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When cultural economy and the experience economy converge in the food sector of rural regions

Analysis of implications for economic development

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The experience turn in local
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Theme: Experience and culture economy and place

By Trine Bille, Associate Professor, Ph.D., tb.ino@cbs.dk
Copenhagen Business School, Department of Innovation and Organizational Economics

Abstract Title: The Scandinavian approach to the Experience Economy – does it make sense?

This paper discusses the concept of the experience economy in a Scandinavian context and shows how the Scandinavian version of the concept has come about from a mix of three different approaches and theories. In the Scandinavian countries the experience economy has been developed in a political context and it is apparently a popular development policy for local government authorities and regions. The Scandinavian definition links the experience economy closely with cultural activities, and besides it is closely linked to expectation of economic return and economic development. This paper discusses the Scandinavian definition of experience economy and questions if it makes any sense. The definition of experiences is not clear, which make the demarcation of the experience economy almost impossible and create other difficulties in relation to policy. The paper shows that the experience economy can follow three different routes to market value creation, and how the growth opportunities for the different experience industries will depend on at least three different trends. Therefore, it can be shown that only some experience industries are growing, and the market value creation occurs in very different ways and to very different extents within, and in relation to, the different experience industries. The greatest growth potential resides probably in the broad value creation in association with the experience industries. But the experience economy does not lend itself to any consistent definition.

Theme: Experience and culture economy and place

Carlos Freire-Gibb, PdD Student, Aalborg University, carlos@plan.aau.dk

Abstract Title: Evolution of the concept of the Experience Economy in Denmark.

This working paper discusses the rise and fall of “The Experience Economy” (TEE) in Denmark (*Oplevelsesøkonomi* in Danish). The term was originated in the American business and marketing field in 1998. In Denmark it started in touristic reports in early 2000s, there was also a crucial report from the Royal Ministry in 2003, and the term kept evolving becoming a multifaceted idea with notable effects for economic development at national, regional and local scales. Although TEE has reached many different fields, this paper focuses in its relationship with economic development policy.

One section of the paper overviews how the term of TEE spread overtime across different disciplines and geographic regions around the world. This shows the worldwide growth of TEE until 2008, when the concept started loosing ground on academic publications, with the exception of Denmark. The use of TEE in the Danish media is also presented. Some charts are presented.

Researchers affiliated to Danish institutions have carry out important research around Denmark, and especially in the field related to economic development. Examples given are: Lorenzen & Lick, 2005; Lund, 2005; Sundbo, 2006, 2009; Jantzen & Vetner 2006; Hjorth & Kostera, 2007; Lorenzen, Kristensen & Skov, 2008; Lorentzen, 2007, 2009; Sundbo & Darmer, 2008; Marling, Jensen & Kiib, 2009; Lassen, Smink & Smidt-Jensen, 2009. The interest on TEE did not only come from academics, also policy makers and the society in general have been attracted by the concept. I suggest this has happened because of different socioeconomic, political, coincidental events in the time being, and even linguistic reasons. In other words, there has been curious path dependency which has set up the emergence of TEE in Denmark.

Within the last months, an increasing critical research in the field of planning and economic development has pointed out that the concept of TEE has crucial limitations. Examples from different institutions include: Smidt-Jensen, Skytt & Winther, 2009; Bille, 2010, Lorentzen, 2010; Sørensen; Fuglsang, Sundbo, 2010. The role of the economic crisis, which started to unfold in the late 2008, has probably influenced this new critical thinking, however there are other factors which have contributed to this process. Until relatively recently, many academics from different disciplines and civil servants at different levels still believed that the experience economy could really keep bringing strong economic growth. Today there are only a few individuals who firmly believe in the potential of TEE. All in all, finally there seems to be a consensus among Danish researchers, and that is to be more skeptic on economic strategies with a strong focus on TEE.

This paper also looks at the methodology of the fathers of TEE (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 1999), and points out several flaws about it. In the evolved case of the research in Denmark, some of it inherited some of the problems from the original methodology. Others have had to deal with a diffuse and

amalgamated concept, which involved a new problematic including derived from the creative class (Florida, 2003), Scandinavian seasonality, measuring issues and absence of quantitative research. This paper suggests it is important for the future to keep an open collaboration with other economic studies, in order to take better economic policy making decisions.

