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## **Governance in the experience oriented economy**

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*Published in:*

International conference: Regions in focus?

*Publication date:*

2007

*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Hansen, C. J., Lorentzen, A., & Lassen, C. (2007). Governance in the experience oriented economy. In International conference: Regions in focus?: Conference abstract volume (Vol. 1, pp. 34). Regional Studies Association.

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Regional Studies Association  
Regions in Focus Conference  
2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> April 2007 Lisbon  
Workshop 5: Spatial strategies and city regions

## Governance in the Experience-oriented City?

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to tentatively explore how the emergence of an experience economy (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999; Jantzen & Jensen, 2006) may influence, transform or relate to new forms of urban governance. The aim is to help establish and further qualify research questions for investigating into the role of governance arrangements and how to act strategically and collectively in the experience-oriented city.

This paper is part of a recently initiated research project, The City in the Experience Economy, at Aalborg University. The project aims to assess the barriers and levers for experience based development in small cities in relation to: 1) the location of experience based consumption, production and innovation; 2) mobility forms and patterns enabling experience production and consumption; and 3) the development of experience based urban development strategies. It is the intention of this paper to contribute to the third bullet point of the project by exploring and searching for challenges and opportunities in rethinking urban governance, or public policymaking and collective action, in relation to experience-oriented urban development

First, the paper will provide a short presentation of how the research project conceptualises the experience economy in relation to urban development. In the following section current general trends, shifts and developments in regulation, public policymaking and collective action are presented, and some overall challenges for urban governance in the experience-oriented city are then tentatively pointed out.

Next, the Danish context is explored, through literature and document studies, in order to search for: current trends in the experience-based economy in Denmark; general changes in forms of governing in Denmark; and specific changes in policies and plans as well as policymaking and planning concerning experience-based activities and urban governance in Denmark. In addition, the small city of Horsens will be used as an explorative case in order to search for concrete challenges and opportunities for urban governance in the experience-oriented city. Horsens is well-known in Denmark for having changed its image completely as well as a fair part of its economy from an industrial to an experience-

oriented basis in only a decade. The case strongly indicates that changed governance settings and practices were decisive in this transformation.

In the final discussion we look across the previous sections in order to pinpoint research questions for the study of governance in the experience-oriented city. In doing so, we draw in new perspectives concerned with a more flexible strategic urban management (Aschér, 2002) – hoping that this may aid us in understanding and researching urban governance settings and practices in an era often characterised by complexity and transformation.

### **THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY AND (SMALL) CITIES?**

This research project approaches the experience economy from an evolutionary perspective. Our point of departure is the broad notion of techno-economic paradigms, introduced by Perez (1985).

According to Perez, the economy develops in long waves, each characterised by particular key factors, cost structures, investment patterns, location geographies, and inter-branch relationship. Each wave is also characterized by particular socio-institutional frameworks, involving relative proportions and character of public and private responsibility, the provision of education and training, the distribution of income, the organization of workers and major interest groups among others. The paradigms and institutions evolve historically, but coexist for long periods of time, and each paradigm has its own specific geography.

The experience economy is connected with the production and consumption of experiences. An experience occurs when individuals become engaged, and experiences are memorable (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999). Experiences are connected to using physical products and service products, visiting places and undertaking activities. People use still more money for experience based consumption, and experience is deliberately added to still more products, activities and places. Investment in experience based activities is growing. New locations emerge as economically dynamic places of experiences, while old (industrial) locations offer new attractions. Costs structures change, implying a lowering of prices for travel and communication. New actors, networks, interdependencies and strategies emerge for the production and consumption of experiences, and new educations emerge, e.g. in tourism and

planning. Geographically the location patterns seem to differ from those of the knowledge economy in being much less amenable to concentrate in large metropolitan areas only.

