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The Peripheralisation of the Danish Vocational Education System

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Workshop:

The "new peripherality": scaled, contested and relational

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Workshop: The "new peripherality": scaled, contested and relational
- Book of abstracts

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Theme: The periphery in human geography thought

Nino Javakhishvili Larsen, SDU, Department of Border Region Studies, nino@sam.sdu.dk

Abstract Title: Theoretical discussion on "periphery" in the European cross border perspective

Human geographers and economists have been widely discussing the "Core-Periphery" theme throughout some decades. They have defined and re-defined this concept many times and have integrated within conceptual and econometric models. Theoretical understanding of the concept "core-periphery" has changed along with the economic development of spaces (regions, cities, nations). Taking departure from the traditional industrial location theories, central place theories (Christaller, Lösch) and later on the New Economic Geography models (Krugman), prove that there is the continues search to re-define this concept. John Friedmann in the 1960s elaborated the development stages of regions. In his model, he argued that there is a purpose why some regions develop into the centres and some into the peripheries. Friedmann's core-periphery model suggests that each stage reflects the change of economic relationship between the core and periphery. In the final stage of economic development of spaces, Friedmann identifies four types of areas. Core regions – that have urban and industrial concentration; upward transition regions – the peripheries that have high trickle-down effect from the core and rapid economic growth; resource frontier regions – part of the periphery that are developing; downward transition regions – that have stagnant or declining economies with exhausted resources. (Friedmann, 1966)i The regions, previously core, can become periphery and vice versa, due to the economic growth and reorganisation of the activities in space. Realizing the relevance of spatial aspects in the socio-economic development and planning draws attention to the theoretical contribution from time to time. "At the grand level, the uneven development of whole regions can be driven by cumulative processes that have increasing returns at their root," writes Paul Krugman (1991a)ii. Krugman is one of the economists that acknowledge the importance of location within the economic growth and opens up the discussion of core-periphery. Krugman defines the centripetal and centrifugal forces that affect the geographical location of production. (1991b)iii This paper serves as a theoretical review regarding the development of the "core-periphery" discourse among economic and geography disciplines. The paper aims to find the cord between the definitions and postulate some aspects for centre-periphery patterns within the modern European cross-border regional perspective.

i Friedmann, J. (1966) Regional Development Policy: A Case Study of Venezuela. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge
ii Krugman, P. (1991a) Geography and Trade. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge
iii Krugman, P. (1991b) Increasing Returns and Economic Geography. *Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 99, No. 3*

Theme: The periphery in human geography thought

Peter de Souza, University College of Hedmark, Peter.desouza@hihm.no

Abstract Title: The urban and the center - suitable analytical categories in defining the rural and the periphery?

This paper continues an effort of defining the concept of peripheral starting out in the anthology edited by Danson & de Souza (2012). One of the major elements of substance defining the concept, is its distinction as reflection and/or antonym of other concepts and terms – urban, central etc. Being peripheral, relate to something that is central, according to a certain specification of *centre* or *urban*, which indicates that a comparison of the term could be done through substantiating its common opposite. But, not only as counterpart, the nature of its unequal relation also appear as important. An approach of more differentiated categorisations, act as instruments creating ladders or scales of centrality, peripherality and marginality simultaneously in different appearances in different continuities.

Periphery is always defined by the core but can we find any proof of analytical or political endeavors the other way around? The periphery tends to be the opposite of the main focus of attention, or lacking any attention at all - so the economic/social system defines, analyses, establishes policies for the centre or core and the periphery is 'the other', the rest, the remainder, etc. Another approach that relates to what is written above is a definition of periphery and marginality based on what they do not have, what they are lacking or what they are deprived of. An interesting entrance here is the dichotomy of **urban/non-urban**.

This inspires me to problematize and deconstruct the concepts of *center* and *urban*, in order to try out how qualified these concepts are in their appearance as antonyms or dichotomous opposites and substantiating the concept of *periphery*.