While this paper is in the line of other papers which questions TEE applications for local and regional economic development; it is not argued that the concept of TEE might be relevant for other fields such as Marketing, Design or Architecture. To sum up, I attempt to answer the question: *How did TEE, being such an unorthodox concept, became such an important factor in Danish Local Economic Development?*

Theme: Places in competition

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Abstract Title: In what way and experience turn? The case of Oslo

Already in 1994 Lash and Urry pointed out that what is increasingly being produced are signs – not material objects. The cultural industries (CIs) are important suppliers of “signs”, i.e. products that communicate through aesthetic symbols, images, forms, colours, sounds, performances and narratives. Through generation and communication of (symbolic) meaning, the CIs are essential to the experience turn.

Generally CIs have a tendency to agglomerate in urban areas. This is also the case in Norway where Oslo is the dominating centre. According to recent mappings (Haraldsen et al 2004; 2005; 2008) Oslo is the only county in which the CI are overrepresented compared to the country average. Of the total employment in the CI in Norway, the county of Oslo accounts for 36,2% (2007) with a location quotient (LQ) of 2,12. The dominating position of Oslo is also reflected in the fact that no other counties have a LQ above one, i.e. compared to the country average the CI are underrepresented in the other of the counties in Norway. In addition Oslo hosts a range of national cultural institutions (opera, ballet, theatres, museums, etc.) as well as higher education and research institutions within arts and culture (Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norwegian Academy of Music, The Norwegian College of Dance, etc.).

According to Mommaas (2004) cultural facilities, which combines a mixture of cultural functions and activities may be termed “cultural clusters”. Such dense concentrations of cultural activities are favourable for creative activities, which in turn may strengthen the attractiveness of cluster thus creating a virtuous cycle (Mommaas 2004). In these general terms Oslo may be regarded as a relative successful cultural cluster – at least in the Norwegian context (Onsager & Haraldsen 2009). This paper focuses on how, if at all, these characteristics of Oslo are used and communicated when it comes to place marketing. The main aim is to investigate *to what extent the strength of Oslo’s cultural activities is used in the international marketing and communication*. We will especially compare how public actors (e.g. Visit Oslo and the municipality of Oslo) and private actors within the CI communicate images of Oslo abroad.

Theme: Places in competition

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Abstract Title: New spatial strategies in the Danish periphery: Culture, leisure and experiences as levers of growth

The aim of the paper is to discuss critically the new wave of culture and experience planning which can be observed in small cities and municipalities. While culture planning has been practised in the context of big cities for decades, today also small cities strive to find a way to turn culture, leisure and experience economy into a much needed 'growth machine'. The paper discusses the rationale behind this wave, the ways in which the strategic focus is integrated in municipal strategies, and the dilemmas and challenges connected to such a strategy in terms of priorities. The paper draws on research in 11 municipalities in the Danish periphery.

First part of the paper contextualises the study theoretically and develops a theoretical framework for the study. In this section the role of leisure, culture and experience economy in urban development is discussed, and it is argued that this role can be related to globalisation and urban competition as a condition which calls forward innovative approaches to urban development.

Second part of the paper analyses the plan strategies of 11 municipal development strategies from the Danish periphery in terms of priorities and rationales. What are the strategies supposed to achieve, and what kind of resources are they supposed to draw on in terms of money, organisation, knowledge and so on? What are the differences and similarities of the strategies? Is this field characterised by 'one size fits all'?

Third part of the paper discusses the possible shift of balance between welfare and market, which the new municipal strategies reflect, and the possible outcomes of this shift. While Danish municipalities for decades have served as providers of welfare, they increasingly focus on local growth and the local business environment. Where does leisure, culture and experience provision fit in relation to this balance? And to what extent can culture, leisure and experience offerings be seen as actual levers of local growth?

Key words: experience economy, culture, leisure, strategic planning, urban development

Theme: Residential location and leisure

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Abstract title: Leisure and urban transformations: studying changing policy approaches

Aim of this paper is to develop a more ‘grounded’ research approach for exploring changing policy approaches of leisure in the recent transformation of cities. First of all, based on a literature review, the overall research theme will be outlined, positioning notions of ‘welfare’ ‘fantasy’ or ‘creative’ cities, within discourses on broader societal developments. Second, the research questions will be presented, aimed at opening up these generic theoretical views, to an empirical inquiry of systemic transitions in approaches of leisure, focussing on changes in discourses, coalitions and conditions involved. Following from these questions, a sensitising framework will be developed, introducing and combining insights from urban regime analysis (Stone, 1989), discursive coalitions (Hajer, 1995) and evolutionary systems theory (Holland, 1998) as the language and concepts of study. The use of explorative case studies, grounded theory and process tracing, for developing a ‘middle-range theory’, will then be proposed as potential strategies of research. Finally, a summary and some future outlooks will be provided, addressing the implementation of this approach into the field.

