Authorities

Municipalities in Norway enjoy a high level of responsibility and decision-making power concerning land-use planning, as they are responsible for managing around 83% of the national territory under the Planning and Building Act (Landbruksdiktoret, 2025). However, land-use

plans are continuously evaluated by regional and national bodies. The Fylkeskommune (regional government) of Vestland, as a planning authority, ensures local plans align with regional goals, while the Statsforvalteren (national government representatives), though not a planning authority, functions as a control and helping authority, monitoring legal consistency and guidelines, whilst ensuring links and mediation between municipalities and the state government. Next to this, separate government departments and authorities such as the Kystverket (Norwegian Coastal Authority) and Statens Vegvesen (Norwegian Public Roads Administration) can provide assessments and inputs to the plans. If cases cannot get resolved between the three main layers of oversight, the plans can be forwarded to the national Ministry of Local and District Affairs, however, this happens rarely (Interviewee 6b, 2025; Interviewee 19, 2025).

5.1.1 Planning Kildn: Then and Now

A central point of tension within the municipal area plans is the proposal to rezone the Træssmarka and Eidsvika areas, which are determined as LNF (Land-use for agriculture, nature and outdoor recreation) according to the 2012-2023 KPA, allowing only limited building and activities related to these purposes (Askøy Kommune, 2016). The Træssmarka/Eidsvika land is owned by the landowner group Follese Felleskap. It is not the first rezone request for this area, as in the past, Follese Felleskap has advocated for rezoning the area for residential or commercial development (Nordstrøm, 2024). The latest rezoning request came from the developers of Tertnes Holding, who wish to rezone the area for harbour development, as this would open the door for building infrastructure for their Kildn project. The first proposal for Kildn was presented in 2021 to Askøy municipality and higher authorities, a few years into the KPA planning (Interviewee 5a, 2025; Interviewee 19, 2025). However, such a shift requires a long and thorough planning process (Askøy Kommune, 2025c). After the first proposal of Kildn in 2021, a special assessment of the case started and input on the harbour goals in the Træssmarka/Eidsvika area was presented by the municipal chairmanship as a separate matter for political consideration. Since then, this version of the plans has been considered by several authorities for feedback, and hearings were held for input (Askøy Kommune, 2025c). Concerning this input, several negative and positive comments have been presented by various actors over the past years. Striking in these input documents is the number of negative comments, assessments and pieces of advice, advocating for an adjustment of the plans or a full removal from the proposal. Next to objections from residents (Document 2, 2024), official bodies such as the Kystverket, Statens Vegvesen, Norges Vassdragsog Energidirektorat (Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate) and Forsvarsbygg (Norwegian Defence Estates Agency) send in critical objections on infrastructure, environmental concerns, land use planning and climate adaptation (Document 7, 2024). For instance, Statens Vegvesen emphasised the concerns about road capacity and traffic safety (Document 1, 2024). Building upon this advice, the Statsforvalteren highlighted that Kildn might pose negative consequences for biodiversity, coastal protection and friluftsliv. However, they stressed that the case has not been assessed comprehensively enough (Document 7, 2024). Another official objection from the Askøy Nature Conservation Association pointed out the area's uniqueness as one of the last untouched coastal regions on Askøy and the negative effects of developments on wildlife and nature (Document 3, n.d.). Although not officially submitted, strong objections from the Port of Bergen were also mentioned in interviews. According to their knowledge and experience, Kildn can only happen in cooperation with them, however, the development plans

have practical implications that are currently not addressed. For instance, Kildn relies on the Port of Bergen to displace their cruises to the Kildn hub, but as the Port of Bergen has invested heavily over the years to become an emission-free harbour and implemented strict regulations for incoming cruises, they are unwilling to move their ships just across the fjord. Next to this, Bergen municipality has strict regulations on the number of incoming ships and passengers, and Kildn would threaten this (Interviewee 16, 2025). This is underlined by an objection of the Marikoven Industrinabolag (local industry organisation), which mentions the current lack of infrastructure on Askøy concerning docks, charging stations, roads, parking and public transport, whereas there is already sufficient cruise infrastructure present in neighbouring Bergen. Furthermore, their objection refers to previous geological studies that have found the mountain rock to be unsuitable for building supporting infrastructure for Kildn. Also, they refer to consultancy reports that mention the impacts on biodiversity, visual scenery, unique species and the limitation of recreational areas (Document 9, 2024). To process the critical comments, Tertnes Holding scaled down their plans for Kildn, moving the harbour offshore, and minimising the size of construction (Interviewee 5a, 2025). The new plan was proposed in the spring of 2023 but had not been considered for official consideration by government bodies until spring 2025, therefore all previous objections refer to the first proposal (Document 15, 2025).

On the other hand, private companies and business organisations have sent in positive inputs to the municipality. For instance, together Fjord1 (Norwegian ferry company), Fjord Tours AS (travel company offering fjord tours) and European Cruise Service state that the project will benefit the expected increase in tourism in the area and can consequently create more opportunities for transport, hotels and jobs (Document 10, 2024; Document 11, n.d.; Document 12, n.d.). In the input from neighbouring municipality Øygarden, possibilities for industrial collaboration and a green transition are foreseen, complementing Bergen's port activities in Øygarden (Document 6, 2024). Business organisation Næringsalliansen Vestland claims to be positive about the fjord metro idea, as it would increase the mobility in the region and lead to an increased number of annual tourists, which could also be more easily spread throughout the region (Document 13, n.d.).

Recent input from the Municipal Director on the 7th of May 2025 has sparked the latest debates. The Municipal Director is the leader of the Executive Body of the municipality, ensuring the execution of political legislation. He stated that experts of the Engineering and Environment Department of his Executive Body concluded again a negative recommendation to the municipal coalition for maintaining Kildn in the KPA (Document 18, 2025; Document 19, 2025; Interviewee 19, 2025). This conclusion was based upon negative advice from the Statens Vegvesen, Kysteverket, Vestland Fylkeskommune and Statsforvalteren, repeating the chance of negative consequences for transport, mobility, the existing road network, biodiversity, friluftsliv, coastal ecosystem, but also for the health of children and youngsters, and the plans would cause increased emissions (Document 18, 2025). However, a few days later on the 15th of May, politicians in the committee for technical affairs and environment decided to keep the down-scaled version of the Kildn proposal in the KPA, hence receiving another hearing. This was decided after an information meeting of this committee and the Tertnes developers, where they presented their second proposal. A representative from Naturvernforbundet (Norwegian Nature Conservation organisation) Askøy was also present at this meeting to present their standpoint. The majority was secured by a single vote – casted by an independent politician who had previously not taken sides regarding Kildn but has recently changed position and now supports it (Document 20, 2025;

Document 21, 2025). Despite the considerable number of input and information which has been provided over the past years, no final decision over Kildn has yet been made by the municipality of Askøy. According to the mayor, all parties should be given an equal chance to present their ideas and information, and therefore also the new version of the Kildn proposal should first be officially included in the KPA and presented during the second hearing. Furthermore, he underlined that there is still information missing on the mobility and transport impacts (Interviewee 8, 2025). Therefore, the matter will be decided upon in the future in the next round of hearings and political voting regarding the KPA, which will include the down-scaled version of Kildn (Document 19, 2025). No dates have been published yet on the next hearing (Askøy Kommune, 2025c). Nevertheless, some interviewees mentioned that the following hearing is expected to happen at the end of this year (Interviewee 9, 2025; Interviewee 18, 2025). In general, all inputs are available upon request, and the latest status of the municipal planning process is visible on the municipality's website (Askøy Kommune, 2025c). To offer a visual summary of the main developments in the KPA planning process, Appendix C presents a timeline of key activities.

5.2 Contextual Dynamics

As a non-Norwegian, I was frequently confronted – and at times confused – by the complexity of political, economic, social, cultural and geographic factors shaping my understanding of the planning process and related debates. To provide an overview of this complexity, a brief analysis on the main contextual dimensions operating on macro-, meso- and micro-levels, which frequently emerged in interviews and documents will be provided. It is important to note that these contextual factors do not exist in isolation but are deeply interconnected, continuously shaping and reshaping one another in a specific geographic context.

Politically, Askøy' municipality functions within Norway's democratic system, where 35 elected representatives govern through a municipal board. Elections take place every four years, and the municipal government holds decision-making power on local matters like budgets and long-term development plans (Askøy Kommune, 2025b). Since the last elections in 2023, the coalition in power (the '*Kommunestyret*') consists of 20 representatives, primarily from the parties Høyre (centre-right, liberal-conservatives) and FrP (right-wing, progress party), while the opposition, led by the Arbeiderparti (centre-left, labour party), holds 15 seats (Askøy Kommune, 2025a). Although the coalition holds the majority, the local decision-making is driven by consensus-seeking traditions which are typical of Norwegian municipal politics (Goldsmith and Larsen, 2004). The municipality of Askøy states on their website that the municipality encourages citizens to get involved and participate in local affairs. For instance, affected people can send in written statements that could be included in decision-making (Askøy Kommune, n.d.-a). Local politicians do their job voluntarily, and only the mayor gets paid full-time (Interviewee 8, 2025). As explained before, authorities such as the Fylkeskommune and Statsforvalteren ensure that municipal plans align with overarching political objectives, and both institutions have the authority to intervene when the plans conflict with higher goals (Interviewee 6b, 2025; Interviewee 7, 2025).

An important economic factor to mention is that Askøy municipality is currently threatened with bankruptcy due to a combination of circumstances, including increased energy prices, an ageing population, low tax revenues and no income from natural resources or property taxes. In general, Askøy municipality is one of the poorest municipalities in Norway considering expenditure needs (Askøy Kommune, 2022). The high municipal debts put pressure on the

municipality to support developments for economic recovery. However, this economic development ambition clashes with socio-political realities. While many citizens express support for growth, Askøy has a tradition of resisting innovative projects. This paradox - aspiring progress while resisting changing initiatives - creates a recurring governance dilemma on the island (Interviewee 18, 2025).

The social fabric of Askøy, characterised by its small-island intimacy, strongly influences local dynamics. Despite Askøy having experienced serious population growth over the past years, it is still perceived as a close-knit community where “everyone knows everyone” and where political actions and opinions rapidly circulate. One interviewee captured this sentiment well, saying; “It is quite small here, so if you use any quotes, please give me a heads up” (Interviewee 11, 2025). This is typical for Norwegian municipalities, as 51% of the nation’s municipalities have less than 5000 inhabitants (Torjesen et al., 2024).

To better understand cultural practices that shape socio-politics on Askøy, it is important to consider the broader societal model they stem from. Norway is part of the “Nordic model”, shared with other Scandinavian countries. This model is characterised by a large public sector, a high level of taxes, and broad, universal welfare services. It also includes a flexible economy, strong collaboration between government, unions, and industry, and a high degree of wage equality. Corruption is rare, and public institutions are known for their transparency and accountability (Johnsen, 2008). While being aware of my outsider’s perspective, I would like to highlight three cultural values that stood out during my fieldwork and daily life in Bergen: trust, and the related values of transparency and humbleness, which help foster and sustain it. These values seem deeply embedded in Norwegian culture and consistently shape both interactions and organisational structures. Firstly, trust can be defined as a “psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations or behaviour of another, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p.395). According to Our World in Data (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2024), Norway is ranked world-leading when it comes to levels of interpersonal and institutional trust. More than 70% of Norwegians answered the question of the World Values Survey “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” – that “Most people can be trusted”. Also, trust in governmental institutions and authorities is reported by 48% of Norwegians as high or moderately high in 2024, exceeding the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 39%. Studies highlight that the most important factor for this high level of political and public trust is Norway’s strong democratic tradition, of which there is general satisfaction. Next to this, the strong collectivistic and egalitarian values, the widespread focus on consensus, and the low levels of internal conflict result in higher levels of trust that shape the socio-political context (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2014). Next to this, the concept of “transparency” is often coined as a key antecedent value for generating trustworthy governments. Transparency refers to “the deliberative attempt to make available all legally releasable information – whether positive or negative – in a manner that is accurate, timely, balanced and unequivocal” (Rawlins, 2008, p.75). Research indicates that increased transparency often leads to enhanced trust. When individuals or organisations openly share information, trustworthiness is signalled (Schnackenberg, 2014). On the other hand, a baseline level of trust is needed to let transparent information become effective (O’Neill, 2002). In Askøy municipality, transparency is not only valued but also strongly institutionalised. It is described as one of the most important democratic tools on the municipality’s website, legally protected by the Public Information Act and the

Constitution (§100). A dedicated webpage provides open access to documents, announcements, policies, and plans, making governance more visible and reinforcing the trust it aims to uphold (Askøy Kommune, 2019). Besides this, according to the mayor of Askøy, it is his duty to communicate all actions openly, and politicians with personal interests in specific decisions are not allowed to vote on those matters (Interviewee 8, 2025). In governance contexts, Grimmelikhuijsen et al. (2013) found that the effect of transparency on trust varies significantly across cultural contexts. Their cross-national experimental research demonstrates that transparency's impact depends on pre-existing trust levels and specific cultural expectations regarding governance factors, particularly relevant in the high-trust Norwegian context. Another cultural value closely related to trust is “humbleness” – expressed in collectivistic and egalitarian practices, where modesty and sameness are emphasised. In Norway, this value is strongly reflected in the *Janteloven* (Law of Jante), a set of ten social rules formulated by Alex Sandemose in 1938. These rules promote the idea that no one should think that they are better or more important than others and are taught to people at school from childhood. The “Jante Mentality” is therefore a cultural phenomenon and individual trait that discourages self-promotion and fosters social equality. Research has shown that it is a strong predictor of generalised trust (Cappelen and Dahlberg, 2017).

Geographically speaking, the planning debate on Askøy cannot be understood in isolation from its spatial and economic proximity to Bergen. Since 1992, Askøy has been connected to Bergen by roads through a bridge, allowing for an easier commute to the urban centre (Bill's Brown Bridges, 2022). As the dominant urban centre in Western Norway, Bergen attracts most regional tourism, with millions of visitors each year (Visit Nordic, n.d.). Cruise tourism is central to Bergen's economy as the city welcomed 337 cruises in 2024, accounting for 630,000 passengers (Bergen Havn, 2024). So far, there are minimal tourist visits to Askøy, and this imbalance forces Askøy into a reactive position where its land-use planning must respond and relate to Bergen's policies rather than developing independently (Interviewee 16, 2025). In this reactive tension and competition with other surrounding municipalities, Askøy aspires to become a “*Ja-Kommune*” (Yes-Municipality), which welcomes growth and investments with the purpose of bringing more tax income, innovations and jobs (Interviewee 19, 2025; Interview 23, 2025). They wish to attain this profile in contrast to the perceived conservative practices and strict regulations of Bergen (Interviewee 23, 2025). To illustrate this: Bergen has strict sustainability goals and emissions regulations for cruise tourism. In 2026, the Port of Bergen will become emission-free due to large investments in onshore power, a quota on incoming cruises, and strict evaluations. Besides this, the government has regulations to reduce the number of daily cruise tourists, creating potential opportunities for neighbouring municipalities like Askøy to step into the tourism sector and position themselves as new economic centres (Bergen Havn, 2024; Interviewee 16, 2025). However, these opportunities are entangled within a broader national spatial debate concerning centralisation versus decentralisation. Norway has a long tradition of investing in spatial infrastructures to maintain communities outside urban areas. Therefore, there are also strong voices against creating a socio-economic connection between Askøy and Bergen, as many wish to preserve the local identity of Askøy (Interviewee 23, 2025). Hence, Askøy's spatial identity is influenced by geographic, economic, political and emotional dimensions.

5.3 Discourse Analysis

Several discourses are constructed surrounding the Kildn project within the contextual planning process. In the following paragraphs, I will identify and analyse the main discourses present in the debate, using Fairclough's framework (1992) of text, discursive strategies, and social practices, alongside the 3A³-framework (2023) of actors, arenas, aims to understand how these discourses are produced, by whom, and with what purpose. While I analytically distinguish between actors' aims and their used text, discursive strategies and relation to broader social practices within various arenas, it should be acknowledged that these dimensions are highly interwoven: the aims of actors are not just stated, but gain meaning through the specific discursive texts, strategies and social practices. Consequently, analysing each element in isolation would not serve the complexity of the case; thus, the analytical concepts are applied in an integrated manner to the empirical findings.

Before diving into the main conflicting discourses, it is interesting to briefly acknowledge a shared aim between the opposing parties, as a later exploration will reveal that this shared value becomes a site for a discursive struggle in which conflicting meanings are constructed, shaping the debates and outcomes. When asking the two main opposing stakeholders independently about their motivations for persisting in the mobilisation and realisation of their ideals, both answered along similar lines: they wished for a better, sustainable future for their next generation and their family. They want Askøy to become a good, green place to live (Interviewee 1b, 2025; Interviewee 5a, 2025). At first glance, both actors thus emphasise a shared aim of realising a sustainable, green future. However, as the following analysis reveals, their interpretation of sustainability is shaped by fundamentally different visions of progress, development, and nature. The way they mobilise these ideals in discourse reflects deeper political and power struggles over the future of Askøy.

5.3.1 The Developers' Discourse: Positive Progress Promises

One of the dominant discourses clearly emerging from the developers of Kildn and progressive, liberal politicians is a discourse I identify as "positive progress promises". This discourse constructs Kildn as a site of futuristic innovation and sustainable development, tightly linking economic growth to environmental responsibility. The following screenshots (see Figure 9), taken from a fictional promotional video on the Kildn project's website homepage, visualise how the developers construct their futuristic ideal hub, which includes space for cruises, ferries, dockside recreation, workplaces, hotels and restaurants. The banner "Kildn til fremtiden, ta fjorden I bruk" is translated as: "Kildn for the future, make use of the fjord".



Figure 9

Visualisations of the Kildn project

Note. Screenshots from a fictional video on the Kildn website depict the developers' vision of a futuristic hub with cruises, ferries, recreation, workplaces, hotels, and restaurants. From the website of Tertnes Holding (2025b).

The following slogan is also found on the Kildn website's homepage, clearly stating the promised vision of the developers as Kildn being a pioneering sustainable transport project and central hub for transport in Vestland:

“Kildn will become the world's first truly zero-emission port and a hub and home port for the regional fjord metro and fjord tourism in Vestland, and a preferred port for national and international passenger ships visiting the region” (Tertnes Holding, 2025b).