In the industrial economy firms have clustered in cities in order to reduce costs by being proximate to markets, supplies and labour. People located in cities because they wanted to socialize and benefit from different facilities and services (Glaeser, 2001). In the knowledge economy firms tend to locate in cities with access to specialists, research and decision making centres, preferably in large metropolises (Simmie, 2003). The specialists and the creative classes have tended to locate in large cities with a varied offer of culture (Florida, 2005; Florida, 2002). The metropolises have grown to the detriment of smaller cities, reinforced by the intensified competition among cities (Brenner, 2004; Simmie, 2003; van den Berg, Pol & van Winden, 2004). In the experience economy, however, the location of people and economic activities may prove to de-concentrate in some cases, as small cities have begun to produce events, places, activities and goods related to culture, heritage and authenticity (Meethan, 1996; Wilks-Heeg & North, 2004).

On this background the overall hypothesis of this research project is that the experience economy represents a new range of opportunities or for the development of small cities situated in the periphery of the knowledge economy.

We have developed our ideas applying the notions of location, governance and mobility, which we see as interdependent and mutually reinforcing dimensions of a techno-economic paradigm. Location concerns the physical location of economic activities and consumers. Mobility is about the technologies and resources involved in moving people and ideas, and creating spaces and networks in support of it. Governance relates to the socio-political logic of governing, in particular the interaction of actors and interests. See Lorentzen et al (2007).

Given the focus on urban governance in this paper, the next section opens up a discussion on current general changes in governing and regulation, and in particular on how such changes may interrelate with experience-based transformation of cities.

## URBAN GOVERNANCE IN TRANSFORMATION?

### **From government to governance**

During the latest 10-15 years, policymaking and planning activities seem to have changed in ways that increasingly have been characterised using terms of dialogue, cooperation, networks and new public management – and a move in focus from government to governance.<sup>1</sup> In general, it is claimed that hierarchically organised institutions increasingly find it difficult to handle contemporary and often rapid social, technological and economic changes through schematic top-down regulatory approaches. In response to an apparent limited range of predefined and set solutions and approaches in governing and regulation, it seems that new, more informal and often ad-hoc oriented practices for collective action are gaining ground. Such practices and settings have been termed as dynamic or fluid networks, in which there is primarily a focus on argumentative, debating and communicative approaches and an increased attention and reflexivity concerning ‘the-rules-of-the-game’. (See Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Bogason et al, 2004; Dryzek, 2000)

Increased fragmentation, differentiation and complexity in society is often referred to as explanatory in relation to this development – or at least we may be talking about what Ulrich Beck has termed ‘an increased awareness of our own unawareness’ (1999, p. 123). It implies an increased knowledge and reflexivity concerning the uncertainty and complexity surrounding us, and hence also about the perceived ability of actors to solve problems on their own. In other words, we increasingly seem to know that we don’t know enough, and we realize that it compromises our ability to act on our own. It sometimes, if not often, results in an increased awareness of the necessity of pooling resources (e.g. economic and knowledge) between actors in new policy-making practices; characterized by participation, collaboration, co-ordination and communication, rather than just interest-based bargaining. The necessity arises for instance in cases of policy making and planning for ‘the common good’ where it turns out that traditional forms of government are unable to deliver results, either because of a lack of legitimacy or simply because there is a mismatch between the scope of the problem and the existing territorial jurisdictions (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 11).

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<sup>1</sup> This subsection is primarily based on Hansen (2006).

Fragmentation, differentiation and increased complexity then co-exists with a continued need for solving common problems. It highlights a growing need for co-ordination across differences and it seems to result in increased concern and common recognition of interdependence between various actors, public as well as private (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Kooiman, 1993; Sehested, 2002).

### **Urban governance and the experience-based development of cities?**

The production and consumption of experiences, and the associated mobility of ideas, information, people, goods and networks, imply the interaction and pulling of resources and skills among a variety of public and private actors and interests. In addition, the transformation towards a more experience-based development of a city is likely to involve reoriented public policies, plans and resources as well as new directions for private investments. Hence, it implies close attention to urban governance in order to embark on a new common direction that makes a difference to potential investors, firms, labour, inhabitants and visitors.