Theme: Residential location and leisure

Christian Schubarth, Private Office, IC Infraconsult, Christian.schubarth@infraconsult.ch

Abstract Title: The experience approach as a way to a more attractive residential economy in urbanized countryside

The trend is well known: people choose rural areas for residence; they continue to work in cities and commute. They satisfy the major part of their consumption needs in shopping malls in the suburban belts. Despite the high purchasing power of their residents, the regional rural economy doesn't capture efficiently the new form of richness generated by the residential development. However, an attractive residential economy might be a possibility to improve the living conditions of rural areas under urban influence. The question is how a residential offer becomes more attractive; attractive enough to face the concurrence of shopping and leisure amenities in suburban locations. The experience approach is perceived as a possible regional selling proposition that allows a new field for economic growth, job opportunities and new economic relations.

This submission is based on an exploratory study on residential economy in rural areas of Switzerland that has been realised in 2009 ([Download](#)). Beside considerations on the general context for residential economy in Switzerland (based on the most important indicators of the concept of residential economy of Laurent Davezies (2008), seven interviews with entrepreneurs and local actors show the importance of the regional experience in their marketing strategies. On one side, this implies a necessary synergy with the regional brand. On the other side, the target groups must be redefined in a spatial logic. This is particularly the case of the tourism office of the Gros-de-Vaud region whose strategy is no longer addressed exclusively to clients from abroad, but also the neighbourhood.

My wish is to present and to discuss the results of the study in a larger academic, and international context. The main interest would be to go beyond the classical promotion of residential economy that remains committed to the recognition of potentials of a macro-economic level. In fact, I hope that some major problems of the residential economy approach, such as the passage from the potential of residential economy to efficient policy strategies, or the management of risks of residential economy (population aging, traffic and mobility growth), could be discussed under a new perspective with the help of the experience approach.

Sources:

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Schubarth Christian, Beer-Tóth Krisztina, Bleuel Selina, 2009, *We Live Here and We Work Here: Comment l'économie résidentielle peut contribuer aux activités destinées à l'exportation*, Berne, 2009, Download: www.regiosuisse.ch.

Theme: Experience economy and tourism development in regions

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Abstract Title: Creation of Place as Experience

This paper should be perceived as a partial input to a discussion about a joint research application – a concept paper to open a broader discussion on the possible relationships between place and experiences and on different forms of interaction between territories of production and territories of diffusion/consumption (Jeannerat & Kebir 2010). The place/origin of production (or customers' perception hereof) is an important dimension in many experience products such as tourism products and local food. But what does the place of production actually mean to the consumer vis-à-vis other product qualities? And for which types of products can the place of production add value to consumers' experience of the product?

We would like to explore how geographical 'places' are transformed and represented as a distinct 'experience' quality, adding value to physical products, i.e. how place is turned into 'quality conventions', socially constructed by producers, consumers and other intermediating actors. By what kinds of dynamics are consumer knowledge and meanings regarding specific places (as well as other qualities) created and through which forms of interaction are these meanings communicated and 'debated' with producers?

Our empirical case is (still) Bornholm regional/local foods, but we should like to move in two directions; 1) to expand our analysis to local foods in other parts of Denmark (and abroad) and work on a typology of placed-based and non-placed based experience aspects of regional food products, and 2) to broaden the empirical focus towards the consumer-side of the production-consumption systems of local foods in order to deepen the understanding of consumers' perceptions and contributions to product development.

Thus, central aims of the paper will be:

1. To develop a **typology of local foods** on the basis of specific quality conventions on which products are built and marketed (local gastronomy, environment, health etc.), with a particular focus on placed-based and non-placed-based experience elements.
2. A **typology of markets/consumption territories** on the basis of consumer perceptions of different quality conventions. Which markets are place-dependent, which are not – when it comes to food – and how might this be different for other products? Doing this will take further methodological considerations.