5.3.1.1 Developers' Stated Aims

The developers frame Kildn in interviews not simply as a technical project, but as a forerunner of a “new way of thinking” - a transformative shift to a sustainable transport system (Interviewee 5a, 2025; Interviewee 5b, 2025). In presentations and flyers of Tertnes Holding (2025a), Kildn is presented as an answer to contemporary challenges: it promises a solution for large-scale sustainable tourism and prepares the tourism transport sector for an anticipated increase in visitor numbers in Vestland. Next to this, Kildn aims to improve the current regional public transport standards with more mobility connections, it will lower travel times and distances, reduce traffic congestion and noise and will offer a sustainable alternative to road transport. Furthermore, the project is expected to create new permanent jobs for Askøy's residents and engage local businesses during construction. This vision constantly emphasises win-win outcomes, presenting sustainability and economic growth as mutually reinforcing goals, which will benefit the local population and society at large.

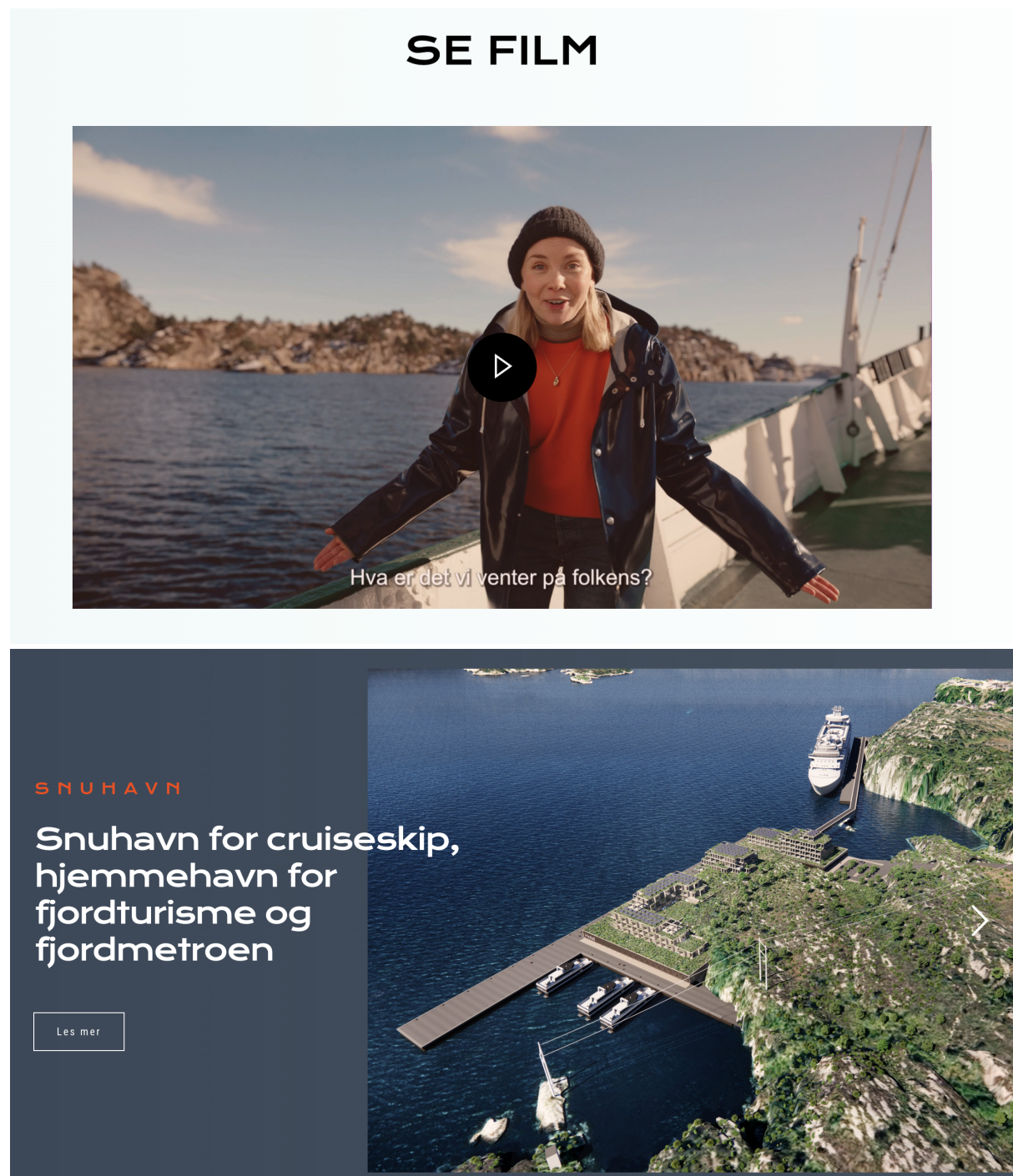
5.3.1.2 Progressive Politicians' Stated Aims

Additionally, some politicians have expressed interest in the development plans for Kildn and resonate with the developers' discourse. Although no politician has directly claimed support for the current plans, some refrain from opposing them. In several interviews, insufficient information is mentioned as a reason for preventing progressive political parties from taking a stance (Interviewee 8, 2025; Interviewee 9, 2025; Interviewee 10, 2025). Nevertheless, interested politicians express that the project is appealing because it could strengthen Askøy's connection to Bergen. One stated that there are high development needs on Askøy as now people must travel to Bergen for the urban life (Interviewee 9, 2025), while another noted that the island “needs to be open for Bergen” due to its proximity to the city (Interviewee 10, 2025). The idea that the project “could place Askøy on the map” (Interviewee 10, 2025) further illustrates the underlying drive for competitive economic growth and regional visibility. These remarks reveal how the developers' discourse aligns with some parties' broader Ja-Kommune desires for regional growth and urban integration. The mayor of Askøy similarly acknowledged the high growth ambitions, noting that the municipality actively aims to expand business opportunities and create more jobs (Interviewee 8, 2025). This progressive wish for growth is also recognised and critiqued by opposition parties,

as another politician defined it: “Some right-wing parties only want growth, growth, growth” (Interviewee 12, 2025).

5.3.1.3 Textual and Discursive Strategies across Various Arenas

The developers’ strategic use of various discursive means has further strengthened their discourse. Several million Kroner have been invested in communicating the project through a variety of formats, including videos, brochures, online flipbooks, social media clips, and a visually appealing website (Interviewee 18, 2025). To provide an idea of the look of their marketing materials, the following visuals are presented in Figure 10: a promotional video about Kildn, a slide from a PowerPoint presentation, an image from the website and a page from the online brochure.



KILDN

paving the future

Use the fjord!

INGEN KONKURRENT TIL BERGEN HAVN

Reiselivsnæringen i Vestland vil vokse med 34% innen 2030. Kildn kan årlig få 500 000 av disse turistene uten å ta passasjerer fra Bergen indre havn.

HVA ER ASKØY OPPTATT AV?

Her følger noen av de mest vanlige spørsmålene som Kildn har mottatt fra beboere på Askøy.

HVOR MYE AREAL TRENGER KILDN

Bygningene på land i Kildn vil bruke ca 14,5 daa av et landareal i området på 430 daa (3,5%). Ubenyttet areal skal beholdes som fremtidig ULN-område. Det skal ikke bygges boliger i Tressmarka.

Kaien legger ikke beslag på landareal. De skal bygges langs fjellside på opp mot 70 m. Det skal ikke bygges inne i Eidsvika.

HVORFOR BYGGE KILDN?

Norge og verden ønsker mer bærekraftig transport. Og det er et uttrykt mål fra norske myndigheter at større del av trafikken skal flyttes fra land til sjø.

I dag foregår 1,9 % av all kollektivtrafikk i Vestlandet med båt. Det mener vi er alt for lite, og Kildn vil være en viktig bidragsyter for å ta sjøen i bruk på ny.

Samtidig skaper Kildn nye reisetempler langs fjordene våre. Vi tar i bruk gamle kaier og gjenstaper nye og større bo- og arbeidsmarkeder rundt Bergen og rundt knutepunktene i omegnskommunene til byen.

ER DET BEHOV FOR KILDN?

Turisme er valgt som Norges nye, store eksportnæring og forventer å vokse fremover. Askøy har i dag svært få turister og potensialet på Askøy er derfor stort.

En ny rapport fra Menon Economics viser at Bergen-regionen gjennom Kildn kan få 500 000 ekstra turister i 2030 når Kildn er etablert og kombinerer kollektivtrafikk og turisme. Det vil gi økt verdiskaping. Bergen-regionen på 445 millioner kroner, og Askøy kan bli knutepunktet i denne satsingen.

Derfor er det behov for Kildn, for uten Kildn vil veksten skje i andre deler av Norge og ellers i Europa.

HVA BETYR KILDN-UTBYGGINGEN FOR ASKØY?

- Askøy vil bli et knutepunkt for kollektivtrafikk i Bergen-regionen.
- Askøy vil få en stor økning i turisme om Askøy tilrettelegger for det og utvikler gode reiselivsprodukter fordelt over flere steder på Askøy.
- En utbygging vil gi arbeid til lokale bedrifter i anlegg og utbyggingfasen.
- Kildn har potensiale for å skape over 500 arbeidsplasser.
- Kildn vil gi økte skatteinntekter til Askøy kommune.
- Kildn vil gi et betydelig økt rutetilbud til og fra Askøy.

BEDRE TILGJENGELIG NATUROMRÅDE

Med utbyggingen av Kildn vil det også bygges en veitunnel ut til området. Det medfører at Askøy vil få et langt mer tilgjengelig naturområde for friluftskativiteter for folk flest med utstakspunkt, turstier, klatrevegg og andre naturopplevelser.

HVORDAN SKAL KILDN FINANSIERES?

Kildn skal finansieres og bygges med privat kapital, og med Tertnes Holding som en hovedaktør. Driften av havneterminal og øvrige næringsbygg vil skje av andre aktører gjennom ordinære leiesavtaler. Det jobbes tett med ulike aktører for havnedrift og med kollektivtransport som skal ivareta disse tjenestene når Kildn er ferdig bygget.

HVOR MANGE BOLIGER SKAL BYGGES I OMRÅDET?

Tressmarka skal beholdes som fremtidig ULN-område (Kommunens arealplan) bekrefter vi dette.

ER DET NOK KRAFT TIL Å DRIFTE KAJOMRÅDET?

Allerede i 2020 registrerte Kildn sitt behov for kraft hos BKK med 50 Megawatt. Det er tilstrekkelig kraftmengde for å dekke behovet til anlegget. Det går allerede en høyspenningsoverledning gjennom området, og det skal etableres nytt ikke medfører nye utbygginger.

HVOR SKAL PRIVATE PARKERE?

Kildn er utgangspunktet i passasjerhavn som beroliser fra sjøen og der de fleste passasjerene vil komme sjøveien. Det etableres en veitunnel ut til Kildn for varetransport og for berolende til området. Det skal tilrettelegges for et begrenset antall parkeringsplasser. I tillegg planlegges tilbringertjeneste inn til anlegget med elektriske minibusser.

HVORDAN SAMKJØRE KILDN OG KLEPPSTØ?

Kleppstø er allerede en etablert havn for passasjertransport til og fra Bergen. Båtene fra Kildn legger opp til samkjøring og koordinering slik at enkelte av båtene mellom Kildn og Bergen også anløper Kleppstø, og kan gi flere daglige avganger også fra Kleppstø.

HVOR LANG TID VIL DET TA Å FÅ PÅ PLESS KILDN?

I kommunedelplanen som nå er på høring i Askøy er Kildn foreslått som havneformål. Etter høringen skal det lages et beslutningsgrunnlag for kommunestyret. Der formål blir endelig avgjort. I etterkant skal det utformes en detaljert reguleringsplan for området.

Anlegget er forventet å ha en byggetid på ca 3 år fra det foreligger en godkjent plan fra Askøy kommune.

INGEN KONKURRENT TIL BERGEN HAVN

Reiselivsnæringen i Vestland vil vokse med 34% innen 2030. Kildn kan årlig få 500 000 av disse turistene uten å ta passasjerer fra Bergen indre havn.

Dette viser en rapport som Menon Economics utarbeidet våren 2024 på oppdrag fra Kildn og Visit Bergen. Målet var å kartlegge næringens vekstpotensial de kommende årene.

Passasjerhavnen Kildn på sørpissen av Askøy skal fungere som et tillegg til indre havn i Bergen og dermed øke kapasiteten for passasjertransport til og omkring i regionen. Kildn skal utføre passasjertransport med utslippsfrie hurtigbåter til og fra Bergen og til omliggende kommuner, både av kollektivreise og turister.

OMSETNING PÅ 40 MILLIARD KRONER

Menon rapporten viser at reiselivsnæringen i Bergen og Vestland kan vokse med 34 % fram mot 2030. Dette gir nesten 30 % økte gjestedøgn og en samlet omsetning i 2030 på nærmere 40 MRD kroner.

Rapporten viser også at antall cruisepassasjerer kan øke med 62 % fram mot 2030. Antall cruisepassasjerer til Norge har også de siste årene økt mer enn forventet, men Bergen ikke har vært en del av veksten som følge av selv pålagte passasjerbegrensninger.

500 000 TURISTER

Basen Kildn kan ta ut veksten i bransjen, vil Kildn kunne få et årlig passasjergrunnlag på 500 000 cruisegjester, som gjør Kildn til Norges 4. største cruisehavn. Samlet vil Bergen indre havn og Kildn da bli Norges største cruisedestinasjon, slik Bergen var før Ålesund overtok i 2023.

500 + 500

Menon rapport viser også at Kildn vil kunne gi en verdiskaping i Bergen og Vestland på nærmere 500 mill kr og en sysselsettelseffekt på ca 500 årsverk, som kommer i tillegg til arbeidsplassene direkte på Kildn.

Rapporten viser til at overturisme er et økende problem i europeiske byer. Dette er ikke et problem for Bergen kommune totalt sett, men oppleves iboende utfordrende for Bergenhus bydel, som viser turisttiltettstendenser på linje med Venezia og Amsterdam.

BÅDE CRUISETURISTER OG ANDRE TURISTER VIL HA NYTTE AV FJORD-RETROEN

Rapporten viser at en ny passasjerhavn i tillegg til Bergen indre havn kan bidra til å løse passasjerutfordringene ved at turistene fordeles mot Bergen og omliggende regioner med passasjerfart. Da kan man lettere begrense overturisme med tidsstyring og geografisk fordeling.

Rapporten viser også til at med en tilgjengelig fjordmetro vil turister som kommer til Bergen med tog, fly eller egen bil vil i større grad bruke fjorden når de skal oppleve vestlandsnaturen.

Figur 1: Prosjekterte passasjerer i Bergenregionen (inkludert Kildn) fra 2018 til 2030. Kilde: Menon Economics.

Reiselivet i vest forventes å være på 40 mrd kroner i 2030.

KILDN

Figure 10
Marketing materials of Kildn

Note. Screenshots of Kildn’s marketing visuals, including a video, presentation slide, website image, and brochure page (Tertnes Holding, 2025a, 2025b, 2024b; Document 28, 2024).

Interviewees described the aesthetics of these materials as “glossy”, “glamorous”, “fancy” and “professional”, underlining a trendy and modern style (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Interviewee 11, 2025; Interviewee 14, 2025; Interviewee 15, 2025). Through high-quality and visual storytelling, the developers not only present their information in static statements, but construct a desirable imaginary future, making Kildn appear both exciting and inevitable. The language used by the developers in their marketing is strikingly optimistic and future oriented. Recurring slogans from their English presentation include: “benefits”, “first”, “make it easy”, “strengthen”, “paving the future”, “better utilisation”, “more affordable” (Tertnes Holding, 2025a). Such language choices frame the project as beneficial and desirable, seeking to mobilise public support. The developers have also spread their message through other textual, physical and social spaces. For instance, they have shared their message in public brochures, inputs to hearings, open-source PowerPoint presentations and in local newspapers (Interviewee 5a, 2025; Interviewee 18, 2025). They have also strongly mobilised the discourse interpersonally, by engaging in direct talks with local and regional politicians, attending library debates, conferences, organising local job markets and events during One Ocean Week in Bergen (Interviewee 5a, 2025; Interviewee 8, 2025; Interviewee 16, 2025; Askøy folkebibliotek, 2025; Tertnes Holding, 2023a; Tertnes Holding, 2025b). These relational actions suggest a deliberate strategy of shaping perceptions and building alliances, positioning their project as in line with local engagements. Another discursive strategy that stood out to me is the constant discrediting of official and unofficial objections by mentioning them as misinformed or outdated (Interviewee 5a, 2025). The latest example of this was presented in a newspaper article, where a developer claimed that the latest negative advice from the municipal director concerned “a plan that is no longer relevant” and against the negative concerns of Statens Vegvesen over the traffic impact. He also said that there are analyses available that reveal that the current Askøy infrastructure is well-equipped; however, the road authority has not asked for them (Document 19, 2025). These responses hint at a discursive strategy aimed at maintaining the authority of the developers’ narrative by discrediting objections.



Figure 11
Entrance of Tertnes Holding's office in Bergen, Norway.
Note. Photo taken by me in April 2025.

I must admit that after leaving the office of the developers, I was impressed by their visionary ideals, clear storyline and strong marketing actions. Consequently, I started reflecting upon my own biases and doubted if I had not been too narrow-sighted and sceptical before my conversation with them. Had I not been regarding the Kildn project too critically due to my background in sustainability science and my love for Norwegian nature? Was I not influenced too much by prior conversations with other dubious voices? During my master's program, I discovered that many innovative, sustainable solutions receive a lot of resistance in the beginning. Maybe this was such a solution, and maybe I was missing out on a true solution for a sustainable transport and tourism sector...?