Theme: Small cities in hierarchies and networks

Jens Kaae Fisker, Aalborg University, jkfisker@plan.aau.dk

Abstract Title: 'Reconstructing Centrality and Peripherality in the North Denmark Region: A Question of Scale and Typology'

Abstract: Peripherality and centrality, as labels attached to places, have become fluent denominators. Their use is contingent upon the applied scalar perspective and the specific spatial features of place that are taken into consideration. If a multiscalar and multimodal perspective is applied, it has the implication that a locality can be considered simultaneously central and peripheral. In definitional terms, then, absolute delineations of centres and peripheries cannot be meaningfully carried out, unless the issue at stake is of a very specific and bounded nature. Rarely can a locality as a whole be labelled as peripheral, as this would imply peripherality independently of scalar perspective and across all defining aspects. Beyond definitional issues, this situation makes it appropriate to wonder, how a multiscalar and multimodal reading of place can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of centre-periphery relations and their associated societal issues.

The paper presents insights derived from the North Denmark Region, where the Frederikshavn municipality has been research subject of a broader case study on the roles of the local state in locality development and change. This broader study includes historical analysis of Frederikshavns positioning through time as a small city in the Danish urban system. A multimodal perspective is applied, inspired by the dual model of urban systems developed by Hohenberg & Lees (1995, 2005), and is combined with a multiscalar perspective that illuminates, how images of peripherality and centrality change across local, regional, national and international scales.

Empirically the paper is based on document analysis (place descriptions, planning and strategy documents, media reports, historical accounts etc.), qualitative interviews (municipal officials and a local historian), as well as quantitative data for more descriptive purposes (i.e. commuting patterns as an indicator of functional peripherality/centrality for the laborforce). The contribution of the paper is to show, how the application of a multiscalar and multimodal perspective can produce contextualised knowledge that go beyond simple centre/periphery labelling. Instead, considerations of the intertwined nature of peripherality and centrality can assist in illuminating the spaces of possibility for local futures.

Theme: Small cities in hierarchies and networks

Adam Czarnecki, Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland, Adam.czarnecki@uef.fi

Abstract Title: Small towns in the economic relations network of rural enterprises (example of the region of Green Lungs of Poland)

The role of small towns in the development of rural areas is under constant changes, from which the deepest and strongest ones are observed nowadays. Similarly to metropolis or rural areas, the small towns are influenced by globalisation processes, large-scale economic and functional changes, increasing social discrepancies, negative demographic tendencies and threats stemming from the ongoing degradation of the natural environment. Many small towns successfully adapt to the surroundings changes, take on new challenges and start having new roles, whereas others go through the crisis and are not able to take advantage of development predispositions that have not existed earlier. Unfortunately, small towns, contrary to rural and metropolitan areas, are usually not respected by decision makers, so they are not regarded as a priority in the national policies and development strategies. Decision makers and politicians often trivialise multi-directional and multi-facet relations between towns and neighbouring rural areas, assuming that these only concern production and trade relations with the nearest surroundings.

The research conception and its methodological frames refer to the FP5 project on the Role of Small and Medium-sized Towns in Rural Development (MARKETOWNS, QLRT-2000-01923), although the scope of the analysis was more limited and focused. The research was of qualitative character, and its only subject were economic relations established by rural enterprises with individual and institutional consumers as well as goods and services suppliers located in small towns. Moreover, the attention was paid only to the incidence of small towns in spatial distribution of economic relations, without taking into account scale and distribution by type of resources (goods, services and funds). The basic source of statistical data was made up by the declarations of entrepreneurs singled out the places (names of towns and communities), from which the suppliers (enterprises that supply materials, commodities and production means), consumers (individual and institutional customers who buy the offered goods and services) and co-operators come. In this way, it was possible to define the position of small towns in the relations network of rural enterprises, and, thus, make the assessment of their significance as far as purchasing, sales and cooperation markets are concerned.

The qualitative analysis with the use of questionnaires was conducted among 284 local entrepreneurs in 19 selected rural communities located in north-eastern part of Poland usually considered as more peripheral and underdeveloped region in the country.