Experience-based activities may not require the same forms of governing – the same constellations and interaction patterns of actors and interests – as in the industrial and knowledge economies. In the industrial economy, governing was mostly a matter of centralised regulation and traditional hierarchical and bureaucratic organisation. Urban development was often decided in limited top-down actor-settings between city authorities and a few influential owners of production companies (industries), trade companies and transportation companies. In comparison, the emergence of the knowledge economy correlated with governing structures and processes that became increasingly polycentric and networking. It embedded a new range of transient and dynamic political practices between governments, the market, societal organisations and people. Open-ended ad hoc arrangements emerged to demonstrate a remarkable problem-solving capacity and opened up opportunities for learning and change in exactly those circumstances where classical-modernist institutions failed to deliver. (Bogason, Kensen & Miller, 2004; Castells, 1996; Dryzek, 2000; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Sehested, 2003).

As indicated earlier, experience products consist in services, activities, places and spaces. They are often produced by both public and private actors that seem to cooperate in new, innovative and flexible

ways, mobilizing local and other resources. We aim to investigate whether actors, interests, networks, and resources are different from those of earlier techno-economic paradigms, for instance by being more local, more horizontal and more temporary and changeable. If the experience economy introduces new or different categories and interplays of actors and interests, such as the ‘visitor’ or ‘guest’, then urban governance may also have to readjust. Hence, it seems relevant to investigate into the conditions, challenges and opportunities of urban governance related to the experience-based development. It implies attention to the emergence and interaction of, on the one hand, experience-oriented visions and activities in cities, and, on the other hand, the (new) associated settings and ways of collective and strategic problem-solving and of public-private cooperation as well as the spread of responsibilities and resources. In which ways do the emergence of the experience economy challenge and condition urban governance, and vice versa?

## **CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN A DANISH CONTEXT**

Whereas the previous two sections provided a starting point for understanding and discussing some general aspects of urban governance in relation to the experience economy, this section will explore the Danish context for some actual developments and changes in economy, regulation and governing. The aim is to explore the role of the experience economy, with particular emphasis on associated governing and regulatory characteristics.

### **The experience economy in Denmark**

In Denmark, the experience economy had a turn-over of approximately £16 Billion in 2000/2001, it employed approximately 170,000 people full-time, and it generated more than 10% of the average household consumption. In addition, and as is also the case in neighbouring countries such as Sweden and UK, the experience economy in Denmark is increasing its share of the economy. Even though the numbers are debatable in many ways (primarily due to difficulties in defining relevant branches and activities), it is reasonable to claim that the experience economy in Denmark is comparable in size to the largest branches of the Danish economy. (Regeringen, 2003) In a Danish regional context, the two main urban regions of Greater Copenhagen and Aarhus seem to be frontrunners in taking advantage of the experience economy (Aalborg kommune, 2005; Andersen & Andersen, 2004).



On the conceptual level, the experience economy in Denmark seems to be viewed as an alliance between culture and business:

From the fusion of culture and business a new form of economy has emerged. It is an economy based on the increased demand for experiences, and one that rests in the added value created by creativity in both new and more traditional products and services... hence, the culture and experience economy is concerned with the place where the two worlds [culture and business, ed.] meet and create a synergy that is interesting seen from the viewpoint of both cultural and business politics. (Regeringen, 2003)

First of all, the experience economy can be seen as a *regional dynamo*, revolving around servicing of citizens, profiling the region, and attracting labour, companies and tourists. Secondly, the experience economy can be seen as *business* – companies that produce experiences and experience-based products. Thirdly, the experience economy is about *creative alliances*, where culture and business engage in alliances that can create innovation in terms of new products, new design or new working processes. (Aalborg kommune, 2005)

Common to national (Regeringen, 2003) and regional/local (Aalborg kommune, 2005) views on the future role of the experience economy in Denmark seems to be a call for improved cooperation and interactivity between various actors and interests.

...there is a need for supplementary initiatives – private as well as public. Initiatives founded in a broad cooperation between large as well as small actors from the areas of business, culture, education and research. Collective action will contribute to create new growth and labour in the new Region North Jutland. (Aalborg kommune, 2005)

Hence, the emergence of the experience economy in Denmark is followed by a vocabulary concerned with synergy, creativity, innovation, cooperation across difference, etc. Supplementary, in their search for the experience economy in a Nordic context, and based in a study of 19 events, Angel & Hansen (2006) point to the importance of many players, both public and private, cooperating and supporting event strategies with commitment and economic resources.