5.3.1.4 Embedding Kildn Ideals in Broader Discourses and Social Practices

What I have found to be most interesting is how the discourse of the developers, filled with positive wording and progressive promises, actively draws legitimacy from broader national and local discourses and socio-cultural practices, reinforcing its strength. I will briefly argue five ways in which this is manifested. First, the project is explicitly linked to Norway's national ambition for a green shift. The "green shift" is a term coined earlier in this text and is worth mentioning again as it is central to Norway's climate narratives. The term is deeply embedded in the country's climate ambitions and perceptions of creating a "green economy" which refers in the Norwegian context to restructuring and diversifying the economy to reduce emissions while maintaining

economic growth and securing social welfare (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 2019; Government of Norway, 2016; Government of Norway, 2019). In Norway, the terms “green shift”, “green economy”, and “green transformation” are used interchangeably (Svarstad, 2019). By branding Kildn as the “world’s first truly zero-emission port”, “an arena for research and green port development”, and as a “hub for green adventure cruises in the fjords” (Tertnes Holding, 2025b), the developers frame themselves as key actors in fulfilling the national climate agenda. Tertnes Holding (2023b) also explicitly states: “We want to be a driving force in the green shift”. Next to this, they constantly highlight the economic growth opportunities which are linked to their green investments, as the project is expected to engage local business opportunities and to offer a sustainable solution to the predicted growing tourist demands in the Vestland region (Tertnes Holding, 2025a). Second, the project can be argued to solve the discursive dissonance between Askøy’s ambition to become a Ja-Kommune and its reputation for opposing developments. Several businesspeople and locals mention criticism that Askøy is often seen as “saying no to everything” (Interviewee 9, 2025; Interviewee 18, 2025). In this context, Kildn is framed as a project that can shift the municipality’s reputation towards more openness to developments (Interviewee 9, 2025). Third, the promising discourse of Kildn responds to deeply felt local concerns which are communicated in newspapers, documents, and through word-of-mouth (Tertnes Holding, 2024a). Askøy faces significant issues in public transport and road safety, with limited accessibility and heavy car dependence (Interviewee 6a, 2025; Interviewee 13b, 2025). The brochure of Tertnes Holding (2024b) assures that Kildn will improve public transport for Askøy and create better mobility connections to the rest of the county. Besides this, they promise that Kildn will bring a significant increase in tourism to Askøy, along with the development of quality tourist products. Additionally, it is expected to increase municipal tax incomes and create over 500 jobs, as well as offer opportunities for local companies during the building and construction phase (Document 31, n.d). All these arguments seem to improve Askøy’s economic situation, which is currently threatened with bankruptcy. Therefore, the project is constructed as a concrete solution to these local, structural challenges. Fourth, the developers appeal to the local historical identity. According to conversations with them, people on Askøy have embedded a cultural and historical memory of travelling by boats through the fjords. The following quote stresses this emphasis:

“I am born in the sixties. Back then, transportation was by boat. We had to go by boat to our cottage... The boats went back and forth along places... But nowadays, with the roads and the bridge, I only have to drive 35 minutes to my cottage, but I never forget the feeling of the boat. It is in my blood” (Interviewee 5a, 2025).

By establishing Kildn as a comeback of old boat-transport traditions, the developers tap into emotional, positive nostalgia of a local and social practice. Fifth, it can be argued that the discourse appeals to national values of transparency and democratic dialogue. The developers publicly emphasise their willingness to engage with residents, stating: “At Kildn we want open dialogue and interaction with authorities and Askøy’s residents. Please contact us directly if you would like a personal dialogue” (Tertnes Holding, 2025c). During interviews, they stressed that they “have nothing to hide”, and several reports are freely accessible on their website (Interviewee 5a, 2025; Tertnes Holding, 2025a). This portrayal strengthens their legitimacy, especially in a country where political transparency is a widely shared practice.

All in all, the discourse of positive progress promises constructs Kildn as a solution to both national and local challenges, aligning with broader narratives about the green shift and Norwegian historical and cultural values. Through professional visual and verbal communication, Tertnes Holding mobilises a vision of Askøy's future that is both desirable and morally good. These findings show that language is not only descriptive but also plays a central role in shaping perceptions of what sustainable development means for the community and the nation. However, as the next section will demonstrate, this discourse also creates tensions and has provoked counter-mobilisations that contest its assumptions about what constitutes a truly sustainable future.



Figure 12
Natural landscape of Eidsvika's bay on Askøy, Norway
Note. Photo taken by me in March 2025.

5.3.2 The Opposition' Discourse: Preserving Nature, Identity and Transparency

“This is science fiction” was the immediate reaction of Jan Nordstrøm, a born and raised Askøy resident and dedicated leader of Naturvernforbundet Askøy, when he heard about the Kildn proposal for the first time (Interviewee 1a, 2025). As a reaction to the plans, he instantly created the Facebook group “Eidsvikas Venner” with three others, which has since then evolved into a platform for critical voices opposing the Kildn project and a source for all information about the plans (Interviewee 1a, 2025). Currently, the page has almost 1500 members and is updated with posts daily (Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.).



Figure 13

Screenshot of the banner from the homepage of the Facebook group Eidsvikas Venner

Note. From Eidsvikas Venner (n.d.).

Over the past months, I have followed the Facebook page closely, had talks with several members, politicians discouraging Kildn, environmental experts, and spoke to Nordstrøm in multiple interviews. Inducing from this information, I argue that the opposing parties against the Kildn project have created a counter-discourse to the imaginaries of the future created by the developers, that I label: “Preserving Nature, Identity and Transparency”. In this section will be analysed how several texts are spread in various arenas to produce a discourse which highlights the nature’s uniqueness and deeper historical, emotional, and cultural value for preservation. Specific strategies and relations to broader social practices that are shaped as a reaction to the developers’ discourse will be highlighted, such as emphasising transparency, constructing nature as a political subject and challenging the legitimacy of Kildn.



Figure 14
 Natural landscape of Eidsvika's bay on Askøy, Norway
Note. Photo taken by me in March 2025.

5.3.2.1 Opposition' Stated Aims

The central aim communicated by the opposing parties is to preserve the landscape in its current state. Several reasons are provided for this value. Firstly, preserving the area is perceived as a truly green and sustainable action to take, as emphasised by the following quotes:

“First of all... the only thing you can do for the environment in this area, that is to do nothing” (Interviewee 1a, 2025).

“How much a project is greenwashed, regardless of how good the project is... we want a green area!” (Interviewee 11, 2025).

To emphasise the landscape's inherent value for a sustainable future, the area is described as “the last untouched coastline of Askøy” and home to red-listed species and extensive wildlife (SV, 2025; Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.; Interviewee 1b, 2025; Interviewee 2, 2025; Interviewee 13b, 2025). These descriptions are repeatedly referenced in interviews and documents, highlighting the ecological uniqueness and irreplaceable value of the area. Secondly, the opposition aims to preserve the area because they frame the area as deeply tied to local practices and identity. Eidsvika is described as a space for wellbeing and belonging to nature in interviews:

“Look around here in Eidsvika. This is what makes us feel good. This is what makes life beautiful” (Interviewee 2, 2025).

“I love nature. I love walking in the woods up there where Kildn is going to be” (Interviewee 14, 2025).

“The nature itself is so important. It is a place for us, for the animals and for the plants” (Interviewee 1b, 2025).

Therefore, the possible disappearance of Eidsvika would threaten locals’ connection to nature and their culture. Interviewees expressed strong emotions by this imaginary, which highlights the emotional and cultural bond to the area. For instance, one resident shared sadness at the thought of Kildn’s construction, feeling the project prioritises profit over emotions, leading him to avoid the area to prevent confrontations with this sense of environmental loss (Interviewee 2, 2025). As a third aim for preserving Eidsvika, the opposition foresees several issues with the development of Kildn. In every interview with opposing voices, I was presented with new arguments. Some examples of repeated issues that were mentioned in the Facebook group and in interviews include concerns that the development would harm biodiversity; cruise ships would block the views and create unwanted cruise tourism; required road construction would be impossible due to rock formations and limited existing road capacities; and that financial investments are questionable given the almost-bankrupt status of Askøy municipality (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Interviewee 1b, 2025; Interviewee 2, 2025; Interviewee 13b, 2025; Interviewee 15, 2025; Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.). As an example, Figure 15 shows a Facebook post in the Eidsvikas Venner group (n.d.) including a picture of a large cruise ship sailing near Bergen, accompanied by a critical caption (translated to English: “Well, cruise ships are now on their way into Bergen, this is what they want in Eidsvika”). The caption suggests that such massive transport modes are unwanted in Eidsvika, implying that Kildn would bring similar environmental and visual impacts. The use of emotional emojis strengthens the concerns.



Figure 15

Post in the Eidsvikas Venner Facebook group, showing negative emotions about a foreseen scenario of cruises in Eidsvika

Note. From Eidsvikas Venner (n.d).

Several of the possible development issues of Kildn, are also substantiated by objections from official authorities such as Statens Vegvesen and the Statsforvalteren as described in paragraph 4.1.1. Politicians from green and left parties who have expressed public opposition to Kildn mentioned in interviews that they are not against the project itself per se, but rather have problems with the placement of the project in that specific area, as it is a unique natural environment and are alternative locations are available (Interviewee 11, 2025; Interviewee 13a, 2025; Interviewee 13b, 2025). Another central aim of the main opposing group Eidsvikas Venner, is to share all up-to-date information about Kildn (Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.). Leader Nordstrøm frequently refers to his mission of “Sharing all information – good or bad – so that politicians can make the right decisions.” His mantra, “the easiest thing to do is to tell the truth”, reflects his moral principle to be truthful and transparent (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Interviewee 1b, 2025).

5.3.2.2 Text and Discursive Strategies across Various Arenas

Over the period of data collection, I have been surprised by the consistent activity of Eidsvikas Venner and the impressive commitment of leader Nodstrøm to translate the aims for preserving the area and being transparent about the land-use planning process. Their work has been highly organised and related to several social and political practices in online and physical activities. In online spaces, members of Eidsvikas Venner spread their stances through a personal

blog (Sivertsen, n.d.-a) and their Facebook group, where they post news articles concerning Kildn, personal comments on the project, official documents, and numerous pictures of the area. As seen in Figure 16, these pictures seem to romanticise the area and portray its uniqueness and beauty, showing sunsets, animals and plants. One interviewee also explained that she strategically posted pictures to show her friends who are in favour of the plans, the beauty of the area and the appreciation and connection she feels for it (Interviewee 14, 2025).

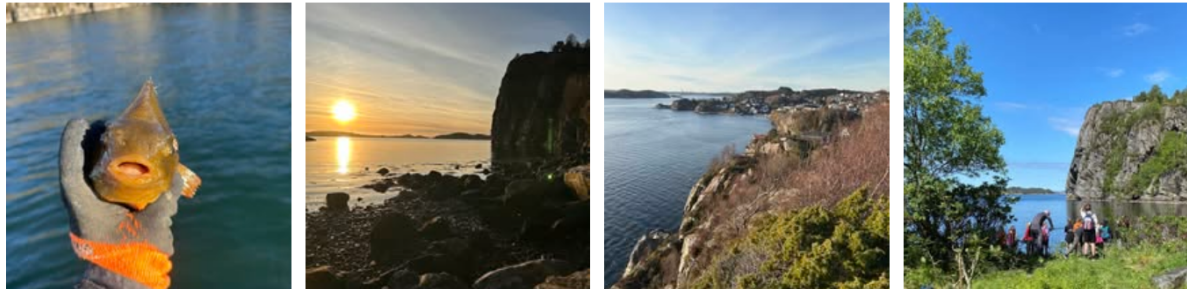


Figure 16

Screenshot from the media page of the Eidsvikas Venner Facebook group, showing pictures of animals, sunsets, natural environments, and activities present in the area

Note. From Eidsvikas Venner (n.d.).

In general, interview responses and Facebook posts revealed strong emotional ties to Eidsvika and the conflict. Emotionally charged words like “monstermaster” and “fight” are often used to describe the Kildn planning debate. In contrast, words like “beautiful” and heart-emojis are found in captions under images of Eidsvika (Eidsvikas Venner, n.d., Interviewee 1a, 2025, Interviewee 2, 2025). This contrast frames the area as physically under threat, but also as a place tied to emotional values and thus worth defending. Next to these online activities, members of Eidsvikas Venner have attempted to mobilise others also through several physical and interpersonal activities, by talking to as many people about the matter as possible, including residents, politicians and experts, sending letters with requests of information to all parties related to Kildn, inviting politicians to the area, spreading more than 10,000 leaflets, setting up petitions, putting up signs close by Eidsvika which express opposition against a cruise harbour (see Figure 17) and organising local volunteer events such as a beach clean-up day (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Interviewee 1b, 2025; Interviewee 2, 2025; Interviewee 3, 2025).



Figure 17

A sign placed along the path leading into Eidsvika on Askøy, featuring a QR code linking to the Eidsvikas Venner Facebook group and the slogan: “A cruise harbour here? No Thanks!”

Note. Photo taken by me in March 2025.

The central role of leader Nordstrøm should not be overlooked in the initiation, organisation and following mobilisation in these discursive activities. Several interviewees refer to his strong persistence and activity for the case, his clear visibility in the Facebook group, his involvement with several actors and parties, and devote the opposition effects and success to him (Interviewee 2, 2025; Interviewee 3, 2025; Interviewee 11, 2025; Interviewee 14, 2025; Interviewee 15, 2025; Interviewee 19, 2025). Nordstrøm has also been highly visible in political activities, by means of writing objections, talking to politicians and explaining the political process on the Facebook page. His background as an Askøy ex-politician of the Socialist Party might have aided him with this (Interviewee 1a, 2025). The central engagement of Nordstrøm in these activities has made him “B-famous” on Askøy, and everyone knows what he stands for (Interviewee 1b, 2025; Eidsvika Venner, n.d.). Besides preserving nature, he also preserves his arguments. He claims that; “I will not change my opinion on Kildn”, and “I am a little tired of it, but it is so important that I can’t stop” (Interviewee 1b, 2025).

Another notable aspect of the opposition’s discursive strategy is that much of their narrative emerges as a direct response to the constructed discourse of the developers. There are three main ways in which the framings and strategies used by the opposition are shaped by the Kildn-proponents’ discourse. Firstly, next to the fact that transparency is perceived as a general aim, it is also produced as a critical tool in Eidsvikas’ Venner discourse to produce and distribute

their text and oppose the developers' discursive practices. To "share all possible information" (Interviewee 1a, 2025), a page is created in the Facebook group which includes case-related documents and several hearing inputs, related newspaper articles are shared, and Nordstrøm explicitly and repeatedly encourages others in posts to fact-check him (Eidsvika Venner, n.d.). In contrast, Nordstrøm accuses the developers of hiding financial sources, maintaining a private Facebook group, and he assumes that some political stances were influenced after developers invited them on a sailing trip (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.). It seems that in this way; by challenging the perceived discreteness of the developers and strongly advocating sharing all information, transparency becomes simultaneously a strategic discursive asset and moral goal. It can be argued that transparency is actively used to show legitimacy, expose signs of corruption, and mobilise public support in a political landscape where trust and truth-telling are important. Secondly, a critical framing in the discourse of Eidsvikas Venner in relation to the developers' discourse is their distrust of the Kildn plans. The project is framed as unrealistic and non-transparent, a form of "greenwashed fantasy" masking real estate interests. This is evident in the use of metaphorical words such as "air castle" or "science fiction" (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Interviewee 1b, 2025), which delegitimise the project's feasibility and intentions. Numerous quotes from residents, politicians and harbour experts also highlight a sense of distrust and disbelief about the plans and the real sustainability of the project. Because this sentiment was expressed repeatedly in the interviews, I have chosen to present a selection of five quotes which reflect this:

"We do not believe their plans! We think that this is only a shelter for building a lot of houses. People think that this is a hidden plan" (Interviewee 14, 2025).

"I do not trust what they say.... I doubt that they will be able to build it. I cannot believe that they can make Kildn the way they say" (Interviewee 15, 2025).

"We do not see the business case... We do not buy the project... At the moment there is no indication that it will happen, that it can happen" (Interviewee 16, 2025).

"They stand for sustainability... But that it one of the most funny things, because the only parties who support this project are the ones that do not care much about sustainability" (Interviewee 13b, 2025).

"In many ways the project seems like a fantasy because there is so much investment in road and infrastructure and that kind of money does not exist at this point" (Interviewee 6a, 2025).

Thirdly, opposition actors construct Eidsvika not just as a passive piece of land, but as a political subject that speaks, should be listened to and deserves representation. In contrast to prior discussions on Askøy, nature is made into a visible, central figure in the political discourse. This transformation forces supporters of Kildn to acknowledge and engage with it as an actor in the debate. Opposition actors see themselves "as the voice of nature" (Interviewee 1a, 2025), emphasising that defending nature is inherently political (Interviewee 1b, 2025). One interviewee noted specifically that the Kildn discussion differs from other Askøy planning cases because, for

the first time, there is a clear defender of natural values, creating a more balanced discussion with developers who normally dominate the debate (Interviewee 11, 2025).

5.3.2.3. Embedding The Voice of Nature in Broader Discourses and Social Practices

Likewise, as the discourse of the developers, the discourse of preserving nature, identity and transparency resonates with broader Norwegian discourses and socio-cultural practices. In the following text, I will present three explorations. First, it aligns strongly with the NRK's article about the bit-by-bit destruction of nature due to building developments and infrastructures (NRK, 2024). The article highlights how local political decisions under the guise of necessary growth and development continually sacrifice small bits of nature. This tension is reflected in online comments of Askøy residents; one asks whether protecting nature in Eidsvika truly takes priority, or if it is overshadowed by vague promises of jobs, taxes, income and development (Sivertsen, n.d.-b). Another comment reveals the emotional impact of the conflict, describing a walk through Træssmarka that once felt carefree but now brings sadness due to the threat of destruction. The writer expresses that her opposition is not directly against Kildn, but against the broader national pattern of nature destruction, highlighting the irony that while Norway spends substantial resources protecting nature abroad, it fails to protect its own landscape (Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.). These comments underline a deep frustration with local environmental protection policies and priorities. Nordstrøm has also tried to bring the case to light to NRK as he perceives similarities with the pattern they aimed to reveal (Interviewee 1b, 2025), and he commented in the Facebook group the following: "We have tipped NRK several times both locally and nationally about what could happen in Eidsvika if money alone is allowed to rule..." (Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.). In this sense, the discourse surrounding Kildn serves as a concrete, local manifestation of the national issue NRK highlighted. By relating the case to this national debate, Eidsvika Venner makes the case legitimate to a wider concern. Second, the discourse also taps into what could be seen as a basis of Norwegian identity: a perceived innate connection to nature, reflected in laws stimulating the *friluftsliv* and proximity to natural areas (Grau-Ruitz et al., 2024; Gurholt and Broch, 2017). Sivertsen (n.d.-a) wrote: "A good rule has been that here on Askøy, we should not have to get in the car to get out into the field". This sentence reflects the national belief that nature should be easily accessible. Next to this, interviewees state that Eidsvika offers the opportunity to be alone and detached from others and culture, as illustrated in this quote:

"People like to be in the nature and go by themselves and not be in a queue. They want not many people around them. Eidsvika is the last area on south of Askøy where you can go and do not meet many people, and you can hear the birds singing" (Interviewee 1a, 2025).

This aligns with the rationales of disconnecting from cultural worlds in nature, which is the core belief of *friluftsliv* (Lund, 2022). A spokesperson from the national body of Naturvernforbundet reinforced the Norwegian sentiment of closeness to nature by emphasising the country's historical tradition of spending time outdoors and caring for the natural environment (Interviewee 4, 2025). Research has likewise shown that Norwegians tend to associate nature not only with aesthetics or recreation, but with moral responsibility and identity formation (Kaltenborn and Bjerke, 2002). Therefore, resistance to the Kildn project is not only framed as environmental protection, but also as cultural preservation of a collective identity and way of life.