Theme: Small cities in hierarchies and networks

Birgit Leick, University of Bayreuth (Germany), Department of Economic Geography,
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Abstract Title: On the interplay of firms and institutions in demographically declining regions of Germany: a first field study (Working title)

Demographic decline has turned into one of the most important contemporary and future challenges for many rural-peripheral regions of Europe. This is particularly true for Germany where ageing and a decline in the population, due to low fertility rates and rising life expectancies, combined with outmigration, shape the growth prospects of many regions. Hence, in such constellations, demographic decline produces various and complex effects on regional economies, shaping their development trajectory. A core premise of recent approaches in economic geography is that firms, organizations and institutions are considered as important elements of regional economies and firms are embedded in regional institutional settings. In the context of demographic decline, institutional configurations are likely to be subject to change due to changing regional and market environments. Yet, it is not clear how institutions interact with economic agents such as firms in changing settings and how institutional change is produced.

Using a case study of rural-peripheral and demographically declining German regions, the present paper sets out to make a first contribution to this promising perspective. It starts by revising important concepts on institutions and regional development (such as neoinstitutionalist theories and the more recent 'varieties of capitalism' school). Based on this conceptual framework, the main proposition of the study is developed: In the context of demographic decline, local and regional institutions that support firms in their endeavours and strategies will face new needs and problems formulated by local agents. As a result, bottom up initiatives may emerge which have not been addressed so far by established institutions (such as chambers, associations, regional development and consulting agencies, and the like). Conversely, new policy responses, initiated at the sub-national level, will probably target problems of firms and influence local and regional institutions. Therefore, institutional change can originate from different channels and will be produced in a variety of ways.

The paper portrays and compares selected bottom up and top down initiatives from different case regions in East and West Germany. It highlights how local and regional responses to demographic decline are initiated, implemented and how they extend or alter established institutional structures. Its contribution is twofold: First, it applies institutional theories to the arena of demographic decline by focusing on the growth prospects of rural and peripheral regions. Secondly, it makes a first contribution to a re-visited institutional perspective in economic geography that deserves greater attention.

Theme: Education and skills

Bodil Bjerring, Aalborg University, bjerring@learning.aau.dk

Abstract Title: Gender, Knowledge and Skills – An Anthropological   Approach

Core questions: How is knowledge produced, in which context, for what purpose, and how are the acquired skills used at the local gendersegregated labour market?
This paper is grounded in empirical findings in the Danish town Skagen. A type of locality that is loaded with work possibilities within harbour-related jobs, tourism, and public/private welfare-service. The questions and answers are discussed within the context of an anthropological study. I have followed 100 men and women, born in 1972, and discussed their decision-making about learningstrategies and the possibilities and constraints of learning in this local community. How did the period of time during which they grew up influence their choices? How did the local labour market change? How did the local community and its social networks around family - and labourrelations influence their choices? How did their parents' working lives, with flexible work in terms of working hours and the organisation of work, influence the decisions to stay or leave the community? Who is still living in Skagen in 2007, and who has left? Gender is a fundamental category in this respect.
How does the chosen package of theory, method and data influence the thoughts about future institutionalised educational facilities? Is the centralisation of educational facilities a threat to this type of communities, adding to a declining population? Does commuting and IT -related jobs solve the problems in what is often seen as a Danish periphery?
If both getting an education and living in Skagen is the wanted answer, what are the questions then?

Theme: Education and skills

Karin Topsø Larsen, PhD student, Aalborg University, ktl@plan.aau.dk

Abstract title: The Peripheralisation of the Danish Vocational Education System

Background
In the past decade, the Vocational Education Training System (VET) in Denmark has undergone a downturn in which fewer and fewer students apply for and complete a vocational education. Choosing a vocational education has become synonymous with choosing the losing team. The result is a drastic drop in the supply of vocationally trained labour. This is especially problematic for labour markets in non-metropolitan areas, where a number of production- and service- firms are still located. At the same time more and more youth are choosing and completing academic education programs, which target work places in metropolitan areas and support a migration flow of young educated people from rural municipalities toward metropolitan areas.

Research Questions
What are the underlying processes and structures, which shape these education and migration patterns? What are the consequences of these patterns on development potentials in non-metropolitan areas? Which mechanisms within the (Vocational) Education System itself, support these tendencies? And, finally, which aspects of the VET system need to be explored further in order to contribute to educational reform policing?