As such, it seems to suggest that conditions and opportunities for dealing with the experience economy in an urban context are likely to be related to new alliances, new actor constellations and new ways of cooperating.

### **Changing general patterns and modes of regulation and governing**

In general, the Danish approach to regulation and governing is changing from a system characterised mainly by hierarchy and bureaucracy, through phases of goal and framework-based steering to action-oriented network steering or governance. The networking governance approach emerged mainly because top-down and hierarchical steering and control were increasingly seen as unnecessarily detailed and impotent. (Reddersen, 2006) There is a move from mono-centric and often rather closed ways of governing towards more open, networking and polycentric approaches. It is often illustrated by more interactivity and cooperation between relevant parties and a broader, sometimes atypical, distribution of work and resources in the attempt to solve collective problems. It shows, for instance, when municipalities in cooperation with interest organisations, citizens and developers, at a very early stage in the policy and planning processes, put together tailored organisational settings for discussion of complex policy or planning issues (e.g. urban regeneration or new urban development processes). See Hansen (2006) and Sehested (2003)

Lately, however, new governing and regulatory mechanisms are being debated and introduced in Denmark, as we shall see below. Management through networks is being criticised for being inefficient, fragmented, implying risks of a democratic deficit, and for not really being able to deal with key players participating or not depending solely on their own interest (Reddersen, 2006).

### **Actual changes in policies, plans, policymaking and planning**

In 2003 the Danish government presented a new strategy for the ‘cultural and experience economy’. The main goal was that:

Denmark should become better at using the synergy between cultural activities, sports and business life in order to improve the development and growth potential in the culture and experience economy. (Regeringen, 2003)

The instruments for reaching the goal were, in general, based in creating incentives and improving framework conditions for building an efficient market place, a meeting spot, for culture and business. It was a rather clear paradigm of this new policy to encourage, not to enforce, cooperation between cultural activities and business through specific incentives such as tax reductions, an Internet-based 'tool box for cooperating', supporting event-making, action plans for tourism, new interdisciplinary education programmes, etc. (Regeringen, 2003)

In a regional and urban context, the attention to the experience economy in actual policymaking and planning activities seems to be developing significantly these years. The new regions in Denmark (see more on the new governing structures and processes below) are becoming outspokenly concerned with and interested in experience-oriented development and in dealing with it through regional development policies and plans. In addition, several cities (in particular municipal authorities) have initiated or established policymaking and planning activities explicitly aiming at improving or servicing the local experience-based economy (Copenhagen, Aalborg, Aarhus, Horsens and more). See the Horsens example below.

As indicated above, Denmark recently changed its overall governing structure. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 the 14 counties were substituted with 5 regions, and 271 municipalities were amalgamated into 98. The overall paradigms, conditions and opportunities for processes of governing in the new municipal and regional setting seem to change or transform along with the changes in structure. Or at least it seems so, when consulting government policies and plans:

The municipal reform provides a new and better framework for a partnership between regions, municipalities, local companies and knowledge institutions. The new, bigger and stronger municipalities create a good basis for living and working in all parts of the country. And the new Regional Economic Growth Forums [a public-private cooperative setting/institution that 'feeds'

the making of the new regional development plans; eds.] create the basis for a stronger and better coordinated regional effort. (Regeringen, 2006)

In this government strategy for 'Denmark in the global economy', those rather general statements are supplemented by a strategy for what is termed 'partnerships for supporting the globalisation strategy' (Regeringen, 2006, p.127):