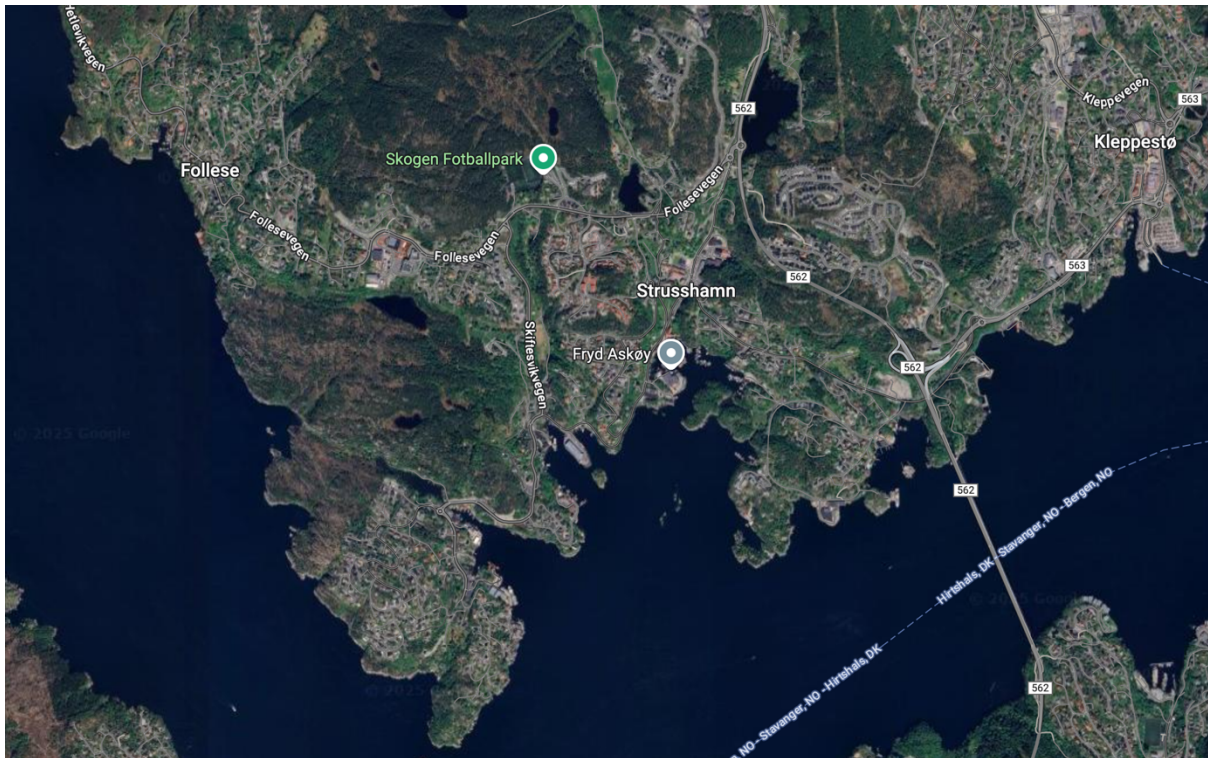


Figure 18

Screenshot from Google Maps showing the clear division between green (natural) and grey (urban) areas in the southern part of Askøy. The image highlights the spatial contrast and land-use patterns in this region and illustrates the current proximity between residential areas and surrounding green spaces.

Note. Screenshot taken on May 16, 2025, from Google Maps.

Lastly, as mentioned repeatedly, transparency is perceived as an important socio-cultural and political value and standard (Johnson, 2008). The serious aim and practice of the opposition discourse to realise transparency resonates with this national discourse.

In sum, the discourse of preserving nature, identity and transparency opposes the Kildn project as it foresees a destruction of natural, emotional and cultural values. Eidsvikas Venner actively mobilises people through both online and physical spaces, sharing emotional comments and official documents to inform stakeholders on their emotional attachment to the place, keep them informed about the planning developments, engage decision-makers, and challenge the feasibility of the project. The discourse generates legitimacy from national discussions on the gradual nature destruction and collective norms of outdoor living and transparency.

5.3.3 The Interplay of Knowledge, Power and Context

The abovementioned results and analyses have attempted to reveal the different actors, aims and arenas that shape the participatory planning process by showing their discursive texts, strategies and relations to social practices. However, the following analysis will dive deeper into how certain actors gain legitimacy, how certain aims are prioritised and how certain voices are perceived as more influential than others. This is particularly interesting regarding the observation that this conflict has been considered in the KPA for almost five years, despite repeated negative

inputs from higher authorities such as the Statsforvalteren (Document 7, 2024) and Municipal Director (Document 18, 2025), which have based their decisions on advice from several expert departments. Next to this, Eidsvikas Venner has attempted for years to share all these inputs publicly, as they believe this would allow municipal politicians to make “the right decision” over the case (Interviewee 1a, 2025, Eidsvikas Venner, n.d.). Ironically, no political decision has yet been made, and certain parties have refrained from taking a stance, due to recurring arguments that information is missing, or decisions do not refer to the correct proposal (Interviewee 8, 2025; Interviewee 9, 2025). A possible explanation of this long-lasting indecisiveness could be based on the controversies of democratic decision-making, where incorporating inputs from several actors in a participatory process results in complex, time-consuming trade-offs between various aims (Interviewee 8, 2025). Nevertheless, I argue in line with Flyvbjerg (2002) that the continuing consideration of Kildn within the participatory land-use planning process is highly shaped by power dynamics. Power in the understanding of Flyvbjerg (2002) and Foucault (1979) produces and regulates knowledge through discourse in a given context. Despite political authorities and opposition parties presenting critical knowledge over the case, the developers’ discourse has remained prevalent. Therefore, the following analysis will explore how political, economic, social, cultural and geographic observations shape the power and knowledge in the land-use planning process of Kildn.

Politically, within the democratic and multi-level governance model of Askøy municipality, several interviews with representatives from state, regional and local governance levels revealed a lack of clarity about who holds the legitimacy and accountability to make the final decision over Kildn (Interviewee 6a, 2025; Interviewee 6b, 2025; Interviewee 7, 2025; Interviewee 8, 2025; Interviewee 9, 2025). Despite the Statsforvalteren having perceived authority to intervene when municipalities cannot decide upon plans and having presented objections on the project, their advice has not yet resulted in municipal decisions. This could be explained by their perceived lack of legitimacy, as in interviews they point out that it is unclear to them when they are expected to intervene and at what point they should transfer conflicts to national-level authorities. Next to this, they seem reluctant to keep the decision-making power local. These quotes from Statsforvalteren’s representatives express their reluctance and perception that the municipality has the power to do what they want, despite Statsforvalteren’s objections:

“You have probably seen the letters that we have send about Kildn. The first part, we have objections... the municipality cannot go for the plan this way. We are clear that this might lead to serious objections. What the municipality can do now... they can do what they want, they can take it out, remove the plan, they can go further with the assessments and find what is lacking knowledge today and go further in the process” (Interviewee 6a, 2025).

“So far, our ministers have said: be very careful with overthrowing municipal planning... the threshold should be high for what kind of plans are send to the minister. We try to solve it to the ground level as much as possible” (Interviewee 6b, 2025).

In a personal email, Mads Nyborg Støstad (2025), the NRK investigative journalist behind the 2024 NRK bit-by-bit destruction of nature article, expressed that he did not understand why the Statsforvalteren does not stop more of these building projects. This surprise is not misplaced, as

Statsforvalteren is expected to take the position as an overseeing authority (Interviewee 6a 2025, Interviewee 6b, 2025). However, Statsforvalteren representatives' (Interviewee 6a, 2025; Interviewee 6b, 2025) have acknowledged in interviews that this is a debate within their organisation, as they face limited resources, lack of clear guidelines from their authorities, and struggle with the complexity of the issues, causing internal institutional debates and uncertainty over their overseeing capabilities. As a representative from Naturvernforbundet observes (Helset Eide, 2024), there is especially no central government review in place in many nature interventions, and there lacks an overarching "system" that looks after nature. Environmental authorities often only act in cases of explicit legal violations. On a regional level, a representative from the Fylkeskommune also underlined that Kildn reveals a discussion between political levels about who has the power to stop the project. Kildn is a complex case, as the project affects the wider Vestland region, but the plan came bottom-up from the developers, and therefore, the county has difficulties in framing their opinion (Interviewee 7, 2025). Locally, the complexity of the democratic voting process is emphasised by the mayor as a hindrance to decision-making. The political parties are highly divided on the matter, and the developers and representatives from Eidsvikas Venner have expressed no compromise to be possible, complicating the consensus-making (Interviewee 1b, 2025; Interviewee 5a, 2025; Interviewee 8, 2025). Another striking observation within the institutional knowledge generation is the fact that the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and traffic assessments are conducted by companies hired by the developers themselves (Interviewee 5a, 2025; Interviewee 6a, 2025; Interviewee 8, 2025). According to the mayor and officials from the Statsforvalteren, there is no non-incentivised/non-biased body carrying out the EIAs, which undermines the objectivity of the knowledge base (Interviewee 6a, 2025; Interviewee 8, 2025). This production of EIAs by developers has the consequence that environmental knowledge is marginalised, providing space for the developers' knowledge to prevail. This is also underlined by a study of NRK, which analysed how Norway's 100 largest nature interventions came about (Støstad et al., 2025). The study revealed that Norwegian planning documents rarely mention nature in their large documents, and as EIAs focus on environment *and* society, often the assessments are skewed towards the economic benefits for society, such as job creation and municipal income, rather than long-term ecological impacts. Therefore, EIAs often become political tools, giving legitimacy to development goals and marginalising ecological voices. This is also visible in the case of Kildn, as the reports of the developers highlight the benefits for tourism, economic growth, and the green shift, whilst minimising the impact on biodiversity and natural landscape (Tertnes Holding, 2025b). Thus, the political diffusion and absence of independent advisory eyes observed in the Kildn case illustrate how unclear power structures can undermine both effective decision-making and the legitimacy of knowledge that informs it.

Next to these political contextual dynamics, economic factors also shape the powerplay over knowledge legitimacy. Askøy municipality wishes to position itself as a Ja-Kommune, becoming more liberal and welcoming growth and developments next to the conservative, yet strong economic power of Bergen (Interviewee 23, 2025). The developers' knowledge highlights the job creation and economic progress of Kildn, aligning with the pro-growth mentality of Askøy municipality. In this way, the struggle between Askøy as a geographic periphery next to Bergen enables the developer's economic rationality of pro-growth to emerge and resonate with pro-development politicians. Furthermore, the developers' discourse has gained power through the constant active spread of their knowledge over time, supported by their significant economic resources. These resources enable the continuous production of information that appears

legitimate, largely due to its professional presentation. The usage of wealth for creating strong marketing discourse has not gone unnoticed by other actors. An interviewee explicitly stated: “They have spent a lot of money! Loads, loads, loads of money. All to films and career days on a project that has not been approved yet. So many resources into selling something, I find it untasteful” (Interviewee 11, 2025). Thus, Tertnes Holding’s substantial financial means enable them to operationalise their message in a professional and visually appealing manner across various platforms, allowing them to maintain a strong presence in the socio-political debate. In contrast, Eidsvikas Venner depends on voluntary efforts for their outreach, limiting their capacity to compete in the same communicative arenas. As a Greenpeace Netherlands campaigner noted, successful activism requires both time and funding; those with access to these resources are more likely to shape public discourse (Interviewee 25, 2025). Despite the limited resources, the discourse of Eidsvikas Venner has remained present in the public debate. However, Askøy’s mayor highlighted the significant role of power dynamics, emphasising how there is a structural power imbalance created between the parties involved due to financial asymmetries:

“Of course... when you have a big private initiative with a fairly large company behind it, they have the resources to do informational processes and lobbying, all different kind of arrangements and so on to promote their initiative in a quite different and larger scale than maybe the environmental groups are able to do” (Interviewee 8, 2025).

Another money-related aspect within the developer’s discourse is their repeated claim that there will be absolutely no costs for Askøy municipality, while Kildn will provide great economic benefits for the local population (Interviewee 5a, 2025; Tertnes Holding, 2024b; Document 31, n.d.). This underestimation of costs and overestimation of benefits is observed as a recurring deliberate discursive strategy to get projects approved by Flyvbjerg et al. (2003). Therefore, money not only influences the knowledge of the discourse, but it is also used as a strategic means itself.

Socially speaking, the local relational dynamics on Askøy reinforce which discourse gains traction. Askøy is a small municipality where political representatives often live close to Eidsvika and serve as politicians part-time (Interviewee 8, 2025). According to Flyvbjerg, goals in planning are always relational, emerging from concrete social interactions (1998). These close-knit dynamics may unintentionally bias decision-making towards local interests, especially when framed as beneficial for the community. Moreover, the mismatch between political cycles and planning timelines further skews decision-making. While the planning process for Kildn spans over many years, political terms change every four years (Interviewee 8, 2025). This misalignment in timing might encourage politicians to make short-term decisions that help them win elections, rather than focusing on environmental protection in the long term (Interviewee 4, 2025).

Cultural norms also shape the production and legitimacy of knowledge. In interviews about Kildn, values such as trust, transparency and humbleness were frequently mentioned, and transparency itself has become a strategic tool by both discourses to legitimise their knowledge. While multiple actors described the planning process as transparent, the opposition discourse strongly suggests mistrust towards developers and local authorities, sometimes even hinting at corruption (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Interviewee 2, 2025). Several interviewees referred to lobbying efforts, information asymmetry, and informal influence patterns, raising concerns about the transparency of the process (Interviewee 1a, 2025; Interviewee 2, 2025; Interviewee 3, 2025;

Interviewee 11, 2025; Interviewee 12, 2025; Interviewee 13a, 2025). This reflects how, as Foucault (1979) argues, legitimate knowledge production is not universal but is produced through discourse and power relations within specific contexts.

In sum, regardless of the amount of information about the Kildn case, the project has remained in the KPA planning for years. This finding can be attributed to the dynamics of power and knowledge which are produced through discourse in a broader context. The interplay of political diffusion, absence of independent experts, aspirations for economic growth, financial resource asymmetries, urban-rural dynamics, local relationships, and cherished cultural values shapes which actors, aims and arenas are perceived as legitimate. Recognising this complexity is crucial for understanding how planning outcomes are not just technically but also politically and discursively constructed.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The preceding results and analysis aimed to provide a more nuanced understanding of how conflicting discourses shape and are shaped in the complex context of the land-use planning process of the Kildn project in Askøy. Following a critical planning perspective and by applying the 3A³-framework and a discourse analysis of text, discursive strategies and social practices across interviews, documents, and social media data, this thesis has demonstrated that a value conflict in planning reflects deeper struggles over meaning, power and legitimacy. Although the planning process appears to follow formal participatory procedures within Norway's democracy, the findings show that it is embedded in a complex web of discursive dynamics that construct what actors, aims and arenas are regarded and perceived as legitimate. This discussion reflects on how the findings both support and challenge the academic debates on land-use planning conflict, participation and opposition, as outlined in the literature review (see Chapter 2). In addition, the discussion raises a reflection on the 3A³ framework.

6.1 A Shared Aim, Conflicting Meanings, and No Resolution?

A central finding in the study is that both supporters and opponents of the Kildn project express a similar aim: “a sustainable future for the next generation”. However, their discursive practices reveal that the actors attribute a fundamentally different meaning to the concept of sustainability, which leads to an irresolvable conflict. While the developers' discourse envisions a sustainable future through infrastructure innovations and developments for economic growth, the opposition's discourse stresses preservation of nature and local identity. This divergence in meaning illustrates Gunder's (2006) argument that sustainability functions as an empty signifier in planning debates, allowing various actors to assign contesting meanings to the same concept. Gunder (2006) argues that particularly the discourse of sustainable development has become appealing in modern planning for institutions and developers, as it allows to value economic growth alongside environmental and social objectives. However, this creates the risk that sustainability becomes captured by capitalist, growth-oriented narratives promoted by entrepreneurial actors, thereby marginalising ecological and environmental concerns (Gunder, 2006) – a risk which seems to become reality in the Kildn planning process. Sustainable development has therefore become a loaded concept in the Kildn case, and both proponents and opponents have clearly stated that they see no possibility for compromise to align their aims and values for a sustainable future of Eidsvika. This ongoing incompatibility of the contested meanings can be further explained by Campbell (1996), who states that planning for sustainable development is inherently a field of conflict, with competing goals that cannot be easily paired. In his theory, the conflict between economic development and ecological preservation, which is present over Eidsvika, represents a struggle over “resources”, where private interests prioritise short-term economic benefits from resource exploitation, while environmental protectionists emphasise long-term sustainability and healthy ecosystems. Owens and Cowell (2011) similarly argue that while sustainable development is often expressed as a shared political goal, its operationalisation often does not create unity but rather exposes underlying tensions between incommensurable aims and values. Further studies help to conceptualise these conflicts. Berlin's (1969) theory of value pluralism suggests that values are inherently conflicting and often cannot be reconciled. Building on this, Walzer (1983) argues that values and goods only acquire meaning within their specific contexts. Thus, understanding conflicts over incompatible values requires a thorough analysis of how their meanings are socially constructed and contextualised. My study applied such a lens and

demonstrated how contextual factors shaped the meaning of sustainability. For instance, Askøy's economic threat of bankruptcy and ambition to compete regionally contributed to a construction of sustainability by the developers that prioritised economic growth. Therefore, this study shows that sustainable development conflicts such as the Kildn case, are not just technical dilemmas but rather clashes between fundamentally different, socially embedded values that are discursively constructed. In the planning process of Askøy, there seems to be no concrete strategies or tools available to decision-makers for resolving these value conflicts. Politicians repeatedly postpone the final decision-making over Kildn, and despite the availability of substantial information and advice, they continue to request additional data. Furthermore, the conflict is displaced across various scales of governance, with responsibilities remaining unclear between different decision-making levels. These strategies of temporal and scalar displacement to manage goal conflicts reflect patterns identified in Norwegian planning practices by Oseland and Haarstad (2022), highlighting that the divergence across institutional levels and the lack of an overseeing authority cause limited institutional capacity to address conflicting goals. These findings challenge planners to move beyond seeking compromises towards approaches that acknowledge and engage with persistent value conflicts. Agonistic planning studies (Kühn, 2020) could offer such an approach by viewing conflict as productive for a pluralistic, democratic planning process. Instead of striving for consensus, this perspective encourages planners to actively create public arenas where actors can express contradictions, discuss alternatives, and use social movements' opposition to change the current power dynamics. In this view, organising inclusive and meaningful participatory processes is crucial to balance contradicting interests and legitimise decisions.