This paper is conceptual and explores processes of peripheralisation with the purpose of understanding the present crisis in the Vocational Education System in Denmark from a perspective of changing hierarchies of place and hierarchies of educational attainment connected to changes in economic processes. Its theoretical contribution is to link concepts from economic geography on the spatial distribution of knowledge and its impact on regional economic development to concepts on learning and educational planning and thus establish a geography of education related to the VET system in Denmark.

Methodology
First, the paper introduces and discusses theorising within economic geography on the service and knowledge economy and the spatial distribution of highly qualified labour and human knowledge capital, which is the backbone of the knowledge economy. The paper traces and discusses theorising on the rise of urban areas and city regions and the development of new economic and knowledge peripheralities in such processes (Scott 2001, Florida, 2002, Hansen & Winther, 2012)/ (Danson & De Souza (eds.), 2012, Kuhn, 2012) .

Then the paper introduces the VET system in Denmark and discusses the mechanisms within the VET system that support the peripheralisation of this education system vis-a-vis academic secondary education. These mechanisms function on three fields – one concerns the qualities and capacities of the vocationally-educated and trained compared to the academically-educated in a knowledge economy (Scott 2008, 2009); the other concerns the spatial distribution of the academic education system in Denmark compared to the vocational education system; and the third concerns processes of governance in the changes brought on by the shift from an industrial to a knowledge economy (Koudahl, 2004).

Finally, the paper will discuss which areas of knowledge that need further studies in order to give relevant input to the necessary policy changes that face the VET system in Denmark today.

Theme: Education and skills

Kristinn Hermannsson, University of Strathclyde, Kristinn.hermannsson@strath.ac.uk

Abstract Title: Expenditure and Displacement effects of Students in the Periphery: Impact on the Scottish Highlands and Islands

A ubiquitous feature of life in peripheral communities is that young adults have to move away to attend further and higher education. From the point of view of an individual student and his family significant amounts have to be spent to pay for term time costs. These are at least partially funded through saving incomes earned locally. These term time expenditures are then spent at the place of study, typically a central city. This gives rise to a spatial demand-shift effect, where students increase consumption where they study and reduce consumption where they are from. Because of this, the location of HEIs can have an important impact not only upon their host economies but also on the localities where students originate from. This paper analyses the flow of students within Scotland and the resulting spatial shift of consumption expenditures. The focus is on the peripheral region of the Highlands & Islands (H&I) and its interaction with the Rest of Scotland (ROS). Student records data are used to determine the origin and destination of HE students in Scotland. This reveals a significant net-outflow of students from the H&I to the ROS. Using survey-based expenditure profiles and a custom built 2-region Input-Output table the economic impact of these student flows are estimated for both sending and receiving regions.

Theme: Creative, culture and experience economy

Michael Thyrrestrup Pedersen, Aalborg University, Mtp@plan.aau.dk

Abstract Title: The Creation of Experience Spaces – in the context of small cities

The aim of the paper is to investigate the recent construction of new cultural experience spaces in Denmark through decentralized levels of governance, with periphery as a relational concept. Place quality and quality of life is in focus in the development of localities and the character of a place is increasingly sought used as an instrument for attracting people and economy. In the context of Danish cultural policy and planning, the governmental strategy of creating Culture Regions as a means to the goal of creating better cultural offers for people in the region; has led to a new spatial order in the area of culture. Culture Regions can be observed as a strategy to try to outbalance the differences in the geographical development in the field of culture.

The theoretical point of departure will be finding its roots in spatial thoughts. Scale-space approach will be setting the scene for the theoretical discussions, mainly inspired by Harvey (2009), Brenner (2004) and Mackinnon (2010), to put in to context the relations between national – regional – municipal, in the light of relational space (Massey, 2005) and the quality of place (Healey, 2010). The third space of Soja (1996) will be addressed as a central theory in this paper, naturally with Lefebvre (1991[1974]) references. Also, in relation Tuan's (1977) thoughts about space, place and experiences. Thus entailing a socio-spatial dialectic in a multi-scalar relational framework, to understand how people and places interact in a co-creating production of imaginaries – a primary source for the experience economy. This relational approach to development and to periphery can be seen for example in different niche development projects - linking to discussions on the scale of development and the scale of periphery.