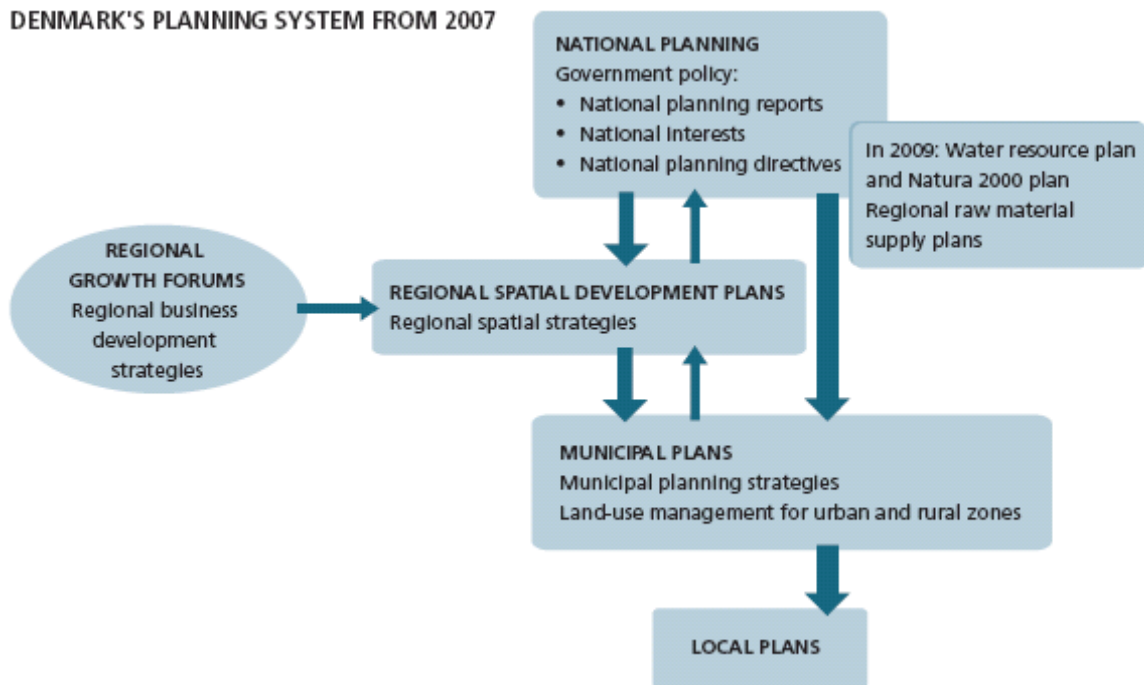
- 1) Improved coordination shall strengthen the regional measures for growth and business development.
- 2) Binding partnerships shall support the globalisation strategy.

Another concrete and important framework condition for regions and cities in Denmark to be able to deal with development issues, and hence also to deal with the experience economy, is the Danish planning system. The planning system changed alongside the municipal reform, not only in its structural settings, but perhaps more importantly so also in its procedural settings and paradigm. In The 2006 National Planning Report (named 'The New Map of Denmark – spatial planning under new conditions') it is clear that regional and municipal (urban) spatial planning in Denmark is meant to play an increasingly important role for development and economic growth:

...the reform of local government structure will give the 98 municipal councils together with the five regional councils and the regional economic growth forums greater responsibility for ensuring that regional economic growth is promoted and especially that Denmark is prepared to thrive in the heightened global competition. Efforts by the state alone are not sufficient.

... The municipal councils have assumed the planning authority for rural areas and will thus be assigned responsibility for creating coherence in spatial planning. The reform thus allows the new municipal councils to increasingly influence development based on their knowledge of strengths, challenges and practical matters in each municipality.

... The state will issue general guidelines for planning; the regional councils, in cooperation with the municipal councils, will present a regional spatial strategy in the regional spatial development plan: the overall spatial structure, nature and environment, business including tourism, employment, education and culture. (Danish Ministry of the Environment, 2006, p.8-13)



**Figure 1.** The Danish Planning System (Danish Ministry of the Environment, 2006, p.13)

This also reflects a general trend in Denmark, through the last 10-15 years, that spatial planning should not only be concerned with traditional approaches of dealing with functions, design and land use, but increasingly also with more strategic and broader approaches to the development of regional, urban as well as rural areas.

To exemplify further: Whereas the 1990s saw the emergence in Denmark of ‘urban politics’ (see Sehested, 2003), the early 2000s has seen the continued growth of a broader strategic approach to municipal and urban planning, e.g. through compulsory Plan Strategies. In addition, a significant increase in focus can be registered concerning the development of new instruments and methods in urban policymaking and planning in order to improve the spatial quality and transformative capacity of Danish cities. See also Andersen & Andersen (2004). Hence, urban policies and plans are increasingly seen as strategic instruments for providing and supplementing renewed conditions for urban growth, activities and quality improvement. It strongly implies that urban policymaking and planning in Denmark is becoming a matter or part of broader urban governance activities. Here, the emergence of

an experience-based economy constitutes a new challenge and opportunity – a new paradigm to be integrated in relation to such instruments.