6.2 Participation under Pressure

Nevertheless, some scholars challenge this assumption that participatory processes provide an effective practice for dealing with planning conflicts, arguing that planning is inherently embedded in power relations and that consensus often reflects power dynamics rather than equal deliberation (Turnhout et al., 2019). The following paragraph explores five discussions on how the findings on Kildn reveal that, while the municipal planning process appears to follow a participatory and transparent model, with public hearings and open consultations, the true democratic and inclusive character can be questioned. In practice, informal power dynamics, expressed through discourse, shape who participates meaningfully and whose voices are recognised. Firstly, my analysis demonstrates that the voices of certain actors were either not formally included, struggled to gain visibility in the debate, or were unwilling to engage. For instance, Follese Felleskap, the collective of 110 landowners of the Træssmarka area who signed an option agreement with Tertnes Holding in 2017, are expected to profit significantly if the harbour development proceeds. Rumours suggest each landowner could receive over a million kroner (Interviewee 1b, 2025; Interviewee 14, 2025). Yet, they have remained silent and absent from public consultation. Meanwhile, a resident and journalist who has followed the case since the beginning suggested that there is also a silent majority that either supports the plans or does not seem to care (Interviewee 18, 2025). This comment that people in favour are generally quiet in Askøy's political debates was reflected by politicians as well (Interviewee 8, 2025; Interviewee 9, 2025). This observation supports critiques of the participatory planning turn, which argues that participation has failed to resolve underlying power asymmetries that determine which voices are included and heard (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Holgersen and Haarstad, 2009). Secondly, while the actors

that were included in the planning process could formally voice their concerns in hearings, questions remain as to what extent they were meaningfully included in shaping decisions. Miraftab (2009) warns that there is a chance that participatory processes become symbolic, serving to legitimise predetermined decisions rather than to empower stakeholders. This dynamic appears present in the Kildn case, as despite consultations, the official planning arena is controlled by institutional stakeholders and appears largely closed to non-official actors. This selective process of inclusion and exclusion privileges certain stakeholders while marginalising others. This process is emphasised by post-political theories, which underline that participatory mechanisms may be used by dominant actors to generate legitimacy and stabilise existing power relations, rather than genuinely opening decision-making to contestation (Swyngedouw, 2005; Legacy et al., 2018). Thirdly, my findings reveal how material and relational resources shape the dominance and legitimacy of certain actors within the participatory process. Post-political scholars highlight that developers are the actors who often dominate planning processes due to their perceived position as “problem-solvers” to public concerns and their material and relational opportunities (Leffers and Wekerle, 2019). Concerning material opportunities, developers generally have more time, expertise, and resources available to produce knowledge and communication strategies that resonate with a broader public, thus creating an unequal balance in influencing the planning process (Turnhout et al., 2019). In the Kildn case, the developers used extensive monetary resources to produce professional marketing materials and events, thereby materially constructing an attractive vision of Askøy’s future. This observation aligns with Flyvbjerg’s (1998) thinking, as to his ideas actors with financial means can influence what is perceived as legitimate knowledge and what knowledge dominates the political planning agendas. The way the developers used their economic resources to visualise their growth-oriented discourse illustrates Foucault’s and Rabinow’s (1997) argument that power operates through the ability to produce reality - in this case, by making one future more visible, credible and “real” than others. Regarding relational opportunities, my findings show that power and legitimacy in planning are relational and networked, supporting insights from relational planning theory and social movement theory (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1996; Van Ostaijen and Agger, 2022). In the Kidn case, both discourses engage in networking and lobbying with politicians to mobilise support. While previous studies emphasise that developers often hold privileged opportunities to shape and influence power relations (Leffers and Wekerle, 2019), my study demonstrates how relational capital enabled the opposition to gain as well substantial local credibility and mobilise community support. In particular, the leadership of Nordstrøm played a central role: through his political networks, continuous stakeholder engagement, participation in public debates, and sustained presence and interaction in the Facebook group, he allowed the opposition discourse to remain present in the planning debate. This supports literature highlighting the crucial role of “key individual activists” as catalysts for social movements (Gulliver et al., 2023; Onyx and Leonard, 2010), while also emphasising that their mobilisation success depends heavily on relational ties with community members and external stakeholders (Fulmer, 2018; Nienaber et al., 2015). Nordstrøm’s position therefore shows that creating opposition to planning practices is rarely the result of isolated individuals but emerges and gains legitimacy through embeddedness in wider social networks. As a result of strong relational mobilisation efforts, both discourses have remained present throughout the planning process, despite continuous objections from both sides. This persistence can be explained by the relational discourse coalition theory of Hajer (1995), which suggests that groups of actors that share similar storylines and resources can stabilise dominant

narratives over time. In the Kildn case, both proponents and opponents of Kildn have mobilised alliances across multiple actors and scales through relationship building and appealing to broader social discourses, strengthening their respective positions. Fourthly, my analysis shows that discursive power dynamics play a crucial role in determining which forms of knowledge are regarded and perceived as legitimate within the participatory planning process. This is particularly visible in relation to environmental and ecological knowledge. So far, environmental assessments on Eidsvikas were primarily conducted by consultants hired by the developers, while no independent, non-incentivised body systematically evaluated the environmental consequences of Kildn. Moreover, negative official advice from governmental advisory bodies has not yet been acted upon. These patterns demonstrate how the production and recognition of knowledge are strongly shaped by power relations rather than formal evaluations. This resonates with Hajer's (1995) argument that discursive powers shape which narratives and knowledge claims attain credibility, allowing dominant actors to define expertise in ways that serve their interests, while marginalising alternative knowledge. Fifthly, I found the observation striking that institutional power diffusion further undermines the implementation of legal frameworks, not only in terms of environmental protection, but also in safeguarding democratic participation. Although Norway is known for its image as a "nature-protectionist" and has a comprehensive legal framework on nature protection (Bugge, 2024), these national legal constraints appear to lack effective implementation on local planning practices. Interviewees rarely referred to juridical power or oversight, suggesting a weak presence of juridical enforcement on the local level. This limited enforcement might stem from the blurred responsibilities across municipal, regional and national governance levels, as this weakens accountability for decision-making. As a result, contested projects such as Kildn can move forward despite objections from several governance bodies and civil society. This situation reflects Flybjerg's (1998) argument that, in the absence of a clear institutional governance, a space opens for a discursive power battle, where dominant actors can use knowledge to legitimise their interests, whereas opposition voices become marginalised due to a lack of institutional support or authority. Therefore, the knowledge in the debate becomes dependent on who and when practices political power. In such cases, democratic planning risks becoming an arena that covers underlying political conflicts rather than resolving them through open deliberation.

6.3 Opposition Shaping Participation

The previous discussion demonstrates that formal participatory processes in the Kildn case are shaped by underlying power dynamics that construct which actors are heard and which knowledge is legitimised. Yet, as Miraftab (2009) and Cornwall and Coelho (2007) argue, participation often happens informally through bottom-up opposition which challenge dominant discourses, led by those who are excluded from official planning processes. Although these insurgent planning practices are often discussed in Global South contexts, my study demonstrates that similar practices emerge in the Global North. The actions of Eidsvikas Venner illustrate how informal groups can create a discourse to articulate alternative futures. Their consistent engagement over the past five years has challenged the developers' narrative and introduced a sustainable future creation which relates to local identity and ecology. The way they have embodied and represented nature as a political subject which should be regarded in planning decisions, resonates with the concept of "subject formation" in the theory of Foucault (1982), where

discourse not only represents actors, but also constitutes them. In this case, the discourse constructs new human actors such as the Eidsvikas Venner opposition group, but also constitutes non-human entities, like the Eidsvika bay, as legitimate political subjects within the planning debate. The opposition discourse which allowed previously marginalised voices to become visible political subjects, has challenged the decision-making of institutions as the opposition's objections are considered by several politicians. This also contributes to debates on the transformative potential of social movements in planning (Miraftab, 2009). Although the outcome concerning Kildn is still undecided, the opposition discourse has already reshaped the playing field of actors, arenas and aims in the debate. This raises a broader academic question of whether social movements can be recognised not just as opposition actors, but also as legitimate participants in planning. My study suggests that they are relevant for introducing neglected values and disrupting dominant planning procedures focusing mainly on physical infrastructures. As such, planners should consider expanding the definition of participation to include informal actors, which has also been raised by previous authors (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Miraftab, 2004; Miraftab, 2009).

6.4 A Discursive Perspective on the 3A³ Framework

The emergence of opposition groups such as Eidsvikas Venner illustrates how actors can actively reshape participation processes, challenge dominant discourses, and bring forward previously marginalised values into the planning debate. This highlights that even within structured participatory frameworks, the planning process remains dynamic. Building on this, it becomes essential to consider how these dynamics are embedded within the broader planning context. The 3A³-framework has emphasised the interplay between actors, aims, and arenas that are situated within a broader context. My study confirms this interdependency. For instance, the framing of Kildn as a solution to increase jobs and municipal incomes was strategically used by the developers to legitimise and shape their project aims within the broader economic context. However, my findings also reveal a limitation in the 3A³-Framework. While it acknowledges various contexts, it does not fully account for the nature of how the context and internal elements are constructed. In the case of Kildn, the context was not just a setting, but an active discursive resource, meaning that contextual elements such as the local environment and cultural identity were not just background conditions, but were actively mobilised by different actors to legitimise their positions and create meaning. The same way the geographic space of Eidsvika was constructed in radically different ways, as a field for economic competition between Askøy and Bergen or as a place which holds a shared friluftsliv identity, I argue that the future applications of the 3A³ model should integrate discourse more centrally as a constitutive element of shaping context, the internal dynamics and their interplay.

In conclusion, this study contributes to planning theory by showing how values, discourse, and power interact in complex, contested ways. It reveals that planning is not neutral, but a political arena shaped by often incompatible aims. While formal participation procedures exist to cope with such conflicts, informal discursive, material, relational and institutional dynamics shape who is heard and whose knowledge is perceived as legitimate. The findings demonstrate that opposition groups can challenge dominant narratives by discursively constructing new actors, aims, and arenas. This highlights the importance of recognising informal actors as legitimate participants and of embedding discourse more centrally within planning frameworks like the 3A³, to explore the dynamic nature of participation, power, and conflict.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Norway's image as a frontrunner of the green shift and environmental champion with ambitious goals to preserve nature at all costs, has been challenged during my studies. Although the country presents itself as a global leader in sustainable development and renewable energy innovation, its green shift comes at a price. This price is often paid through bit-by-bit destruction of natural landscapes. However, this cost is far from easily accepted in municipal land-use planning decisions, as diverse stakeholders fight for their own land-use interests within the democratic planning process. To better understand how Norway's national sustainability ambitions play out, this thesis aimed to study how conflicting discourses on sustainable urban development are constructed and shaped by power dynamics in the complex context of a land-use planning process. Focusing on the Kildn project on Askøy, it provided an in-depth understanding of how urban planning evolved in practice. Through a qualitative analysis including interviews, social media, and document analysis, this research explored the research questions of how opposing discourses are constructed, and how power relations determine their positioning and legitimacy within the complex planning context.

7.1 Conclusions

Inducing from the empirical findings and discourse analysis, it became clear that sustainability is a politically contested and discursively constructed concept, shaped by actors' competing aims and values. The Kildn project has evolved into a symbolic object through which fundamentally different meanings of sustainable urban development futures are expressed. The developers' discourse constructs Kildn as a future ideal that combines innovation, economic growth and sustainable urban transport, aligning with Norway's green shift' ideals and with local ambitions of economic growth and regional competition. Contrary to this discourse, Eidsvikas Venner emerged as an opposing actor in the planning debate to embody the natural site of Eidsvika as a political subject. They created a discourse where sustainability equals preserving the physical natural environment and non-physical aspects such as local identity, connection to the outdoors, and transparency. Both actors have used several texts, discursive strategies and appeals to broader social practices across various arenas to construct their aims and mobilise support. The developers' discourse drew primarily on monetary resources to create various professionally polished visuals and texts that idealised the project's potential through optimistic, suggestive, and future-oriented expressions. The marketing strategies are highly materialised, using various formats and products such as websites, social media clips and events. Next to this, the developers have used their relational capacities to generate visibility and mobilise support from locals and decision-makers. On the other hand, the opposition actors depended on voluntary efforts to construct their discourse and generate support. A Facebook group was created as a space to express their discourse. By sharing almost daily updates on the political planning process and emotional expressions of Eidsvika, they aimed to show the connection and meaning locals attribute to the place. These emotional posts were used to strengthen empathy and cultural legitimacy. Next to this, facts and official documents were shared to promote and practice transparency and support their disbelief in the project's feasibility. To mobilise support, the opposition depended heavily on relational resources. Key figure Jan Nordstrøm took a central position in talking with as many stakeholders as possible to spread their discourse and generate support. So far, the technocratic planning process on Askøy has not succeeded in resolving or creating a compromise between the competing values of sustainable urban development. There seems to be no effective strategies do

deal with such conflicts. This shows that planning is not neutral and an easy problem-solving process, but a contested arena where conflicting values exist and are rarely reconcilable.

Beyond analysing how conflicting discourses are constructed, this study revealed how their legitimacy is shaped by deeply embedded power dynamics operating within a broader political, economic, social, cultural, and geographic context. These contextual factors have not existed in isolation, but were deeply interconnected, constantly shaping and reshaping each other and the aims, actors and arenas at stake. Despite Norway's democratic and consensus-oriented planning system filled with formal participatory procedures, land-use planning remains influenced by structures that determine which voices gain traction and which are marginalised. First, I found that certain voices were excluded, struggled to be heard, or chose silence, illustrating that who participate is itself an expression of power. Second, even when actors were formally included through consultations and hearings, their influence on actual decision-making remained limited as this still happened behind closed doors. This raises questions about democratic engagement and empowerment. Third, the relative positions of both discourses in the debate were shaped by material and relational power asymmetries. The developers drew mainly on monetary resources and professional networks to materialise their promises and gain credibility, whereas the opposition relied predominantly on relational connections to create visibility and agency. Notably, the broader political-economic interests of leading political parties - such as Askøy municipality's overall growth-oriented agenda - further reinforced the networked support for the developers' discourse while undermining ecological values. Fourth, power dynamics played a key role in shaping which knowledge was included and perceived as legitimate. The absence of independent eyes on the case, and the fact that environmental assessments were carried out by the developers themselves, reveal how knowledge is selectively produced and used. This lack of external examination enabled the developers' discourse to persist while sidelining alternative forms of information. Fifth, institutional weaknesses strengthened the persistence of these power dynamics. Blurred responsibilities between municipal, regional and national levels and a lack of local legal enforcement of environmental protection, reduced the accountability for decision-making and enabled the project to move forward despite multiple objections. Finally, the broader geographic context of Askøy as a peripheral municipality located in the shadow of urban centre Bergen, made the developers' promises for economic opportunities especially persuasive for politicians striving for Askøy's ideal as a *Ja-Kommune*.

All in all, while these results illustrate how opposing actors construct their positions, exercise power, and mobilise support within a complex planning context, the outcome is yet undecided, and therefore, it is still unclear which voices will ultimately prevail in Askøy's urban development planning. Nevertheless, this study confirmed existing literature while adding a more in-depth, practice-based understanding: planning is never a neutral or purely technical process, it is a contested and deeply political one, even within consensus-oriented, democratic cultures. Contextual dynamics are not just a background to planning, but they are an active resource that shape the power and legitimacy of aims, actors and arenas in land-use planning. These factors do not operate in isolation but continuously shape and reshape one another. Formal democratic participatory procedures do not neutralise the power, but often just hide power asymmetries. Therefore, this study showed that urban planning does not depend on formal and institutional procedures, but is constantly shaped by discursive struggles, which creates the aims, actors and arenas at stake. The study demonstrated that marginalised voices could enter and influence planning debates, when they organise systematically, create presence across various arenas, and

built persistent relationships and leadership. These understandings demand planners to recognise and consider underlying power structures that are expressed through discourse, to create inclusive decision-making processes that respond effectively to conflicts in diverse social contexts.

7.2 Future Research Suggestions

Despite this research has contributed to filling the knowledge gap on the underlying discursive dynamics of local land-use conflicts in Norway, the findings are case-specific and cannot be directly generalised. Further research could apply similar analytical frameworks to other land-use conflicts to discover patterns and test the transferability of the findings across various contexts. Approaching these cases through an academic complexity lens, could further unpack the systemic and complex relationships between actors, aims, arenas and contexts. Moreover, several other dynamics could be explored. For instance, research could dive deeper into the organisational capacities and internal dynamics of opposition actors, examining which specific strategies effectively alter planning outcomes. A related research direction would be to investigate the traits and roles of key activist figures and how they can shape planning debates. Next to this, it would be interesting to explore how other participatory methods, such as co-creation approaches, can be adapted to Norwegian local land-use planning processes. This could also offer insights in how opposition groups might become more integrated into political planning and how conflicts could be managed. Moreover, as this study focused mainly on discursive constructions rather than their causal effect on political outcomes, future studies might examine the causal relationship between discursive strategies and actual planning decisions. For instance, do certain discourses consistently gain more traction, and what role does media play in influencing these effects? Lastly, as this case also shows that finding a compromise between incommensurable public values is difficult and there has been limited research done on solving land-use conflicts in Norway, there is a need for exploring strategies to deal with these conflicts. Research could experiment with innovative design tools or mediation strategies to allow more constructive conflict planning. Bridging this gap between participatory design and planning theory could be especially interesting in local, Norwegian, urban contexts that are located outside dynamic, urban research focus areas.