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Cook & Crang (1996): cultural geographies of “displacement”, Cultural circuits (creation of knowledge), 3 kinds of Geographical knowledge about food: settings/contexts (recipes), biographies (how they move about in the food system), origins (where foods come from), stressing relevance of looking at “surface fetishism of commodities rather than reaching behind surface veils to reveal ‘real’ material cultures hidden behind them”.

Grabher et al 2008:

Entrepreneurial customer communities, Hybrid communities (of producers and users)
Mobilizing customer knowledge: Deductive, Inductive and Codevelopment approaches
The Emerging Knowledge Ecology of Codevelopment: six types of “users”: Expressive users, Lead users and Professional users (alle 3 “epistemic communities”) – og Consumer communities, User communities and Interest communities (alle 3 “practicing communities”)

Food Experiences = Food qualities?

Taxonomy of Food Experience production systems based on production means and delivery means (after Samuelsen 2010)

	Interpersonal/Immaterial experiences	Material/physical experiences
Close/Attendance-based Experiences	<p>Performance (Human-human in physical space):</p> <p>Enter/Edu/Info-tainment related to face-to-face producer-consumer interaction (story-telling, guided tours, sale, fairs)</p>	<p>Techno interaction (Human-technology in physical space):</p> <p>Experiencing the production/place (self picking, open workshops, eating places)</p>
Distant/Distributed Experiences	<p>Virtual interaction (Personalized distribution, human-human in virtual space)</p> <p>Cultural identity formation</p> <p>Re-confirmation of shared values (the “right” kind of food)</p>	<p>Mass distribution (one-to-many)</p> <p>Organoleptic experiences (e.g. gourmet taste)</p> <p>Satisfaction of functional/material (health/green) goals e.g. organic food</p>

Place as experience

	Immaterial experiences	Material experiences
Close/Attendance-based Experiences	<p>Performance (Human-human relation in physical space):</p> <p>People, social relations (lived life), culture/folklore</p>	<p>Physical interaction</p> <p>Natural, physical, cultural artifacts, locations, landscapes/experiencescapes</p>
Distant/Distributed Experiences	<p>Virtual interaction (Personalized distribution, human-human in virtual space)</p> <p>Radio, tv, magazines, internet</p>	<p>Mass distribution (one-to-many)</p> <p>Local/Terroir food</p> <p>Local Art and crafts product</p>

Theme: Experience economy and tourism development in regions

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Abstract Title: From an industry-based region towards an experienced based territory: combining traditional and new knowledge in regional tourism development

The aim of this project is to study how knowledge from traditional industries can be used in combination with new experience based knowledge bases to support the transition from a manufacturing towards a service based regional economy. Since the project is in its initial stage this presentation will primarily focus on research questions, theoretical framework(s), research design and selection of cases.

A basic hypothesis is that tourism is a potentially important sector in the restructuring of regional economies but has so far been treated in isolation from the traditional industrial sectors. At the same time has research in tourism seldom made an explicit link to the wider regional economic context. One objective is therefore to initiate a platform for research on regional development and tourism by combining theoretical work from economic geography and tourism geography. We argue that tourism research can benefit from economic geography, especially the current evolutionary debate.

The methodological layout is based on comparative case studies of a number of European regions. Cases represent projects where knowledge from traditional industrial sectors in the region is used in the restructuring process towards a service and experience based economy. A biographical approach will be applied to capture how actors, resources, and institutions inside and outside the case regions have facilitated or hindered the efforts to combine knowledge from different sectors. Special focus will be on the interplay between tourism- and business development policies on the regional level.

Expected outcomes of the project are threefold. Firstly a better understanding of the potentials and problems to integrate knowledge from different sectors in order to support regional restructuring from traditional to a "new" economy. Secondly the establishment of a common research platform at the School of Economics based on the combination of economic geography and tourism research. Finally we have a more action research related hope to initiate a knowledge network between business, academia and public actors.

Theme: Experience economy and tourism development in regions

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Abstract Title: Sustainability and the experience turn – a regional perspective

The framework of experience economy and sustainability play both central roles as new turns in regional planning and development, but are often not connected and integrated. The consequences are that initiatives to develop local experience economy can have unintended unsustainable effects on the environment and social milieu on the one side. And on the other side are local sustainable initiatives often not able to fulfil the social and economic dimensions of sustainability, because they focus primarily on environmental aspects and traditional ways of organising production and consumption.