What is also evident from studying the latest developments and changes in the Danish spatial planning system is the increased focus and active encouragement to develop and apply new more interactive methods and ways of creating visions, strategies and plans. Here, cooperation and dialogue are key terms used not only from top-down through national government reports and policies, but also among regional and urban/municipal policymakers and planners.

It is fundamental to the new planning system that the necessary coordination must be created through dialogue. The regional development plans and the business development strategies of the regional economic growth forums will have a significant role as the regional voice that supports and aids the municipalities in their strategic thinking. (Reddersen, 2006)

The shift towards more interactive and cooperative forms of governing is partly argued to be a consequence of cities and municipalities seeing themselves as part of a greater whole, and partly because they have recognised the need to work together and think much more strategically than earlier. (Reddersen, 2006)

The question remains whether these developments and transformations ‘matches up’, in particular whether the transforming governing structures and practices in Denmark ‘fits’ the characteristics of the experience economy? In the final section, this will be discussed further, but first we shall turn to the example of Horsens.

### **The city of Horsens**

Since the 1990s, Horsens has become known in Denmark as a city of entertainment and cultural events, e.g. with visiting names such as Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney, Robbie Williams and Madonna as well as being host to the large European Middle Age Festival. This is quite remarkable as Horsens is a city of barely 50,000 inhabitants, and it is remarkable considering that until the 1990s Horsens had a reputation as a fading industrial city mostly known for its state prison. Today, Horsens experiences a

significant urban development and increase in the number of inhabitants. Hence, Horsens has managed to change its image and some basic urban development characteristics in only a decade.

The main factors in this transformation have been argued to be an increased attention to experience-based and cultural activities, a conscious effort to rebuild the ‘story’ or narrative of Horsens, and the ability to establish collective action across the city in order to move in a common direction (Løkke, 2006). In other words, Horsens seems to provide an interesting and relevant background for searching into the relationship between urban governance and experience-oriented development and change.

As indicated, the 1990s became a turning point for Horsens.<sup>2</sup> In 1995, a survey showed the local politicians and business life what they already knew: That Horsens was seen and known as ‘the prison city’, and that this image had a negative influence on the chances of local business to attract labour and for the city to attract new inhabitants. The local politicians and business felt they had a well-functioning city, that ‘the product’ (the city) they could offer potential new citizens and companies was one of satisfactory quality. Therefore, the same actors chose to initiate the establishment of a communication strategy that should rebuild and profile the image of the city as ‘The experience city of Horsens’, based on marketing the qualities already present in Horsens.

However, in the mid- and late-1990s, the frequency of concerts, events and entertainment arrangements in Horsens were not yet at the level as can be seen today. The initiative to embark on the development of Horsens as an international music event city emerged alongside, rather as a consequence of, the official strategy of rebuilding the image of the city. In fact, the communication strategy did not mention concerts as a means to achieve the goal. On the other hand, ‘*everybody knew that we had a communication problem*’ (Løkke, 2006, p.64), Actors, interests and citizens concerned with the development of Horsens were well aware of the need to reorient Horsens some way or the other. It seems then that there was, in general, a strong feeling among people in Horsens of a need to act, and to do so collectively. It resulted, not only in the new communication strategy, but also in new concrete activities and projects.

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<sup>2</sup> This subsection is mainly based on Løkke (2006) who performed a well-written and well-structured investigation (thesis) of urban branding, narratives and experiences, using Horsens as a case.

Cooperation as well as broad anchoring and commitment to the reorientation of the city seems to have been of crucial importance to the success of this strategy as well as the development of large scale experience-oriented events and arrangements. Due to a combined and coordinated effort of the municipality, local business life, cultural and educational institutions the transformation of Horsens became the project, not just of the municipality (with its politicians and administrations), but rather of the whole city.