7.3 Information for Knowledge Users and Recommendations

To provide information for future knowledge users of this thesis, I would like to present my designed journalistic article of 1590 words titled “Norway’s Green Shift: How We’re Nibbling Away the Planet”, which can be found in Appendix D. The text aims to translate the complex and contested controversies around the Kildn development into a publicly accessible story. The piece was shared with Askøy’ journalists, NRK and DeSmog, with to aim of contributing to broader debates around green transitions and contested land-use planning. Rather than offering formal research recommendations, I chose to convert my research into a format that invites broader audiences to engage with the debates addressed in this thesis. This choice aligns with the constructivist approach of the study, which recognises the interplay of context, power and discourse in shaping knowledge and political planning decisions. From this perspective, where planning is shaped through discourse, contributing to public discourse through a journalistic article can be seen as a meaningful form of intervention. I argue, in line with other scholars (Bonder et al., 2023; Schmidt and Stenger, 2021; Jenner et al., 2024), that fixed recommendations often reduce complexity into oversimplified solutions - assuming a clear and linear path to action, creating an

illusion of neutrality, or implying that the researcher holds superior insight. Also, they can unintentionally silence local voices or favour elites over the publics most affected by land-use decisions. I am aware that my journalistic article also simplifies complexity to some extent. Any form of information design requires selection and framing, and I acknowledge that transforming complex research into a normative story inevitably includes and excludes certain perspectives that are based on subjective decisions. Nevertheless, this simplification does not aim to prescribe interventions or actions but aims to invite engagement. The article wishes to reveal underlying tensions and controversies, provoke reflection, and allow for multiple interpretations. It does not serve as a blueprint, but a story. In that sense, it recognises the risks of reducing complexity, while also acknowledging that stories serve as powerful tools to shape public discourse and influence different stakeholders (Polleta, 2006). My aim is to reach those involved or impacted by planning decisions, such as citizens, local politicians and civil servants, who might not read academic work but are essential in shaping the planning discourse. With this article, I wish to bridge the gap between academics and social understandings, trusting that readers can draw their own conclusions and decide for themselves how to engage with the raised issues.

Epilogue: Personal Questions and Answers

Today it is June 4, 2025. The day I leave Norway, after having spent the past three months here, living in Bergen. Although this day does not mark the official end of my thesis project, this day feels in a way like a symbolic closure. My research has become deeply intertwined with this place, its landscapes, its people and its conversations.

Over the past period, I fully immersed myself in the social, political and emotional dynamics surrounding the Kildn project. I have had the opportunity to meet people from many sides of the debate, from activists and residents to politicians, planners, journalists and developers. I truly enjoyed the variety in conversations and contexts: from doing interviews during long hikes accompanied by several dogs, to well-organised meetings in fancy offices, from online Teams calls to informal talks in a café or sauna. Each conversation brought me new insights and answers, but mostly, they sparked more questions and fascinations. I learned how much joy I get from asking questions, exploring ambiguities, and trying to understand what motivates people – especially when I do not agree with their perspective.

Although my academic study into Kildn now comes to an end, the case itself is still open. The decision-making process continues, and I will keep following the developments with great interest. Despite having studied the reinforcing dynamics of the conflicts, I still find myself surprised by its persistence. I still wonder why the developers keep pushing for a cruise terminal in the quiet, zero-tourist area of Askøy – just one fjord away from the already existing (and successfully functioning) cruise port of Bergen, which has even explicitly stated not to support this project? Why invest so much energy into a plan that seems unlikely to succeed? I am also still fascinated by the lack of strategic use of certain facts. There are said to be red-listed species in the area, which would be a potentially powerful and measurable reason to stop any development, especially in a country like Norway with strong environmental protection laws. Yet, the opposition has not fully focused their efforts on documenting and leveraging this. It surprises me. Similarly, I am still curious about the financial background of the developers: where does their funding come from, and why are they so hesitant to share this? It has been surprising to observe how a project that, to me, seems environmentally and practically unfeasible, still manages to survive in the planning system. I am curious to see who will have the longest (and strongest) breath.

Engaging with this case-study has changed my perception of Norway. While I will keep on admiring the impressive natural aesthetics of the country, my image of it as a global frontrunner in nature protection has been challenged. However, I remain hopeful and still perceive the country as a great example to others for several aspects. The deeply rooted connection between Norwegians and their outdoor life, the culture of consensus, trust and humbleness, and the community involvement in protecting natural landscapes (of which Jan Nordstrøm and his followers are an inspiring example), offer a strong foundation and potential for caring for valuable natural environments and traditions.

Overall, this thesis allowed me to experience in practice what I have so often discussed in theory during my MADE master programme. Concepts such as stakeholder dynamics, contested values, planning as politics, the influence of bottom-up and citizen-led initiatives, the challenges of implementing sustainability in practice, the role of entrepreneurship and innovation, the influence of (monetary) power, and the practice and risks of participatory planning have become real. This project brought together several elements of my MADE program: interdisciplinary

research, attention to both underlying systems and real-life stories, and engaging within a complex, urban context. In that sense, it has really evolved in the final piece of my master's studies.

As I leave Norway today, I take with me more than just various chaotic mindmaps, handwritten notes and printed transcripts. I am very thankful for this experience and for the people who made it possible. I want to thank everyone who shared their time and perspectives with me, whether on a trail, in an office, during a Teams call, or in the train. Bit-by-bit, these stories constructed my understanding of how we shape our values and urban environments.



Figure 19

View from the plane window during a flight from Bergen to Amsterdam

Note. Picture taken by me in June 2025.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guides

Interviewee 1a (Leader Naturvernforbundet Hordaland)

Background, Initial Involvement and Motivations

1. Background information?
2. Can you recall the first moment you heard about the Kildn case? What triggered your interests and involvements?
3. What are your main concerns about Kildn?
4. What has been your motivation to resist this project over all these years?
 - a. What keeps you going?

Community Engagement and Personal Role

5. How do local people react to the project? What issues matter most to them?
6. When you communicate about the project, what key ideas/messages do you find the most important to share?
7. How do you see your role in the Eidsvikas Venner community?
8. How do you see your role in influencing decisions over the Kildn project?
9. How do you challenge the ideas on a small and large scale?
10. What have you learned about yourself over these years?
11. Have you experienced any sacrifices over these days? / Did you pay a price for your ideals?

Case-Related Questions

12. How is Friends of the Earth involved?
13. Do you collaborate with other activist groups?
14. Did you encounter resistance / support about your opposition? If so, from whom or what?
15. What developments/outcomes do you expect?
16. What are things you would still like to know about this case? What is still unclear to you?
17. Is a similar case/struggle also seen at other places in Norway?
18. What are the actors on a bigger scale/internationally?
19. What has been the role of citizen engagement / participation in the land-use planning process?
 - a. Have you noticed any underrepresented groups?
 - b. What has been the level of transparency of the decision-making process?
20. What fascinates you about the developers?
 - a. Do you know where they get the money from?
 - b. Do you know if they have contact with the landowners?

Interviewee 1b (Leader Naturvernforbundet Hordaland)

Understanding the Public Values at Stake

1. What do you see as your role in the planning process of Kildn?
2. What are the main reasons why you oppose the Kildn project?
3. What are the main reasons why Eidsvikas Venner opposes the Kildn project?
4. What values do you believe are at stake in this conflict? (e.g., environmental protection, economic growth, social equity, cultural heritage)
5. Who are the key stakeholders in this conflict?
6. How do you think the municipality and developers justify the project? Do they emphasize different values?

Communication

7. What do you do to promote your values?
8. How does Eidsvikas Venner communicate its position to the public and policymakers? (Social media, protests, legal actions, lobbying, etc.?)
9. How do you engage people to join the Eidsvikas Venner group and stay motivated?
10. Have you communicated with other stakeholders? Have you talked to the entrepreneurs?
11. Have you noticed any particular tactics used by the municipality or developers to frame their position?
12. Have you countered their framing of the project, if so, how do you counter their framing of the project?
13. Did you also experience that the municipality and developers responded to your actions? If so, how? (How did others influence the communication and decision-making of Eidsvikas Venner?)

Impact on planning

14. How has the municipality handled public participation and community concerns?
15. What is the role of Eidsvikas Venner in relation to planning processes in the Kommune?
16. Could you explain how the different types of opposing pressures, e.g. public pressure from protests, petitions, or media coverage (social media, news, radio, TV, etc.) of Eidsvikas Venner had an impact on the process, perhaps with some examples?
17. Do you have trust in the decision-making capabilities of the politicians? If so, why?
18. Last time you told me that if the politicians will be presented with all the facts, they will make the right decision. Why do you think that this is the case?

Conflict

19. Do you think that certain actions have made the 'conflict' bigger? If so, what have these been? Lack of transparency, power imbalance, external interests, etc.)
20. Have there been attempts to resolve the conflict? (Negotiations, legal procedures, mediation)

Case-related questions

21. What is going on now exactly in the planning process? And what will be the next steps and your actions to influence the planning process?
22. Why do you keep resisting the project, although the chance of succeeding with Kildn is little?
23. Who do you believe is the leader of the opposition?
24. What lessons can be learned from this case for future urban planning in Askøy?
25. And reflecting on your long-term involvement, what have been the most important lessons for you?
26. Is there anything you would like to add or mention? Something I did not ask?

Interviewees 2 and 3 (Eidsvikas Venner Members)

Beginning – let them talk openly about the 'conflict'

1. Could you introduce yourself? What do you do in your daily life and what is your relation to the Askøy island?
2. When did you hear the first time about the Kildn-project? And what were your first thoughts about it?
 - a. How did your opinions about it change over time?
3. What specific concerns about the Kildn project have you heard people discuss? Which of these matter to you mostly?

Eidsvikas Venner

4. How did Eidsvikas Venner form as a group? Could you describe the early days of organizing?
 - a. Could you describe the identity of Eidsvikas Venner?

5. What is your role with Eidsvikas Venner?
6. When and why did you join the group?
7. How do others perceive Eidsvikas Venner?
 - a. Is this different then the way you see yourself?
 - b. Does this influence the way you act?
8. What personally motivated you to become active in the resistance against the Kildn project?
9. How has your involvement changed over time?

Framing Strategies & Communication

10. How would you describe what Eidsvikas Venner stands for in relation to the Kildn project?
11. When communicating your concerns about the project, what specific aspects do you try to emphasize and why?
12. Could you walk me through how your group decided on the main messages to communicate to the public? / How do you decide which information to share on Facebook or on other channels?
 - a. How do you think these aspects connect to broader values or concerns within the community?
13. What role do emotions play in how is communicated about the project?
14. Could you recall a moment when a particular post or message gained a lot of traction/attention with Askøy residents? Why do you think it resonated with the people?
15. Have you noticed any changes in how the group has framed its opposition over time?

Mobilisation & Collective action

16. What strategies have you used to engage and mobilise people? What has worked well and what has not?
17. Have you noticed a shift in public support over time? If so, what has caused this?
18. What do you see as the biggest challenge in mobilizing people against the Kildn project?

Role and other parties

19. How do you view the role of the leader of Naturvernforbundet in mobilizing resistance against Kildn? / What is his role in Eidsvikas Venner?
20. How would you describe your interactions with...
 - a. Tertnes Holding?
 - b. Askøy Kommune?
 - c. Local media?
21. What do you believe to be the intentions of these (Tertnes, Municipality, Media) parties?
22. How do you think Tertnes Holding has framed their side of the debate? How do you counter their arguments?
23. Have you noticed any attempts from Tertnes Holding or the municipality or other people to reframe or challenge your group's narratives?
24. How do you respond when these parties present counterarguments to your position?

Political Process

25. How open and transparent have you found the decision-making process so far? Could you give an example of something which increased your trust in the decision-making yes or no?

Ending

26. What do you consider your group's biggest achievement so far?
 - a. How do you think your group has shaped how people understand the development plans in Askøy?
27. Is there anything outsiders misunderstand about Eidsvikas Venner or your motivations?
28. Is there something important that I haven't asked that you would like to share?

Interviewee 4 (Spokesperson Naturvernforbundet Norway)

1. Short introduction of her and background?
2. Why was the NRK article such an eye-opener for Norwegians?
3. How does Naturvernforbundet give nature a voice in Norway?
 - a. How does Naturvernforbundet make nature a political subject?
 - b. What are the communication strategies?
4. (Political actions) What strategies does Naturvernforbundet use to influence local politics? / How is their ideal – give nature a voice – realized?
 - a. Which are successful?
 - b. Which are not successful?
 - c. Which actions have a mobilizing effect?
5. How do the messages of Naturvernforbundet align with a broader discourse in Norway? / How does Naturvernforbundet try to influence the public debate?
6. How to communicate to broader public?
7. How is often reacted by other parties (local governments/entrepreneurs) to these actions of Naturvernforbundet? / How does it align with bigger power structures?
8. Does Naturvernforbundet has 'trust' in their local governments?
9. Does Naturvernforbundet work a lot together with NRK?

Interviewees 5a and 5b (Developers Tertnes Holding)

Background

1. Could you briefly introduce yourself and your relation to the Kidln project?
2. Could you please describe the beginning of Kidln? What were the initial ideas and key objectives? – transform the tourism and transport sector
 - a. What did you write in your plans about nature?
3. What public values do you see as central to this urban development? (Economic growth, sustainability, housing, infrastructure, etc.)
4. Have these values shifted throughout the planning process?
5. What do you do to promote your values?
 - a. Spaces?
 - b. Formats?
 - c. Rhythms?
 - d. Why do you do this?

Urban development planning process

6. What is the role of Kidln in relation to the urban development plans in the Kommune?
7. How did the planning process work so far for them?
 - a. How can a private party come and apply for land-use changing plans? How does this work?

Other stakeholders

8. With what other parties do you communicate? What are other relevant stakeholders?
 - a. How have you engaged with the local community?
9. How do you inform the other stakeholders about your plans? And what do you communicate?
10. How do you perceive the opposition from Eidsvikas Venner?
11. What do you think are the main concerns of the opposition? Why do you think that people could be against the plans?
12. Have you adjusted the project based on public input or concerns? If so, in what ways?

Conflict & Planning problems

13. Have there been specific moments when the conflict has intensified? What happened?
14. How do you respond to claims that the planning process has been controversial / not realistic?
15. How do you deal with the fact that certain information is missing? (According to Statsforvalter information is missing on impact on marine biodiversity. Administration miss information on maritime safety and traffic)
16. How do you see the role of local government in this process?

Finance

17. How is the Kildn project financed?
18. Who are the main investors of financial partners?
19. How do financial considerations shape your planning process?
 - a. Are there any financial risks?

Conflict Resolution & The Future of Kildn

20. What mechanisms have been used (or could be used) to resolve tensions with stakeholders?
21. Have you experienced similar conflicts in other projects? If so, what lessons can be applied?
22. What do you think is the ideal outcome of this process for all parties involved?
23. What will happen when Kildn is not approved??

Ending

24. Out of personal interest, the article of NRK on 'nedbygging' has been referred to a lot during my interviews. Do you know the article and what do you think of it?
25. Is there something I did not ask but that you would like to mention?

Interviewees 6a and 6b (Spokespersons Statsforvalteren)

1. Could you start by outlining the main roles for the Statsforvalteren in Vestland, and what each of you do?
2. Under what circumstances do you get involved in decisions about land use? (e.g. when the law may be broken, to offer guidance to align with policy etc), and what forms can your intervention take? (e.g. advice, legal action, fines?)
3. What was the first time you heard about Kildn and what were your thoughts about it?
4. What do you see as the main reasons of conflict concerning Kildn?
5. Have you taken any steps to mediate this conflict?
6. In general, what is your role in handling these local land-use conflicts?
7. Which groups do you think have the most influence in shaping land-use and urban development decisions in Vestland?
8. I understand from your website that you have a responsibility to ensure that fundamental principles such as equal treatment, equality, consistency, freedom of action, impartiality and justice are safeguarded in the administration (*å sjå til at grunnleggjande prinsipp som likebehandling, likeverd, føreseielegheit, handlefridom, habilitet og rettferd blir sikra i forvaltninga*); in the light of these commitments, how do you ensure that different voices are heard and receive equal treatment in the planning process?
9. In what ways do you work with the Fylke on planning and environmental policy?
10. How do you assess cases like Kildn? Upon what information do you base your final decisions?
11. How come such a project which already received a negative advice from you in the first hearing – can still continue?
12. NRK showed the national impact of nedbygging in their impactful article in 2024. This article showed that every minute a lot of hectares of Norwegian nature is lost. I had a conversation with the journalist of the article and one of his main questions is: why does Statsforvalteren not stop more of these building projects? – What are your thoughts on this?

13. Who has the final decision power concerning such urban development projects, *or does it depend on the nature of the case (and if so, how?)*
14. How do you think that political corruption and close ties in small towns affect land-use decisions in Norwegian municipalities?
15. So far, I have discovered that every party in this case has their incentives and there are few third-parties involved. The third-parties which are involved, are often introduced by the stakeholders themselves. I wonder, who are the non-incentivised eyes in this case?

Interviewee 7 (Spokesperson Fylkeskommune Vestland)

1. What is the county's role in approving and overseeing large-scale urban development projects like Kildn?
2. What is your power-structure?
3. What are the shared values of the Vestland county? / What do they stand for?
4. Conflict – where do you see conflict popping up in the county? People feeling not heard?
5. How does the county government balance regional and national sustainability goals (e.g., Norway's Green Transition) with local concerns and opposition?
6. How does the county ensure that public voices and concerns are considered in urban development decisions? / How does he view/consider local opposition?
7. Transparency is often seen as a key factor in public trust. How does the county communicate decisions about projects like Kildn to the public?
8. How do they gain trust from communities?
9. In large development projects like Kildn, different stakeholders (e.g., developers, municipalities, activists) have competing interests. How does the county mediate between them?
10. To what extent does the county see grassroots activism as a legitimate force in shaping urban development?
11. Does the county see the opposition to Kildn as part of a broader trend of public resistance to urban development projects in Vestland?
12. Looking ahead, do you think there is a need to adjust governance processes for balancing sustainable urban development with local resistance? If so, how?

Interviewee 8 (Mayor Askøy)

Introduction

1. In general on urban development - What are the most important public values the Askoy Kommune stands for on urban development in Askøy?
2. Is Askøy seen as a Ja-Kommune?
3. What were your first thoughts when you heard about the Kildn project?
 - a. Did you opinion change over time?
4. What do you see as the main reasons for conflict concerning Kildn?
5. Have you taken any steps to mediate or resolve the tensions around Kildn?
 - a. What strategies are used in the decision-making to resolve the conflicts?

Actors and Planning

6. Which groups or actors do you think have the most influence in shaping urban planning decisions in Askøy?
7. Are there certain groups/people not heard / marginalized groups in this case?
8. What is the role of the Fylke and National Government?
9. In a talk with someone from the FylkesKomunne, he said that there is a continuous discussion whether the county should steer en stop to give guidelines to municipalities, as local municipalities want to decide by themselves. Do you recognize this in Askøy?
10. Can you explain me the planning process so far.
11. Is Kildn already part of the regional plans?

12. What happens next?
13. Do you think that the planning process has been transparent and trustworthy so far?
14. Who have binding voices in this Innspill for the land-use plan? – Who can stop the process?
15. What are ways in which the project could be stopped?
16. Some parties say that more information is needed to make a decision. Where should this information come from? Is this information provided by Tertnes?
 - a. Are any advisory bodies / third parties used in the advising?

