

CALL FOR PAPERS



Regional Studies Association

Research Network on Experience Economy
and Spatial Strategies.

Culture and experiences in spatial
planning, development and innovation

Producers and consumers in the Experience Economy : What territorial shapes?

3rd - 4th December 2009
Institute of Sociology, University of Neuchâtel

Abstract submission deadline: 31st October 2009

For further information: gret@unine.ch or visit www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk

Research Network Organisers:

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AIM OF THE RESEARCH NETWORK

The experience economy represents a turn, not only in business strategies but also in local development strategies. Local planners focus increasingly on quality of place and quality of life as an aim in itself and as a tool for attracting citizens, tourists and businesses. Businesses, on the other hand focus increasingly on non-material features of their products such as narratives and images which relate to the customers perceptions. It seems that no city or region can afford to stay unnoticed, and place branding is part of the play of the global competition between places.

The focus of the network is the role of place, spatial narratives and identity in the leisure, culture and experience economy and planning, and the spatial development potentials of these economies. The research network intends to coordinate, produce and disseminate front line research on the spatial dimensions of the emerging leisure, culture and experience economy.

The network intends to research into the following issues:

- Regions and cities in the experience economy
- Trends in experience demand and consumption: leisure, culture, places and events
- Event making as strategic tools in local development
- The construction of experience regions, networks and narratives
- Knowledge and innovation in the experience economy
- Stakeholders of the experience economy and public private partnerships
- Globalisation, mobility and the experience economy
- Social and geographic layers of the experience economy
- Place branding and authenticity
- Typology of experience based urban strategies
- Impact of the financial crisis on the experience economy
- The experience economy in the industrial sector
- The commodification of culture, leisure, experiences and its impacts on the cultural and social dynamism of local communities.

WORKSHOP FOCUS

If the role of customers in innovation processes has been emphasised by different studies since the end of 1980s and addressed by literature (i.e. work done by Von Hippel 2005), his place - especially regarding the end-customer - has largely been “neglected “ by theories devoted to territorial development and economic geography (Grabber et al. 2008). Those latter theories most often paid attention to the role of regional capabilities in productive processes in order to understand local competitiveness in the global economy. A large field of investigation is still open and is even getting of greater importance through the development of cultural and creative industries as well as of new communication technologies.

In the experience economy, the role of the end-customer is central because he participates in “personal” and “memorable” way to the experience staged by a seller. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), “the customer is the product”. In that sense the activity of the “stager” cannot be separated from the activity of the “guest”. Recent works dealing with regional development in the experience economy have analysed how different kinds of knowledge and resources participate to staging experience and how they combine within different places (central cities, provincial cities, rural areas, etc.)¹. From that perspective, further theoretical considerations can be raised regarding the involvement of the end-consumer and the territorial relations that occur in those processes.

The characteristics of the demand are largely determined by factors such as consumer’s income, personal socio-cultural background and particular embeddedness in a territorial and socio-cultural context. This workshop intends to go beyond traditional economic and marketing reasoning in order to explore the current knowledge of experience, leisure and culture demand, its dynamic and segmentation, socially and geographically. In that sense different guiding questions can be proposed.

- “How social, cultural and geographical factors can affect an experience economy?”
- “Can an experience economy exist in a society where personal income is lowering?”
- “How does the awareness of the consumer to sustainable development influence the experience he expects?”
- “How does income influence the kind of experience economy and the space where it is purchased?”

¹ See the different papers presented at the RSA conferences in Prague 2008 and Leuven 2009 as well as the special issue edited in *European Planning Studies*, Volume 17 Issue 6 2009

- “How does territorial embeddedness influences the kind of the expected experience (urban socio-cultural context, rural socio-cultural context, etc.) and where the experience is purchased?”

The relation of production-consumption is crucial to be analysed because it is the relation between a “stager” and a “guest” that forms the experience. That relation revealed over a duration sets coordination rules regarding *when* the economic exchange is done (for instance “admission fees”, complex business model, etc.) and *where* the experience takes place. Several studies have analysed cases in the field of tourism, agro-food or event organisation where co-localisation of the producers and the consumers is needed. Again, further guiding question can be proposed.