The empirical analysis will be conducted in the intersection field of collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and four municipalities in East Jutland. The analysis will evolve around how cultural experience spaces are created for the citizens to enjoy.

This paper will contribute with knowledge about the creation of experiences in the common space of the four municipalities? Are these spaces increasing the opportunities for quality, cultural experiences? What are the challenges, obstacles and problems in that regard?

Maria Vallström, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, maria.vallstrom@soderhamn.se

Abstract Title: The Darkening of Places – a comparison between former single-industry communities and ex-modern suburbs

In this paper I would like to examine the processes of stigmatization of place. It is a kind of peripheralization by underlying power structures, of which class and ethnicity is most obvious in my examples. Those are primarily taken from my research in former single-industry communities in a region of Sweden and from a more superficial glance at research on ex-modern suburbs. There are two guiding stories connected to these places; one concerning the backward, unemployed, uneducated (man) in former single-industry communities, one concerning the depending (or violent) migrant in ex-modern suburbs. Both stories tend to obscure real social and economic problems and the solution is sought for in the dark places themselves, not in the gaze of the center. One "whitening strategy" is trying to "wash" the place by producing ameliorative descriptions of them. Another way is simply trying to change the inhabitants. In many suburbs of Stockholm, of which Husby is known for it's recent riots, the political recipe for integration is to transform rental flats to private ownership.
Ways to redefine and "wash" former industrial communities can be made by arranging art projects and replace or exploit industrial heritage, inviting "the creative class", overlooking the actual inhabitants as "hopeless" and being of the wrong kind. Both can be seen as gentrification processes closely linked to place. The social geography in my examples suggests that power is, like never before, exerted as a matter of place, of peripheralization and a very clear distribution of value.
As a consequence of this, important resources for social sustainability are undiscovered. Collective action, social control and cooperations are overlooked, due to peripheralization processes and a deeply rooted individualistic norm. The collective structures in for example former single industries might be something to recognize as a good soil for social sustainability. Right now it can as well become the opposite, since inhabitants often turn to anti-democratic movements in lack of other recognition. As Don Kalb has suggested, the former working class has nothing or very little to gain on globalization. Rather they tend to merge with others in a new class, what Guy Standing has called "the precariat", a new kind of underclass marked by uncertain living conditions and democratic deficit.

Theme: Creative, culture and experience economy

Lotta Svensson, University of Uppsala, a.lotta.svensson@soderhamn.se

Abstract title: How can a local facebook group provide opportunities to contribute to a socially sustainable society?

In this paper I discuss, based on theories of social capital, salutogenes and possibilities in new social media, how a local facebook group seems able to open opportunities for new forms of democracy and thus also contribute to social sustainability from a "glocal" point of view.

The discussion is based on an example from the municipality of Söderhamn, Sweden, where I have followed the development for many years, and where two young adults for almost two years ago started a facebook group with the aim to "lift Söderhamn and its positive sides and to pep for involvment and positive attitudes". After interviewing these two founders, I summarize their ideas behind this facebook group like this: it is difficult to defend and creatively develop your life choices if they are constantly devalued and judged on by other people's pictures and norms of what is "the successful." But together in a larger group, you can review and change the norms that assume that you are a failure (and make mistakes because you live where you live). And from that strength you can make more constructive decisions about what to do with your life and how you want to try to influence your environment. By avoiding letting you be devalued by a more consumptionistic worldview, where high consumption and career is what gives status, you are taking a stand for a more sustainable development, based on your own, local, cultural and social conditions.

The facebookgroup has become an arena in which each member can both participate in development discussions and actions. The group members themselves, together and in present time, negotiate and appreciate each other's efforts and gets access to skills and resources they would not otherwise have found. This group appears to be able to provide tools to enhance bridging social capital.

However, the facebookgroup seems only to a limited extent have contributed to achieving the level of social capital that connects people with varying degrees of influence and power. The group is not invited to discussions with the "authorized local" decision-makers. Although there now exists a group of young people expressing a strong commitment to the region and actually acting in a number of ways to bring about change - it appears that those people in power do not see the group as an opportunity for democratic discussions and forums for idea development. This pinpoints both the difficulty of renewing the political and democratic development and the problems that small municipalities have - to see the young people as resources in the development.