Conflict

17. How come that the information is not clear/equal to everyone?
18. Why is it a challenging case for taking political decisions in this case? Do not understand as many parties are against it and reports are already out? Why are some parties waiting for more information?
19. What to do with Bergen port? They are really against it?
20. Do you believe there is room for compromise, and if so, what would that look like?

Ending

12. One Ocean Week – have you been on a trip with Tertnes Holding?
13. What lessons can be learned from the Kildn case for future urban development projects?
14. What did I not ask but is relevant to mention?

Interviewees 9, 10, 11, 12, 13a and 13b (Askøy Politicians)

Background and Perception Kildn

1. Could you introduce yourself? What do you do in your daily life and what is your relation to the Askøy island? And what is your role in your Party?
2. In general on urban development - What are the most important public values guiding your party's stance on urban development in Askøy?
3. What were your first thoughts when you heard about the Kildn project?
 - a. Did your opinion change over time?
4. How does your party see the Kildn project? What are their thoughts and concerns about it? And why? How does Kildn align with or conflict with your party's values?
5. How does the party weigh economic benefits vs. environmental and local concerns?

Other actors & Planning influence

6. What is the role of your party in the planning process over Kildn?
7. How do you perceive the other political parties concerning this debate?
8. What are the most influential actors in the planning process?
9. What do you think is the intention of Tertnes Holding?
10. How would you describe the role of Eidsvika's Venner in the public debate? What image did they, according to you, create around the Kildn project?
11. Have you read or participated in the Eidsvikas Venner FB group? What do you think about the way discussions are conducted there? How have they impacted the decision-making?
12. What has been the influence of each party (the developers, the public, Eidsvikas Venner) on the planning process of Kildn?
 - a. The developers
13. What provision there is for ensuring that under-represented and/or marginalized groups are included in consultations about planning proposals?
14. Do you think that the planning process is transparent and trustworthy? If so, what makes it this way?

Conflict

15. What do you see as the main reasons for conflict concerning Kildn?
16. Have you taken any steps to mediate or resolve the tensions around Kildn?
17. Do you believe there is room for compromise, and if so, what would that look like?
18. What role should your party/the municipality/higher government play in resolving conflicts over urban development projects?

Ending

19. What lessons can be learned from the Kildn case for future urban development projects?
20. Is there something I did not ask, but you find important to share/add?

Interviewees 14 and 15 (Marikoven Residents)

Beginning – let them talk openly about the ‘conflict’

1. Could you introduce yourself? What do you do in your daily life and what is your relation to the Askøy island?
2. When did you hear the first time about the Kildn-project? And what were your first thoughts about it?
 - a. How did your opinions about it change over time?
3. What do you see as the important concerns/issues about this project?
 - a. Did your concerns change over time?

Different roles and responsibilities

4. Could you tell me about which parties do you think have a say in this discussion concerning the Kildn project? And could you give an example on how they practiced their influence?
 - a. (Who do you believe is the most influential/important and why)
5. How would you describe the role of Eidsvika's Venner? What image did they, according to you, create around the Kildn project?
 - a. Do you respect them?
 - b. Do you think that they are showing true statements?
6. Have you read or participated in the Eidsvikas Venner FB group? What do you think about the way discussions are conducted there?
7. How do you see the role of the leader of Naturvernforbundet in these discussions?
 - a. Could you describe an example when you noticed his influence on the discussion?
 - b. Do you support his views? Why yes/no?
8. How do you see the role of Tertnes Holding?
 - a. How are they positioned in this debate?
 - b. What image do they create of themselves?

Politics and Governance

9. How do you judge the role of Askøy Kommune in this process? Do you have examples of the way they communicated / were involved with the project?
10. How open and transparent have you found the decision-making process so far? Could you give an example of something which increased your trust in the decision-making yes or no?
 - a. Do you think that the Kommune is really caring for its members?

Own Position and Influencing Actions

11. How do you see your own role in the project?
 - a. What is your responsibility?
 - b. What is your power?

- c. What is your intention?
 - d. Do you have the feeling that you can influence the Askøy politics and the decisions concerning the Kildn project?
- 12. Did you take any actions yourself to influence this projects? If so, could you describe these and what motivated you to do that?
 - a. Refer to the letter they wrote to the Kommune... Why did they write this (intention)? On what message did they focus and why?
- 13. Is there a certain group or individuals you talk a lot with about this project? Why?
- 14. Is there a message or argument from a party that has affected/influenced/touched you? Why?

Ending

- 15. Is there something I did not ask, but you find important to share/add?
- 16. Is there something you would still like to know about this project?

Interviewee 16 (Spokesperson Port of Bergen)

Introduction

- 1. Could you please introduce yourself and your role in the Bergen Havn?
- 2. When was the first time you heard about the Kildn project and what were your thoughts about it?
- 3. How does Bergen Havn perceive the project?
 - a. What are the main reasons why you are in favour/against it?
- 4. What did you communicate publicly about the project so far?

Planning process

- 5. What is the role of Bergen Havn concerning the planning process of Kildn?
- 6. Do you communicate with other stakeholders about this project?

Impact on development

- 7. From your perspective, what role does the Kildn project play in the economic development of the region?
- 8. How does the project align with the Port of Bergen's long-term development plans?

Benefits and Risks

- 9. What potential benefits and risks does Kildn pose for the port and surrounding businesses?
- 10. How does the project impact existing port operations, transport networks, and shipping activities?
- 11. You mentioned that the project will be difficult to realize—what are the main financial or regulatory obstacles?

Other projects

- 12. Are there other large-scale urban development projects in the region facing similar challenges?
- 13. What lessons do you think urban developers and policymakers should take from the Kildn case?
- 14. Is there something I did not ask, but you would like to add?

Interviewee 17 (Spokesperson Rodne Fjord Cruises)

- 1. What are the perceptions of Rodne Fjord Cruises on Kildn?
- 2. What do you think of their 'sustainable tourism' part?
- 3. How would it impact your company? Would their metro not replace your ideas?
- 4. Do their ideas align with your vision?

5. What would be the potential challenges of the project?

Interviewee 18 (Local Askøy journalist)

1. Could you introduce yourself?
2. When did you hear the first time about the Kildn-project? And what were your first thoughts about it?
3. What do you think is striking about this case?
4. Why do you think that there is such a strong public debate about Kildn?
5. What role do you believe that the local news has played in this public debate?
6. What do you think has been the role of Askøyværingen specifically in this debate?
7. Have you observed other local newspapers taking another stance in this debate?
8. What is the incentive of Askøyværingen in this debate?
9. In what have you reported about the case so far? What information have you shared so far? And why did you choose to share this information?
10. Which voices did you give a stage in your reporting?
11. Have any of the stakeholders/parties tried to influence the media about this case?
12. What about the case is still unclear to you?
13. What about this case / what reveals would be relevant for the local news?
14. Do you believe that you can share anything about this case in the news?
15. Which story do you think will have the final power?
16. Which structural pattern / interesting phenomenon does this case reveal which is also observed in the national debates and media?

Interviewee 21 (Researcher Discourse Analysis)

Background and General Academic Perceptions

1. Could you introduce yourself and academic background? What were academic key moments / turning points in your career?
2. You have conducted extensive research on discourse, climate narratives and the role of language in environmental conflicts. Based upon your expertise, how do you see discourse shaping environmental conflict?
3. You emphasize the power of narratives in climate communication. How do these narratives influence public perception and decision making in environmental conflicts?

Norway-Context

4. What are attitudes to sustainability / climate / nature in conversations in Norway?
5. Is this framing/discourse different compared to other countries?
6. In your studies on climate discourse... What patterns have you observed that create cultural resonance with broader audience in Norway?

Framing and Discourse

7. What discursive strategies have been most effective in challenging established power structures (particularly in environmental contexts)?
8. How do activists construct legitimacy through discourse?
9. What role does transparency play in environmental discourse?
10. What discourses do you often see to be present in urban development projects?

Interviewee 22 (Researcher Urban Geography)

1. Could you maybe introduce yourself and research interests?

Planning practices

2. What are often pitfalls / challenges in the local urban planning process in Norway?
3. What are specifically the challenges related to the local governance?
4. I have perceived the political planning process as very complex (assumptions: voluntary work, different institutions in the democratic process and personal incentives) – what does he think of this?
5. Role of values such as trust and transparency in the planning process?
6. What is the value of ‘nature’ in the local planning process?
7. How political corruption and close ties in small towns affect land-use decisions in Norwegian municipalities?

Case-specific questions

8. What challenges / interesting structures do you believe this case reveals? What do you find the most appealing of this case?
9. Which debates of the planning literature are most relevant/does my case reveal?
10. How can it be explained that such a developer cannot be stopped although there are many (official) signs against it?
11. After contact with the NRK article... Why is the Statsvernforvalteren not able to stop such an urban development project?

Future-questions

12. How do you think urban development projects can be planned in a way that is inclusive of diverse public values, especially when these values conflict?

Interviewee 23 (Researcher Urban Planning)

Questions Article

1. Your article ‘*Displacing Conflicting Goals in Planning for Sustainability? Insights from Three Norwegian Cities*’ was very interesting to me and I have some questions concerning certain statements in the article and regarding the outcomes. For instance, I would like to know what the role of (public) values has been in your studies
 - a. Why is the academic focus on ‘goals’?
2. In your view, how do conflicting public values typically shape urban development projects, particularly in smaller communities like Askøy?
3. What are some of the key actors in urban development that you believe play a central role in shaping the values that guide projects? How can these actors influence urban planning?

Planning Process

4. What are often pitfalls / challenges in the local urban planning process in Norway?
 - a. How political corruption and close ties in small towns affect land-use decisions in Norwegian municipalities?
5. What are specifically the challenges related to the local governance?
6. I have perceived the political planning process as very complex (assumptions: voluntary work, different institutions in the democratic process and personal incentives) – what does he think of this?

Perceptions Kildn

13. What challenges / interesting structures do you believe this case reveals? What do you find the most appealing of this case?
 - a. In planning process Kildn there is a conflict between different goals – what are your thoughts on this case?
14. Which debates of the planning literature are most relevant/does my case reveal?

15. How can it be explained that such a developer cannot be stopped although there are many (official) signs against it?
7. How to make an academic bridge between the mapped out conflicts and planning?
8. How can this conflict be resolved?

Ending

9. What do you see as the major challenges in urban development in the coming years, particularly in Norway, and how should we approach the tension between development and environmental sustainability?
10. How can local communities be empowered to participate more meaningfully in urban development processes, particularly when facing competing values?
11. Is there something I did not ask but you would like to add?

Interviewee 24 (Researcher Investigative Journalism)

1. Could you please tell me a bit about your work/background/interests?
2. How does the 'media sphere' work and operate in Norway?
3. How is investigative journalism perceived in Norway, and specifically in Bergen? What is its role in the public debate?
4. What are the biggest challenges investigative journalists face in Norway today?
5. Which principles should I apply if I use investigative journalism as a method for my thesis?
6. What is the current debate on nature and (urban) developments in the Norwegian media?
7. How are urban development projects typically framed in Norwegian media? What is the role of Norwegian media in such debates?
8. What kind of narratives tend to resonate with the public when it comes to urban conflicts?
9. Are there common patterns in how different stakeholders (activists, government, developers) attempt to influence media framing?
10. Many people in my research referred to the NRK article on 'Nedbygging' when discussing the Kildn case. Why do you think this article was so impactful?
11. I talked with the journalist of the NRK article and he said that "Journalists have written thousands upon thousands of stories about single building projects in nature, and very few of them have truly broken through and become major stories..." How can these local stories get a voice?
12. What types of urban development stories are typically interesting for local Bergen newspapers?
13. Based on your experience, what are the most effective ways to inspire public engagement and action?
14. In my case study, I have many different leads and interesting angles. How would you recommend structuring a coherent investigative piece when there are so many aspects to focus on?
15. What are key things to keep in mind when conducting investigative research on politically sensitive topics?
16. What are the most effective ways to pitch a story to Norwegian media outlets?
17. What have been the biggest lessons for you in your career as an investigative journalist?

Interviewee 25 (Greenpeace Activist)

Persoonlijke achtergrond

1. Kunt u kort vertellen hoe u uw reis als activist heeft doorlopen, van uw ervaringen bij Extinction Rebellion en Greenpeace tot uw huidige rol bij Hart voor de Haven? Wat heeft u gemotiveerd om telkens over te stappen en u te blijven inzetten voor deze zaken?
2. Welke lessen uit uw eerdere activisme-ervaringen heeft u het meest meegenomen en hoe past u die nu toe in uw werk met Hart voor de Haven?

Werk voor Hart voor de Haven

3. Wat is er aan de hand in de Rotterdamse haven? / Kernteam Hart van de Haven, waarom opgericht? Welk probleem proberen ze op te lossen?
4. Welke strategieën gebruikt u om bewoners, lokale organisaties en andere stakeholders samen te brengen, zeker in gebieden waar nog geen georganiseerde bewonersgroep bestaat?
5. Wat is de rol van 'taal'/discours?
6. Welke specifieke woorden, concepten of verhaallijnen hebben jullie bewust gekozen om jullie boodschap te framen? Hoe zijn deze frames in de loop van de tijd geëvolueerd?
7. Hoe hebben jullie bij het Havenfonds geprobeerd om legitimiteit op te bouwen voor jullie positie? Welke argumenten of discursieve strategieën bleken het meest effectief in het verkrijgen van steun?
8. Hart voor de Haven wil de stem van de bewoners richting de gemeente en het havenbedrijf versterken. Hoe ervaart u de samenwerking en/of weerstand vanuit deze grote institutionele actoren?
9. Hoe proberen jullie een collectieve identiteit te creëren onder de diverse groep van havenbewoners en havenmedewerkers? Welke gedeelde zorgen of waarden staan centraal in dit proces?
10. Welke onverwachte uitdagingen of kansen zijn jullie tegengekomen bij het opzetten van het Havenfonds als concreet alternatief?

Algemeen en activisme

11. Wat heeft u persoonlijk geleerd over effectief activisme tijdens uw jarenlange betrokkenheid? Welke inzichten zou u willen delen met opkomende activisten?
12. Welke eigenschappen zijn essentieel voor inzetten maatschappelijke projecten?
18. Heeft u een prijs betaald voor uw idealen?
19. In hoeverre speelt kennis van academisch onderzoek over sociale bewegingen en activisme een rol in uw praktische werk? Zijn er specifieke theorieën of concepten die u nuttig heeft gevonden?
20. Welke rol spelen digitale en sociale media in jullie activistische strategieën? Hoe heeft dit de dynamiek van jullie beweging veranderd?
21. Welke rol ziet u voor burgerinitiatieven in het vormgeven van stedelijk beleid, zowel lokaal als in bredere maatschappelijke contexten?
22. Wie is verder nog interessant om te spreken? Wat nog interessant om te lezen?

Appendix B: Stakeholder Map

Latest update stakeholder map: May 2025

Acknowledgement:

This stakeholder overview is compiled to the best of my knowledge. The actors included, their roles and general stances are subject to revision and may not be exhaustive. Information is obtained from interview data and document analysis (see Chapter 3: Methodology for a full overview).

Stakeholder	Type	Position to Kildn proposal	Explanation of positionality
Statsforvalteren	State government	Negative	Objections on infrastructure, environmental concerns, land use planning and climate adaptation
Directorate Vestland Fylke Kommune	Provincial government	Negative	Mentioned possible negative consequences for: the nature and the climate (e.g they found red-listed species there and acknowledges that the wetland stores a large amount of CO ₂), people's access to recreational area, and unreasonable required changes in the infrastructure of Askøy to accommodate the project.
Ordfører Askøy Municipality for Fylkes Kommune Vestland	Provincial government	Negative	Major objections; environmental damage, climate concerns, poor urban planning, loss of agricultural land, car-dependent urban sprawl. The plan exceeds housing needs and lacks proper environmental impact assessments. Highly against Kildn port.
Askøy Municipality 'Styret' – coalition of strongest parties in the parliament	Municipality	Divided	The local government has remained non-committal, choosing to listen to all parties before taking a position. By including the proposal in the land-use plan, they have kept both options open: ending the project or allowing it to move forward
Øygarden Municipality	Municipality	Supportive	Foresees industrial collaboration and sustainable economic growth in Askøy and Øygarden. A zero-emission port in Askøy could complement Bergen Port's container activities in Øygarden. Øygarden is known as the "yes-kommune" and had massive development in the last years for huge projects claiming land and nature.
Bergen Kommune	Municipality	Unclear, but explicitly wants to be informed and involved	No major objections. Support new center structure for compact urban growth, benefiting climate goals and public health. They do have concerns about impact on Bergen' cruise tourism.
SV Askøy	Local organisation of the Socialist Party (SV) in Norway.	Negative	Opposes Kildn project due to severe environmental damage, infrastructure challenges, maritime safety risks, and negative public health effects. Advices to remove Kildn from the plan and develop a ferry network independently on the cruise port.