In this article we develop a framework for integrating sustainability and experience economy, and show how this integrated perspective contribute to develop regional planning and development, which create cultural, social and economic sustainable development in regions. The framework will be based on a critical discussion of the concept of sustainability and emphasise the importance of the cultural, social and economic dimensions of sustainability and show how the concept of experience economy is useful for discussing these dimensions. The article will use empirical materials from research on local sustainable strategies and initiatives at the island of Samsø and the municipality of Thisted.

Theme: Innovative networks and projects in the experience economy

Thomas Østergaard, Director of Cultural Affairs, Frederikshavn Municipality,
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Abstract Title: KARIZMA – building cultural communities through inclusion, A COMMUNITY OF TALENT. A CULTURE OF GROWTH. A WORLD OF INCLUSION.

HISTORY: Frederikshavn is a municipality with some 62.000 inhabitants. During a period of appr. 12 years Frederikshavn has endured a massive decline in numbers of industrial jobs as the major companies primarily based on shipyards and related industries in the area shut down their activities. In the late 90'ties the Municipality developed a political frame; "Fra Værftsby til Værtsby" for repositioning the Town and community through public investments in creative and experience-economy related activities, new cultural projects and venues. During these years Frederikshavn produced a variety of cultural and creative projects in pursuit of redefining the image and attitude of the city. The building of large scale culture, sports and leisure Arenas, new festivals based upon the history of the town, the Tordenskjold Festival Music Houses, and cultural centres, "Palm Beach", "EnergyCity Frederikshavn" and prominent visits from all over the world, including Bill Clinton.

Even if Frederikshavn managed to reposition itself as a vibrant and dynamic city in the northernmost, the municipality is still suffering from a high level of unemployment (7.8% comp. nat. lev. 4%) and high emigration rates as well as a low level of education and artistic production compared to Copenhagen, Odense or Aarhus.¹ These social figures, educational figures as well as mobility figures calls upon a change in attracting new settlers, educations and frames for social development.

The Municipality recently decided to launch a new-deal including programme, called "KariZma", designed and generated by the director of Cultural Affairs in the municipality, Thomas Østergaard.

KariZma has a vision of creating a socially inclusive society through cultural user driven activities.

Achieving this vision means that our inhabitants will have the resources, opportunities and capability to:

- Learn by participating in education and training
- Work by participating in employment, in voluntary work and in caring
- Engage by connecting and relating with people and using their local community's resources
- Have a voice so that they can influence decisions that affect them.

Approaches

- building on individual and community strengths
- building partnerships with key stakeholders
- developing user-tailored services and experiences

¹ Anne Lorentsen, Knowledge networks in the experience economy; An analysis of four flagship projects in Frederikshavn, s.4, January 2008 : "Most remarkable is the fact that within only a five year period Frederikshavn has been able to brand itself into the minds of most Scandinavians as an attractive and pleasant place to live and to visit. It seems that Handlers harsh prophecy that the re-imagining efforts of different institutions are 'ushering an objectified culture, pseudo-events and spectacles (Handler, 1987:141) does not apply to Frederikshavn".)

- planning for sustainability
- generating educational and community-based network inclusion through cultural activities.
- restructuring and redesigning public services, institutions from "passive" to including and proactive.

KariZma is the new "Imagineering"²-tool with three focal areas:

1. A COMMUNITY OF TALENT

Inspired by the british "social inclusion" frameworks and cultural planning and mapping methods KariZma identifies new talents and areas of potential growth. By bring amateurs and professionals together in new relation-based networks we aim to create 4 new talent-academies; KariZma Film, KariZma Performance, KariZma Sports and KariZma Music in cooperation with universities etc.

2. A CULTURE OF GROWTH

Growth through relationdevelopment. Creating new cultural expressions, venues and experiences – and thus new jobs and enhancing the existing jobs in the creative and cultural sector. Assisted by professionals and local, regional and national both cultural and educational institutions.

3. A WORLD OF INCLUSION

In the globalized world Frederikshavn will focus on glocalization, transforming our own expressions in dialogue with the international tendencies. Frederikshavn is to become a knowledge, cultural and science Demonstratorium, creating 75 new cultural activities and events and 150 new jobs. This provides a pro-active and demonstratory approach rather than a traditional administrative to the cultural and leisure based sector.