Theme: Creative, culture and experience economy

Lise Schröder, Aalborg Universitet, lisesch@plan.aau.dk

Abstract title: Cultural heritage and the mobile dimension – representational perspectives on space, scale and experiences

In various concepts referring to creative economy, culture economy or experience economy, cultural heritage plays a central role due to its great potentials relating to storytelling and the creation of meaning and identity of places and products (Graham et al, 2000).

Dealing with the challenges of peripheries the focus on cultural heritage and the mobile dimension is an attempt to illustrate how not only the mobility of people and material goods but also the mobility of information and knowledge is affecting the role and potentials of the historic and place-bound qualities (Healey, 2007)(Lorentzen, 2012) (Lund et al, 2007) (Jensen, 2010).

In order to frame the relational and value-based aspects of space, scale and experiences related to the strategic use of cultural heritage semiotic concepts developed by Charles Sanders Peirce will be introduced (Peirce, 1931-1966) (Preucel, 2006).

This conceptual framework will be used as a means of investigating the relations between the various aspects of cultural heritage referring to the use of meanings and the consumption of experiences in a spatial planning context (Hird et al., 2010)(Allingham, 2012).
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Peirce operates with various categories of signs making it possible to characterise communication processes and distinguish relations between diverse phenomena, representational modes and use contexts. On this background empirical findings related to dealing with cultural heritage and mobile communication technologies in a municipal development context will be presented.

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Jesper Manniche, Centre for Regional and Tourism Research, manniche@crt.dk

Abstract Title: From regional innovation and institutions to multi-scalar knowledge and networks: New relational perspectives on rural development

The paper addresses the critical debates within economic geography about the varying theoretical Territorial Innovation Models that in recent decades have been so influential in regional innovation studies and policies (clusters, industrial districts, Regional Innovation Systems, Learning Regions, etc.) The growing critique includes the emphasis on the local/regional level of interaction and institutional conditions, the focus on specific, often manufacturing sectors, and on science and technology driven innovations, whereby interaction at other territorial levels, cross-sector activities, and cultural and experience aspects of innovation and economic development are overlooked.

Based on in-depth empirical case studies about the knowledge dynamics of developing 'regional food' on the Danish island of Bornholm, the paper discusses the (positive) implications for rural areas of changing the attention from 'innovation' to 'knowledge', from 'regional' to 'multi-scalar' and from 'institutions' to 'network relations'.

Theme: Planning of small cities

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Abstract title: The concept of cluster- villages as planning tool in the rural districts of Denmark

The Danish rural districts are transforming; structural and demographical changes are influencing the rural villages and the contemporary rural districts can be characterized by both well-functioning and growing villages as well as declining and decaying villages. In addition to this, the merger of municipalities in 2007 has resulted in geographical larger municipalities in which the distance between the lived lives in the rural villages seem increasingly alienated from the municipal government and civil service.

These challenges require new methods and approaches that address the reality of the rural villages in order to secure their future. This paper will address the concept of cluster-villages as a possible approach to strengthen the conditions of contemporary Danish villages. Cluster-villages is a concept that gather a number of villages in a network-structure where the villages both work together and uses each other's strengths, as well as developing the individual village in addition to the specific potentials of that village.

In order to investigate the potentials and possibilities of the cluster-village concept the paper will seek to unfold the concept theoretical and strategically; looking into both the theoretical frame as well as the benefits of such concept. Further, the paper seeks to inscribe the concept into the existing debate regarding villages in the rural districts and the current planning discussion about Decline Management.

Key words: rural villages, polarization, cluster-villages, decline management, rural and regional planning

Theme: Planning of small cities

Helen Carter, Department of Development & Planning, Aalborg University, hflc@plan.aau.dk

Constructions of Peripherality: an example from Northern Ireland

In this paper I focus on the concept of peripheralisation. In particular, I consider how peripheries can be discursively constructed in the debates surrounding planning cases, and how this might serve to legitimate particular interests. This is related to the case of a proposed golf resort in a rural area of Northern Ireland, and the manner in which peripherality is constructed by a variety of different actors in this debate. In the case discussed in the article, peripherality is constructed in different ways by different actors, yet the debate becomes somewhat polarised into the environmental values of a periphery versus the 'need' for economic development in such a periphery. In this paper I will analyse these constructions of peripherality and discuss the manner in which different framings of the region affects planning, and perhaps legitimates certain developments. This offers a contribution to the discussion of peripheralisation and how the discursive construction of peripherality can affect policy-making.