Askøylisten, MDG, AP, INP, SV	Local parties Askøy municipality	Negative	Do not support Tertnes Holding project due to climate, infrastructure and health risks.
Høyre, FrP, SP, Venstre, Pensjonistpartier	Local parties Askøy municipality	Supportive	Will look further into plans Tertnes Holding.
Follese Felleskap	Landowner group Eidsvika/Træss marka	Unclear	The landowners have an interest in the area being rezoned for commercial development, as the current designation under the municipal plan (LNF: agriculture, nature, and recreation) restricts such possibilities. While their individual intentions are not fully known, selling the land would generally require a zoning change to attract potential buyers like Tertnes Holding.
Tertnes Holding AS	Kildn developers	Supportive	Proposed plans for Kildn: first zero-emission cruise port and fjord metro hub.
Skyss	Regional public transport company	Unclear	
European Cruise Service		Supportive	Kildn expected to create increase in tourism in the area and can consequently create more opportunities for transport, hotels and jobs
Fjord1	Ferry company	Supportive	Kildn expected to create increase in tourism in the area and can consequently create more opportunities for transport, hotels and jobs
Fjord Tours AS	Fjord Tour Company	Supportive	Kildn expected to create increase in tourism in the area and can consequently create more opportunities for transport, hotels and jobs
Rødne Fjord Cruise	Fjord cruise company	Supportive	Kildn expected to create increase in tourism in the area and can consequently create more opportunities for transport, hotels and jobs
Næringsalliansen Vestland	Business association Vestland	Supportive	Kildn expected to create increase in tourism in the area and can consequently create more opportunities for transport, hotels and jobs
Visit Bergen	Tourism company Bergen	Supportive	(Unknown)
De Historiske AS (hoteller)	Hotel Company Bergen	Supportive	(Unknown)
Jan Nordstrøm	Leader Askøy Nature Conservation Association	Negative	Last untouched coastal regions. Opposing rezoning port, rezoning Follese Pier, large-scale housing developments and industrial expansion. Emphasizes the impact on biodiversity and conflict with Montreal Agreement. Advice to follow old KPA plan.
Marikoven residents	Residents	Negative	Environmental concerns, loss of public access to nature, threats to local recreation and public health. Also, the proposal contradicts the international commitments to protect biodiversity. Area is last untouched coastline in Askøy.
Marikoven Industrinabolag	Askøy local industry organisation	Negative	Objects plans due to concerns about infrastructure limitations (Askøy lacks docks, charging stations, roads, parking, public transport) while nearby

			Bergen already has cruise facilities. Also shares concerns on geological unsuitability for construction and potential negative effects on biodiversity, landscape and recreational areas.
Eidsvikas Venner	Facebook group with around 1500 members	N.a.	Follow the case and post all information on the case.
Statens Vegvesen	Norwegian Public Roads Administration	Negative	Concerns about road capacity and traffic safety.
Norges Vassdrags- og Energidirektorat (NVE)	Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate	Negative	Send objections on infrastructure, environmental concerns, land use planning and climate adaptation to the Askøy municipality County Governor.
Kystverket	Norwegian Coastal Administration	Negative	Send objections on infrastructure, environmental concerns, land use planning and climate adaptation to the Askøy municipality. Foresee serious safety concerns.
Forsvarsbygg	Norwegian Defence Estates Agency (Responsible for managing real estate for the Norwegian military)	Negative	Send objections on infrastructure, environmental concerns, land use planning and climate adaptation to the Askøy municipality.
COWI	Environmental Impact Assessment	Negative	Mitigation measures will not be sufficient, Kildn will have negative impact on biodiversity. Irreversible damage to coastal landscape and influence visual scenery. Reduce children's access to public green and increase traffic risks.
Askøyværingen	Local Askøy newspaper	N.a.	Follow the case and share information on the case.
Askøy24	Local Askøy newspaper	N.a.	Follow the case and share information on the case.

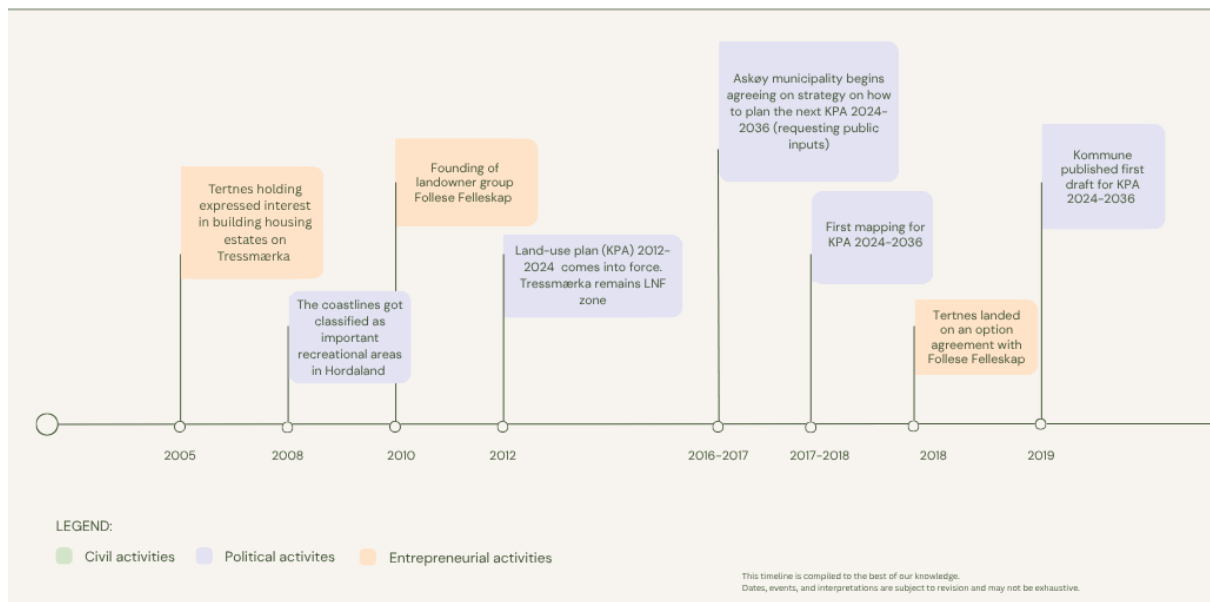
Appendix C: Key Moments KPA Planning of Kildn 2020 – 2024

Latest update timeline: June 2025

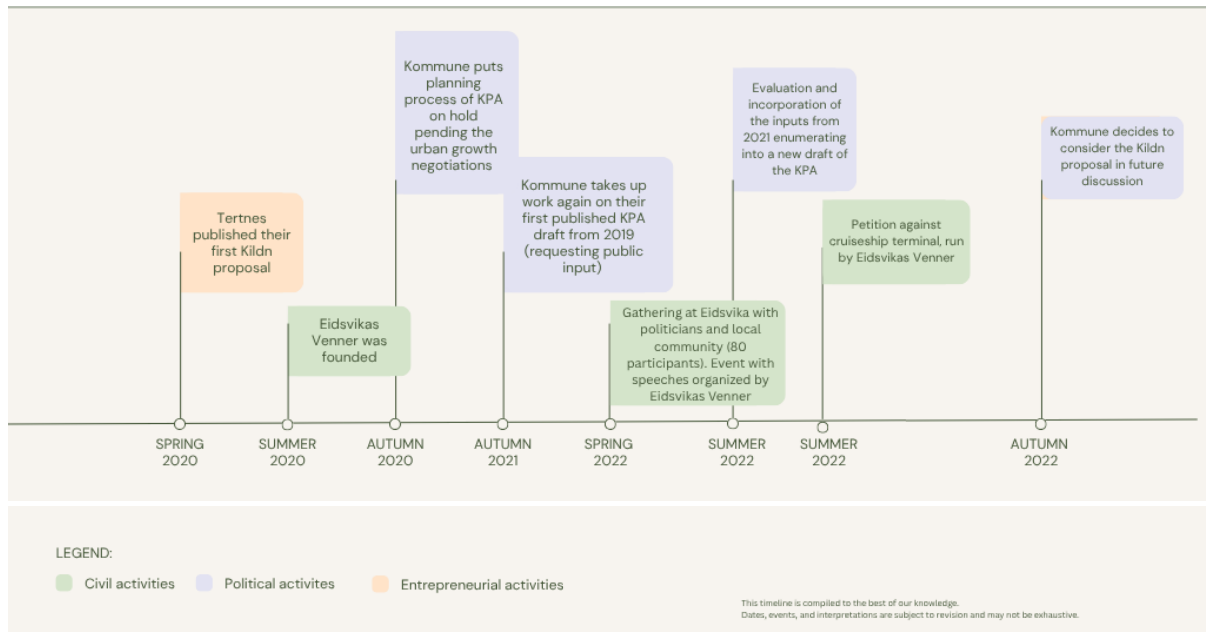
Acknowledgement:

This timeline of the KPA planning over Kildn is compiled to the best of my knowledge. The dates, events and interpretations are subject to revision and may not be exhaustive. Information is obtained from interview data and document analysis (see Chapter 3: Methodology for a full overview).

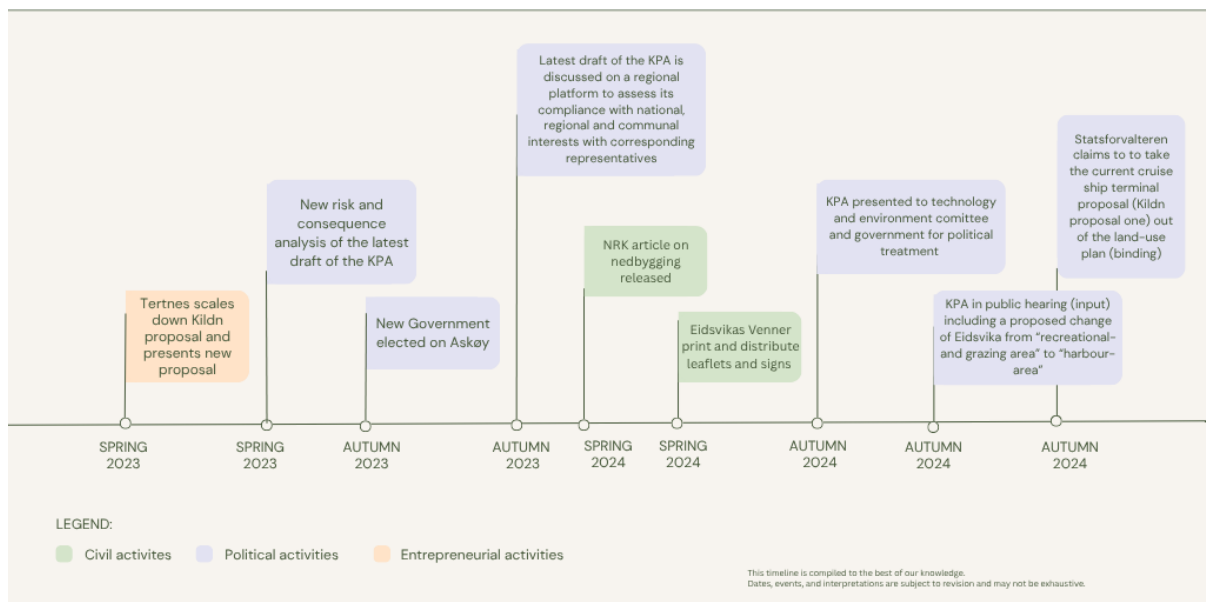
PRE 2020



2020 - 2022



2023 - 2024



Appendix D: Information Design

Norway's "Green Shift": How We're Nibbling Away the Planet

Bergen, 29-05-2025

Emily van Dijk



Figure 1

Picture of a resident guiding the author around Eidsvika, Askøy island in Norway

Note. Photo taken by the author in March 2025.

It is March 20, 2025, when Helge Sivertsen guides me along the rocky, untouched coastline of Eidsvika. Enclosed by marshes and ancient forest, the bay of Eidsvika is a popular outdoor spot for residents of Askøy, an island near the city of Bergen in Norway's Vestland province¹.

As we walk, he pauses and points across the water." Here," he sighs, "is where developers want to build a massive infrastructure project called *Kildn*. The project aims to become the "world's first fully zero-emission cruise port," envisioned as a central hub for regional fjord metro, fjord tourism and cruise ship docking in Vestland²." The label sounds promising, but it masks a global truth: we keep taking tiny bites of nature, one so-called sustainable project at a time.



Figure 2

Visualisation of the Kildn project

Note. Image presented by Tertnes Holding on their website (Tertnes Holding, 2025a).

The developers of Kildn present their cruise-tourism project as a contribution to Norway's *Green Shift*³. This concept lies at the heart of Norway's climate narratives, referring to the nation's ambition to create a "green economy" which involves restructuring and diversifying the economy to reduce emissions while maintaining economic growth and securing social welfare^{4,5,6}.

Yet despite serious environmental concerns raised by official bodies and residents^{7,8,9}, the Kildn development has remained on the Askøy political agenda for over five years¹⁰. While many politicians are hesitant to voice their opinions, the developers' narrative about sustainable economic growth opportunities that are linked to their green investments seems worth considering for several politicians^{11,12,13}.

But how "green" is the narrative in reality? By 2025, it is widely recognised that the tourism sector – and cruise tourism in particular – ranks amongst the most environmentally damaging industries. Per passenger, a cruise holiday emits about twice as much CO₂ as an equivalent trip by plane, not even mentioning the fact that most people first hop on a flight to reach the cruise. The fuel combustion of cruise ships contributes significantly to air pollution, releasing large amounts of sulphur oxides and fine particulates, which seriously threaten human health. Additionally, the great size and waste discharges put pressure on fragile marine ecosystems. While sustainable alternatives, such as electric ferries and cleaner fuels, are in progress, none have achieved the scale needed to realise Kildn's zero-emission promise^{14,15,16}. Therefore, rather than representing genuine sustainable growth, such developments are clear examples of greenwashing.

However, this debate over the Kildn developments is not a local story. It reflects a national paradox: Norway's green image versus the reality on the ground.

Norway, a Green Frontrunner?

Norway is perceived as a "green frontrunner"^{17,18}, pioneering in environmental measurements such

as implementing a carbon tax¹⁸, and holding ambitious climate goals, including the aim to be fossil-free by 2050¹⁹. Next to this, the country's environmental responsibility is supported by its perception of nature as an integral part of its identity²⁰. Norwegian outdoor culture is even legalised under a 1957 Act of Parliament, providing three public rights: the ability to roam freely across the countryside, camp temporarily overnight, and gather wild foods such as berries and fish, with only a few small limitations²¹.

However, Norway's image as a great protector of the climate and natural environment can be disputed. Under the guise of the "green transition", natural areas in Norway are constantly being sacrificed for economic interests.

This trend of destruction of nature for "sustainable initiatives" has been a high matter of discussion the recent years, especially due to widespread opposition to renewable energy projects, such as wind farm developments on the grounds of the indigenous Sámi population^{22,23}. Next to this, Norway's national news broadcast, NRK, revealed the totality of this "bit-by-bit" destruction of nature through mapping 44,000 national instances of nature loss over the past five years by using AI-generated maps from Google's Dynamic World project. Not all nature sacrifices were due to Green Shift developments; other causes for destruction were transport infrastructures, cabin constructions, housing and business parks²⁴.



Figure 3

Image which highlights a selection of the 44,000 interventions that have been carried out across Norwegian nature.

Note. Image from the article "Norge I rødt, hvitt og grått" (NRK, 2024) by Norge i Bilder.

Of all these destructions that were reported, many included valuable natural areas, such as habitats for red-listed species, untouched nature, marshes, coastal zones, waterways, wild reindeer areas and forests with large amounts of carbon storage. All areas which are crucial for preserving a sustainable and green future²⁴. Just like the bay in Eidsvika.

The article spread a shockwave throughout the country, becoming one of NRK's top ten most-read online news stories ever in a few days²⁵. According to the NRK's journalists, the story made many municipalities pause and reflect²⁶. However, the actionable impact can be questioned, as according to the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Norwegian municipalities have decided to increase development in Norway by almost 40%. This will – interestingly - happen mostly in forests²⁷.

National Tensions, Played out Locally

In Norway, local governments manage around 83% of the national territory under the Planning and Building Act, with no national agency overseeing the development planning^{28,29}. This makes it especially important to examine land-use decisions at the local level to understand how the sacrifice of natural areas, often in the name of sustainable development, continues to take place.

On this municipal scale, natural environments seem to lose out to economic future visions, presented and legitimised through discursive strategies within political structures. A closer look at the case on Askøy will shed some light on this structural issue.

Signs of Local Lobbying

In Askøy's local democratic system, politicians serve voluntarily¹², which often leads to conflicts between personal and professional interests. Despite recent population growth, Askøy remains a close-knit community where “everyone knows everyone,” and political opinions spread quickly. This is typical for Norwegian municipalities, as 51% of the municipalities have less than 5000 inhabitants³⁰. As one Askøy politician put it: “It's quite small here, so if you use any quotes, please give me a heads up”³¹, highlighting how intertwined and personal local politics can be.

Monetary Power vs. Voluntary Efforts

The competition to promote economic development or nature preservation is based on divergent resources. Where the developers of Kildn have already spent millions of Kroner on marketing efforts, which professionally visualised their future ideals¹⁰, local opposition depends on voluntary forces and an active Facebook group to get their message of nature preservation across³².



Figure 4

Marketing material of Kildn

Note. Screenshots of Kildn’s marketing brochure page (Tertnes Holding, 2025b).

Limits of Democracy

The classic “small man’s fight against big developers” is a common story in Norwegian land-use conflicts³³. Askøy’s democratic municipal system gives both sides a seat at the table, yet oversight from regional and national authorities remains weak and reluctant to intervene, insisting the decision stays local³⁴.

Despite serious formal objections from higher governance levels, the regional or national bodies have not yet stopped the project³⁴, exposing a confusion over decision-making authority and power. This confusion causes a tricky situation as these local decisions add up to large amounts of nature destruction on broader scales.

No Independent Eyes on Nature

Next to this, the “voice of nature” struggles to obtain legitimacy due to several reasons. A striking finding is that the environmental impact assessments on Eidsvika are done by consultants hired by the developers¹². No independent agency has done the evaluations. This is a common trend amongst Norway’s land-use planning processes³⁵. Are therefore environmental assessments becoming sales documents?

Inter-Municipality Competition for Growth

Furthermore, the local economy of Askøy is threatened with bankruptcy³⁶ and aspires to become a *Ja-Kommune* (Yes-municipality), a municipality which welcomes growth and investments, to better their financial situation. In this endeavour for economic gain, they are in constant tension and

competition with other surrounding municipalities³⁷ – a dynamic that reflects a broader trend of inter-municipality competition for growth and development infrastructures across Norway³⁵.

Green Promises

The Kildn developments are promised to increase the value of the site, offering local jobs, tax incomes, and increased tourism incomes³⁸. Therefore, “green” is marketed as an attractive future ideal of which the municipality has a lot to gain, easily resonating with pro-growth politicians. However, this narrative legitimises environmental harm by prioritising economic gains, effectively sidelining nature, whose value is not expressed in financial terms.

A Local Formula for Global Nature Loss

Although no final decision has yet been made on Kildn, this case reveals how local lobbying, diffused political authority, and a persuasive greenwashing narrative combine to ensure that environmentally harmful developments move forward. This combination of forces constitutes a familiar formula for nature loss in Norway – and, as it turns out, around the world.

These local, seemingly minor decisions add up and undermine Norway’s national climate goals. Especially in the context of the much-celebrated Green Shift, this raises the critical question: some nature loss might be inevitable for realising this ideal, but where do we draw the line?



Figure 5
Natural landscape of Eidsvika’s bay on Askøy, Norway

Note. Photo taken by the author in March 2025.

It becomes particularly ironic when that line is not drawn for a claimed “sustainable cruise port”... It is a sharp reflection of Norway’s broader climate paradox: while promoting itself as a global leader in sustainability, the country sacrifices small patches of nature on a massive national scale, destroying the nation’s green image. The contradiction could not have been clearer.

Yet this pattern is not only fixed to Norway’s borders. Zoom out and you will see the same playbook everywhere: glossy “green” development plans nibble away nature, one small bite at a time. Are we therefore destroying the planet in the very name of saving it?

If the global climate fight is won – or lost – project by project on a local scale, we must keep cases like Eidsvika in the spotlight. Not only in national debates, but across international and local media as well.

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