For instance, significant efforts were put into communicating emerging new initiatives to a variety of different actors and interests across the city, as well as to the public in general. A great number of meetings were held with local organisations and groupings. In addition, the process were not carried out overnight, but cautiously and long termed. One actor in Horsens (a PR consultant who toured Horsens with a slideshow on 'What Horsens should be proud of') puts it this way:

*I told them what they already knew, but just had not formulated themselves yet. (Løkke, 2006, p.68)*

The results of the extensive efforts of consultation and communication also shows in the rather common vocabulary used today by a range of different actors in Horsens, when trying to explain the course of events and the reasons for the changes. They often use exactly the same terms, the same concepts, the same stories, and refer to the same visions and strategies. It is remarkable how a common and consistent narrative of Horsens seems to have been established, and it seems to be a significant reason and background for the capability of Horsens to transform itself, and to be able to act collectively (and fast) towards a common goal.

*It is due to the fact that a lot of people have worked with this during those years, and that they know the same story. In addition, we have also told ourselves, internally, the same story repeatedly... I will not claim that there is only one Horsens story, but it comes close to that. [Leading civil servant in the municipal administration] (Løkke, 2006, p.73)*



In other words, transforming Horsens was also about creating a new identity through collective strategy-making, action-orientation as well as storytelling, thereby also changing the 'meaning' of Horsens.

## **RESEARCH POSITIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR STUDYING GOVERNANCE IN THE EXPERIENCE-BASED CITY**

In many ways, the developments and changes described above goes to show that Danish regions and cities are in midst of redefining their role and focus. The economy is in a transformative phase, often characterised in terms of globalisation. However, it is dealt with by regional and local actors as something very real and concrete down to the level of even the smallest communities. In that sense it is reasonable to characterise this using what a range of authors have termed 'glocalization', see for instance Brenner (2004). The essence of this is that 'the global' happens through localities, and it happens through actions and decisions in many localities. Rescaling have made it possible for, and partly forced, Danish regions and cities to establish active politics in areas that was earlier exclusively handled by national authorities, e.g. politics concerning business and labour. Rescaling means that politics too have to move beyond old limits (Andersen & Andersen, 2004, p.5).

The emergence and regional/local attempts at handling the experience economy can be argued as an expression of glocalization. However, observers or critics of the Danish context find that experience-based urban life is still not sufficiently understood and planned for by key actors (Andersen & Andersen, 2004). Cities and regions increasingly compete to attract labour, inhabitants, investments and visitors, and in doing so, experience-based activities have emerged as new competitive parameters. In addition, the qualities, opportunities and experiences associated with cities are becoming important development factors that demand increased attention. Here, renewed urban governance settings and practices are likely to play an important role in order for cities to (better?) achieve advantages in the experience-based economy – as exemplified in the Horsens case. The initial exploration of the Danish context suggests that there are useful and fruitful advises and advantages to be found and gained in studying the relationship between urban governance and the experience economy.

So, based on the above, what can be said, so far, on this relationship? And in particular, what kind of research questions emerges for more detailed studies of this relationship? In the remaining part of this paper we will, tentatively, attempt to clarify further our position and outline a workable approach.

In general, as well as in the specific context explored, it seems that there is a move towards new forms of governing and regulation that aims to match transformations in economic paradigms. In particular at regional and urban levels this means that a wider range of public as well as private actors and interests increasingly seem to recognise some sort of interdependence and need for coordination and collective action. This tendency seems to be supplemented by a general trend of de-regulation that leave it up to authorities and other actors at lower levels to find their own appropriate and tailored means of action in order to find new tracks of development as well as to comply with objectives formulated at higher levels. The essence seems to be to be able to manage, steer, govern, etc. without undermining local engagement, drive and autonomy. Hence, the assumed move from mono-centric and hierarchical ways of governing towards more networking and polycentric approaches seems to be both real and relevant.

Coordination, cooperation and dialogue seems to have entered the stage full-force as useful instruments or governing mechanisms – and it is not driven by idealism and attitudes of ‘just-want-to-do-the-right-thing’, rather it is propelled by perceptions of necessity and needs and goals of optimised and more efficient decision-making and problem solving.

In each situation, e.g. when trying to transform a city, it means that a sufficient critical mass of actors and interests must emerge to be able to ‘move things’. The examples and conditions described above imply the emergence of some new rules-of-the-game as a basis for collective action.