Theme: Planning of small cities

Maria Quvang Lund Vestergaard, Aalborg University, Mqhv@create.aau.dk

Abstract title: Virtual Mobility in Peripheral Denmark

This paper seeks to investigate the potentials for virtual mobility in Peripheral Denmark – with National Park Thy as a case.

Lately a centralisation of hospitals, government and education has taken place in Denmark which has intensified the movement from peripheral areas to the cities of especially the young people. This has left the fringe of Denmark with a huge problem of depopulation and lack of economic growth. This leads to empty houses and closing of shops and schools which leave the areas with among others longer distances and lack of development. All of this makes it even harder to attract new residents and companies, and prevent others from moving away. This leaves the areas with many mobility challenges and it is part of a vicious circle which can be difficult to interrupt.

However with the entering into the Information Age and with the development of the Network Society the vicious circle might be interrupted. As Castell (2010) puts it*: "The development of electronic communication and information systems allows for an increasing disassociation between spatial proximity and the performance of everyday life's functions: work, shopping, entertainment, healthcare, education, public service, governance, and the like."* (Castells, 2010, p. 424). This makes it possible to live in the pheriphery while e.g. having a job further away and thus reduce some of the problems with longer distances in these areas. This could give the peripheral areas new development possibilities. Gordon and de Souza e Silva (2011) also highlights how it is possible to be global locally: *"The provinciality of the small town, physically isolated from the rest of the world, is potentially cosmopolitan because of the integration of information into its streets."* (Gordon & de Souza e Silva, 2011, p. 3).

This article investigates if this Information Age has made Peripheral Denmark more connected to the rest of the country and the rest of the world, how the residents feel they are connected as well as the possibilities to be more connected. To answer these questions Denmark's first National park, Nationalpark Thy, has been chosen as a case. Even though this paper mainly focuses on virtual mobility the paper arguments that this cannot be investigated isolated and throughout the article the connection with other mobility modes (Urry, 2007) will be present. Also in the end of the article the connection between the different kinds of mobilities will be discussed as well as the possibilities to develop the virtual mobility potentials.

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Theme: New work places, commuting and distant work

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Abstract title: Offshore but on track? Working life in and around North Denmark´s offshore sector.

Abstract (subtheme b): In the spring 2011, and again during summer 2012, the small provincial town of Hirtshals (approx. 6000 inhabitants) in the region of North Denmark was home to the two - so far - most spectacular symbols of the success of an emergent offshore sector in the region. The upgrading and overhauling of the two jack-up rigs 'Mærsk Guardian' and 'Mærsk Giant' provided the basis for a number of short-term jobs for individuals and companies in the entire region and beyond, the first rig alone wielding an estimated production turnout value of 171 million DKK, and leading to direct and indirect extra tax revenues for local authorities amounting to approximately 11 million DKK. Sums which are reckoned with in a region otherwise characterized by high unemployment and low education levels compared to the rest of the country, a decreasing population, and which is often being referred to as part of 'peripheral Denmark'.

This paper builds on biographical interviews with a number of local men and women from North Denmark whose working lives were directly affected by the two projects on upgrading 'Guardian' and 'Giant'. All of the interviewees worked either directly on upgrading the rigs, or in auxiliary functions such as providing food and lodging for the great number of workers working night and day for the three months each rig was docked in Hirtshals. In dialogue with theories on the effects of globalisation on labour market realities (for example Beck, Bauman, Standing and others), the paper discusses local attitudes and experiences regarding flexibility and mobility in a globalized labour market, and what may actually be perceived as centre and periphery in this context. Most of the respondents have extensive experiences with working abroad, some through going abroad to work for a year or more, some through histories of prolonged global mobility in the maritime sector, and some through a pattern which seems best captured by the metaphor of bungy-jumping: venturing out to new more or less distant localities to perform a task, only to return to North Denmark for a brief period before setting off to a new location. The paper discusses the extent and sustainability of these various patterns for seeking solutions to the local job challenges based on the attitudes and experiences of the respondents.