- “In what way do spatial characteristics represent a resource for the production of innovative experiences?”
- “What are the social and territorial challenges for the experience economy if co-location of producer and consumer does not exist?”
- “Are the theoretical concepts of the experience economy applicable for larger industrial activities which cannot sell its whole production locally?”
- “What are the territorial implications of new communication technologies and new media in the experience economy?”
- “Is the concept of experience economy applicable if no direct fees are charged for an experience but included in a wider business model taking place multi-locally and across different sectors?”
- “What territorial relations do occur between different places at different time in the production-consumption process (complementarities between metropolitan and rural areas, role of central places as relays of experiences, etc.)?”
- “What are the critical perspectives, threats and opportunities on experience economy based developments for traditional industries?”

Those questions are indicative, please feel free to submit an abstract on any topic related to the specific issue of the workshop.

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

The main aim of this event is to develop a journal special issue, which will provide the opportunity for participants to give exposure and visibility to their research and papers. In a broader perspective the workshop might be as well a starting point to the setting up of a wider research program at the European level.

PUBLIC TARGETED

The workshop is open to all researchers, young and experienced, PhD students, practitioners and policy makers with an interest in the Experience Economy and more specifically in the above mentioned topics.

SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACT

We invite all participants to submit a paper proposal in English, by email, of up to 2500 characters by no later than the 31st October 2009. The abstract should be submitted to the Research Network's organisers at : gret@unine.ch.

PARTICIPATION COSTS

Participation to the seminar is subject to a fee of EUR 40 (CHF 60) for scientific contributors and EUR 120 (CHF 180) for practitioners. For PhD students, the participation to the workshop is free. The payment has to be made before 30th November 2009 to:

Account in EURO (EUR):

Bank: UBS SA CH-2001 Neuchâtel

Account number: 290-500080.60L

IBAN: CH49 0029 0290 5000 8060 L

SWIFT-/BIC-No: UBSWCHZH80A

Payment to: Université de Neuchâtel, Bureau des Fonds de Tiers, CH-2000 Neuchâtel

Reference/Note: U.01714 - Experience Economy

Account in Swiss Francs (CHF):

Bank: UBS SA CH-2001 Neuchâtel

Account number: 290-500080.05H

IBAN: CH53 0029 0290 5000 8005 H

SWIFT-/BIC-No: UBSWCHZH80A

Payment to: Université de Neuchâtel, Bureau des Fonds de Tiers, CH-2000 Neuchâtel

Reference/Note: U.01714 - Experience Economy

TRAVEL GRANTS

Thanks to RSA support, a limited number of bursaries of up to EUR 250 will be made available to graduate, postgraduate students, young researchers and other participants with financial difficulties. Applicants are expected to minimise the costs by using economy travel, single rooms, etc.

If you are interested in receiving a bursary, please send a short justification to gret@unine.ch at the same time as you submit your abstract explaining how this workshop is relevant for your work and what possible co-financing from your own university you can get. Bursaries will be awarded on the basis of the justification of each demand. Furthermore, bursaries will be awarded on a first come, first served basis. Priority will be given to RSA members.

LOCATION AND ACCOMODATION

A train from Geneva, Basle and Zürich runs directly to Neuchâtel every hour. The journey is about 90 minutes. Information regarding timetables can be found easily under <http://www.sbb.ch/en/index.htm>.

Regarding accommodations, we can recommend four hotels which make special rate for the workshop. So, if you book one of them, tell the receptionist that you are taking part to the workshop organised by the University of Neuchâtel. You can book by phone, fax or e-mail.

The hotels are the following ones:

1) Hotel "L'Aubier"

Rue du Château 1
CH-2000 Neuchâtel
Tél.: +41 32 710 18 58
Fax: +41 32 710 18 59
lecafe@aubier.ch
<http://www.aubier.ch/fr/offrcafe.htm>

3) Hotel « Alpes et Lac »

Place de la Gare 2
CH - 2000 NEUCHATEL
Tél.: +41 32 723 19 19
Fax: +41 32 723 19 20
hotel@alpesetlac.ch
www.alpesetlac.ch

2) Hotel des Arts

Rue Pourtalès 3
2001 Neuchâtel
Tél.: +41 32 727 61 61
Fax: +41 32 727 61 62
info@hotel-des-arts.ch
www.hotel-des-arts.ch

4) Hotel Touring au Lac

Place Numa-Droz 1
CH - 2001 Neuchâtel
Tél: +41 32 725 55 01
Fax: +41 32 725 82 43
hotel@touringaulac.ch
<http://www.touringaulac.ch/131/English.html>

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