Maximum participation in economic, cultural, social and community life is a defining characteristic of an inclusive society. Achieving this outcome for all inhabitants in Frederikshavn Municipality means delivering programs which support people to learn and strengthen their ability to participate actively in their lives; labour, education and expression and in their communities.

Over time people's opportunities and capabilities are formed through their experience their participation in the communities, economies and institutions around them. People with well-established social networks and institutional connections are more likely to deal successfully with personal crisis and economic adversity. A key aspect of boosting participation is capacity building – supporting individuals' personal capacity to address the issues that arise over the course of their lives, and supporting people to take independent decisions and to negotiate priorities through participation in their workplaces, their neighbourhoods and their communities. This is especially true for communities struggling with disadvantages like the ones in Frederikshavn.

Thomas Østergaard lectures over the ideas, projects and expectations to KariZma.

² Bringing solutions to the development of The Disney Company created a new word bringing imagination together with engineering; IMAGINEERING.

Theme: Innovative networks and projects in the experience economy

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Abstract Title: Cultural heritage and creative collaboration processes in local development – experiences from the Danish municipality Gribskov

This paper will report on the experiences and results so far of a creative teamwork in the Danish municipality Gribskov. The municipality of Gribskov is a beautiful rural area in driving distance from Copenhagen with a lot of summer residences as well as inhabitants working in the capitol. The area is rich on material as well as immaterial cultural heritage and several projects aiming at transforming the experience economy potential into services and events have been carried out since the Danish municipality reform in 2006.

The projects have been developed as a flexible teamwork based on municipality staff, local museums, the forest authorities as well as small business partners and researchers. The main challenge has been to get funding for the projects and the core of the project development can be seen as a prototyping concept, where mappings of cultural heritage were turned into an audio guide and a simple game concept based on mobile phone technology.

Now this prototype has been further developed into an educational concept aiming at using the resources of the local environment combined with mobile games as a teaching tool in the local schools and as means of communication and branding for the local cultural institutions as well as the local department of the national forest and nature agency. The project is a good example of how creative resources combined with a common understanding of the local identity and values can support local engagement, knowledge sharing and collaboration in a flexible organisational learning context.

Theme: Innovative networks and projects in the experience economy

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Abstract Title: When cultural economy and the experience economy converge in the food sector of rural regions: Analysis of implications for economic development

This paper explores the convergence between cultural economy and experience economy in the food sector, and to analyse their implications for rural development. The paper draws on interviews with owners and managers of food enterprises in three Danish rural regions (Thisted, Mors and Bornholm). This paper takes its motivation from the commodification of culture in today's economic space, which has attracted several academic discourses (see e.g. Florida 2002; Scott 2004, Rantisi et al. 2006). Such debates include emphasis on the significance of "cultural products" as catalyst for economic development of cities (Scott 1997, 2004). This symbolizes an era in which enterprises produce cultural products as sources of competitive advantage (Rantisi et al. 2006; Scott 2004). It is a phenomenon embedded with the creation of aestheticised products with symbolic features largely dominating their added value (Lash and Urry 1994). Another phenomenon, which has attracted several analyses in academic literature for some time now, is the turn of the 'experience economy'. Despite the research boom on these phenomena, less attention has been paid in research on how cultural economy and the experience economy converge particularly in the food sector of rural regions. Findings suggest that food enterprises attach different cultural products such as storytelling, cultural and natural heritage, festive events, music concerts, art, and leisure activities as add-ons to food offerings to create experiences for consumers. Analyses of these findings suggest community economic development implications such as promoting business networks, job creations, activities to boost business profits, encourage new business creations, and potential to boost tourism in the regions studied.

Keywords: Cultural economy, experience economy, rural regional economic development

Theme: Innovative networks and projects in the experience economy

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Abstract Title: Quality in the Experience Economy. Quality and competitiveness: theoretical reflections Quality and competitiveness: theoretical reflections³

Most commentators agree that innovation and creativity is the only way to survive in an ever more global, competitive business arena. In addition we see broadened understanding of innovation; it is not longer just a narrow focus on producers and new products. Increasingly the consumers are included in the innovation equation. Both how consumers' ideas are translated into new products, how they experience products and services and how they are persuaded in to buying certain goods are slowly making its way in to innovation theory. This is an apprehension of the fact that in our current experience economy, marketing innovation is equally important, and often trumps technical innovation. However, the focus on excellence in innovation and marketing is not enough to understand competitiveness of firms and regional competitive advantage. The analysis of competitiveness needs to be complemented by a renewed focus on the vital role that quality plays in competitiveness. In this paper it is suggested that through making and providing quality goods and services – that may be based on the latest technologies or equally on age-old craft traditions – firms secure and develop competitive strengths.