Theme: New work places, commuting and distant work

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Abstract title: Telework centers as local development

This paper discusses the establishment of distant work centers as an element in local development strategies in rural areas with a particular view on two new telework centers in Region North Denmark Distant work is a phenomenon on the rise, due to the development of the internet on the one hand and new flexible work functions on the other hand. Not only the exchange of documents, but also meetings can be organized virtually by still better video conference equipment and programs. An implication is that an increasing number of new service jobs in the knowledge economy can be carried out regardless of location, as long as there is access to internet. Not only firms, but individual labor is potentially liberated from the logic of physical location and proximity. Technically speaking 'geography is dead' and the clustering of new service jobs in big cities is no longer a technical necessity.

This is good news for rural areas, where the access to new service jobs is limited. In order to make distant work performed outside of the city centers attractive, telework centers have been established with the aim of providing office facilities and a professional and social environment for service workers. In the US, in Canada and Australia the number of telework centers is high and rising. Also in Europe a number of telework centers have been established, well documented in eg France. In connection with the EU program Micropole, Region North Denmark has initiated two telework centers in rural areas. The present paper is developed as part of a research project on the developmental potentials of these two telework centers.

The paper consists in three major parts. A summary of the history of telework centers and international experiences (France, US,, Canada, Australia) to contextualize the local telework projects. A record of the **d**evelopment challenges of the two host municipalities Jammerbugt and Brønderslev, to contextualize the telework centers in the local context. And finally a preliminary analysis and discussion of the two telework centers in relation to their potential community benefits of the telework center projects in terms of e.g. jobs, entrepreneurship, attraction or retention of population, and reduced commuting. Also the challenges and risks of failure connected with them will be discussed. Based on this points for further research will be suggested.

Theoretically the paper will draw on relational economic geography, proximity and new peripherality in general, and on the work by Edward Malecki and Bruno Moriset on the Digital Economy and rural telecenters in particular.

As an early paper from the research project this paper is basically exploratory and will present a literature survey of telework research as well as a preliminary case study of the two telework centers and their local context in Region North Denmark, based on documents as well as observations and visits to the centers.

The contribution of the paper is to establish a point of departure for further research into the regional development perspectives of telework centers. The developmental perspective of telework research is severely understudied, so this paper fills a vacuum.

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Theme: New work places, commuting and distant work

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Abstract title: Migration and work-life balance in the periphery

This paper will address the potential of teleworking in relation to migration decisions to leave or stay in rural, peripheral locations. Various studies document long term patterns of migration from rural to urban areas but also urban-rural migration as well as significant differences between rural localities in regard to population growth or decline.

Mobility is generally low in Denmark, decreases with age and is very low from age 50 whereas mobility is high when establishing family. Thus, migration takes place in relation to life phases where young people seeking education move to cities where universities are located. Some – but few - return to the area where they grew up e.g. due to lack of jobs and career possibilities especially for those with a higher education. However, transformation of work culture driven by information and computing technology (ICT) enables working independently of time and place which leave potential for rural, peripheral locations for retaining as well as attracting qualified labor.

In the paper the relations between balanced work/family life and modern work culture is explored on the basis of research on migration between urban and rural places. Lack of development potential for rural peripheral areas is generally explained by poor proximity and connectedness to urban areas however some rural, peripheral locations succeed in retaining and attracting population which points to different qualities of specific places, individual perceptions and meaning of place. The paper also explores meaning of place and place identity as perceived at individual level.

The paper draws on theory on migration, belonging and settlement in a biographical perspective in which moving decisions are seen as the result of a complex process rather than caused by single event or explanation and where place and meaning of place is crucial to decisions to leave or stay in peripheral locations. The paper will also draws on recent studies on migration from rural to urban areas and vice versa.

The contribution of the paper is to develop a framework for further research into potential for local and regional development in perspective of telework centers and related to work/family balance.