For instance, politicians and civil servants must increasingly participate in negotiative settings and processes with a wide range of actors. At the same time, they must observe that a democratic anchoring is maintained. In practice, it points to finding new formats of consultation, participation and deliberation that increases the odds for broad debates and the establishment of broad political anchoring and ownership to strategies as well as to concrete action.

The emergence of, and ability to handle, new development paradigms such as the experience economy in particular seems to be dependent on renewed governance to be able to succeed. It seems to be about making decision processes and strategic collective action more efficient – under new circumstances, in an age of transformation and complexity. *It seems to be about finding proactive formats and solutions for improving reaction, e.g. about being able to act flexible, sometimes fast, but always efficient when economic paradigms or developments suddenly changes, alters or transforms.*

In addition, the focus seems to move away from talking about and producing decisions in a traditional sense, rather the actors must now compete in storytelling, in producing convincing narratives and visions that makes sense to other players (Reddersen, 2006). This also puts more emphasis on discussing the meaning and identity of a city.

As indicated, the means to support such a process may be found through new ways of urban governance – or what might be thought of as a new kind of strategic urban governance or management that puts complexity and flexibility at centre stage and attempts to make space for enveloping urban culture, identity and meaning. According to Pløger's (2004, p.178) and Aschér's (2002) views on 'meta-urbanism', such an approach should:

- involve a new urban management that defines and works with different projects in the city and attempts to create a local coherence around those projects. This approach aims to take into consideration unforeseen events along the way – it lives with risks in its practice without prefixed procedures for reducing risks.
- still celebrate efficiency and prioritisation. However, it is public and private actors and interests in unison who must find ways of realisation that are the most efficient for the community and for the parties involved. Urban management must not simplify complex realities, but work with them instead. Efficiency and durability is better achieved through variation, flexibility and reactivity. This urbanism must work with varying and changing needs and with a continuous reconfiguration of interests.
- prioritize the coordination between the needs of different actors, however not in order to make the choices of political strategic reasons. Hence, it is a strategic governance or

management approach that should be able to consult and mobilize still more differentiated citizens, actors and experts rather than hiding away rulings inside more or less closed political decision-processes.

In this approach, urban governance, management and planning is seen as based in projects, and hence in contextuality, actuality and locality. It is sensitive to the field of actors and interests, and it does not reduce public enquiry and debate to predefined and specific phases. The political and centralised governing based in bureaucracy and institutional power is replaced with an open, dialogue-oriented, self-reflective, transformative, micro-political and locality-oriented mode of management and governance. (Pløger, 2004, p.179)

Is this then how governance could look like in the experience-oriented city? We leave this as an open question, rather than establishing fixed analytical variables and indicators. Instead, we find it fruitful to work with a methodology that provides an opportunity for the cases to 'explain themselves'. We search for the explanatory power provided by the cases themselves, in particular through actors and observers involved in the cases. Hence, we see ourselves as working within an emerging post-positivist tradition. In our research practice it means, for instance, that we do not establish a pre-fixed detailed framework for categorising, analysing and understanding the cases. Rather, and as we hope we have illustrated in this paper, we attempt to search a range of seemingly relevant perspectives as well as concrete practices related to the topic in order to generate some general entry points to do case studies. This, for instance, helps to guide us in doing interviews with key actors. Having performed case studies we will return to discussions of more theoretical perspectives. Hence, we apply a version of what can also be termed an interpretative approach.

Finally, and in more practical and methodological terms, it means that we will work from the following more specific research questions:

-Who are the relevant and (perceived) legitimate actors, interests and networks in experience-based urban development activities? Do we see new governing structures and relations form, and if so, (how) do they rely on new practices?

- The (re-)distribution of influence, workload and resources (economy, knowledge, skills) in the attempt to transform urban governance in an experience-based direction?
- The role of urban narratives and conscious efforts of building and discussing urban identity and meaning – in relation to governance settings and practices?
- The role of urban policies and plans, in particular strategies, in transforming the development?
- Attention to main conditions and determinants of urban development and change, the interaction of such characteristics, but in particular the scope it provides for regulatory approaches and collective action – and hence for urban governance?

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