Individual firms have very seldom a capacity to provide quality goods and services in isolation; they are a part of an industrial system. This means that they are dependent on the relations they are able to establish externally with suppliers, customers, institutions, collaborators, stakeholders, trade unions and government. This means that the space where firms are located is very important for their performance, both when it comes to innovation, production and the quality of these outputs. In addition is quality not stable. It changes over time and space and varies from industry to industry. Demands related to the concept of quality are extended over geographical space. In some markets quality is synonymous with fixed specifications and regulations, in others it is more related to taste and tradition, and in some cases it is more related to current social conventions. This means that quality is not a given unity, it is built up by practices, networks, flows and senses: It is constantly “in the making”. Hence, there is a distinct geography to quality.

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Theme: Governance in the experience economy

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Abstract Title: The experience economy as a tool for urban and rural development in North Denmark: Exploring current means

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During the past years, the experience economy has been established as a goal to pursue neoliberal planning and development agendas at different scales. In Denmark, diverse development and growth policies at the regional, urban and rural levels portray the EE as a catalyst and a competitiveness tool to promote and attain local economic development. However, such policy documents seem to leave out the necessary means through which the goal of experience economy can be achieved. Through a series of empirical studies at the urban and rural level in the region of North Denmark, we take on a network governance approach to explore the ways through which particular stakeholder arrangements facilitate the implementation of the abovementioned policies.

In our urban case, Aalborg, investments are being made as part of an extensive restoration effort in its harbour areas, which are aimed at creating an “experience Mecca” that emphasizes on a wide spectrum of cultural institutions. Our rural case takes on the food sector in the municipalities of Thy and Mors in North Denmark, which is being transformed from a traditional industry to a versatile business cluster that focuses on “quality and unique products”. For both cases, the article identifies relevant actors and explores their roles and the ways by which they become assembled in carrying out experience-based development projects and strategies.

Keywords: *experience economy; governance networks; rural development; urban development.*

Theme: Governance in the experience economy

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Abstract title: Creativity as a possible catalyst in place-management

- How to plan for the unplanned

Urban regeneration driven by creativity, art and culture has become a still more widespread phenomenon. The paper will discuss the implicit paradoxes when buzzwords like creativity and innovation enters the agenda of strategic locality management. The paper will argue that if creativity and the experience economy are to become constructive fellow-players in locality planning it has to involve indebt analyses of the possibilities and limitations of planning in relation to creativity and experiences and thorough investigations of the specific potentials of the places and localities we want to renew and enliven.

Theme: Governance in the experience economy

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Abstract Title: Experiential turn and territorial staging systems: What new research challenges?

Many socio-economic theories can be discussed to explain the rise of an experiential-based economy. However, the ‘real’ achievement of a new historical phase of ‘experience economy’ can be debated. For that reason, defending an effective ‘experience turn’ in local development and planning in this paper would lead to fruitless controversy and would prevent discussing other important research challenges, which are in our opinion of much more interest for today’s regional studies. Our contribution rather addresses the ‘experience turn’ as a particular conceptual perspective that proposes a view on today’s challenges for regional competitiveness and attractiveness.

In current regional studies and economic geography literature, regions are mostly studied as locally embedded production system within global production networks. The relation between producers and end-users of a good or service is mediated by retailing channels and conceptualised as a part of these production networks (Coe et al., 2004). Placing the concept of experience economy at the centre of a new comprehensive paradigm asks for a new understanding of traditional industrial processes and of traditional producer-user relations. We need to analyse production-consumption motives not only within an ‘information processing system’ but also as an ‘experiential system’ (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) within which the end-consumer engages personal resources in a memorable way (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

Studying the experiential system raises new research issues for regional studies and economic geography. In this paper, we will propose the concept of Territorial Staging System to address new research challenges dealing with regional capacity to mobilise/combine local and distant resources to stage experiences, to attract and organise co-location of producer and consumers, and to develop multi-local complementarities.

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