

Abstract

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About Organising Tourism Studies of Tourism Co-organisations in Sweden

This thesis is about the organisation of tourism, with an emphasis on the regionally active co-organisations that co-ordinate and market tourist products. The main aim is to create understanding of tourism's regional co-organisations through identifying, describing and problematising the institutional structures and institutional processes that comprise tourism promotional work. Special interest is directed towards activities that develop co-operation based on business-like relationships between companies operating at a tourism destination. Yet another aim of this thesis is to contribute to sector research within tourism.

The thesis is based on three different studies. The first examines the different thought traditions of tourism in Sweden to better understand how tourism has been established as a social institution. The second investigates tourism's regional organisation through the pattern of websites on the Internet. It draws a broad picture of the organisational field of co-organisations for tourism in Sweden. The third one is a case study of a commercially oriented regional co-organisation where co-operation develops with a basis in business-like relationships. The institutional situation can be described as an institutional landscape in three dimensions, Rules for Tourism, The Organisational Field of Co-organisations, and Regional Co-organisations, which all creates the conditions for organising tourism. The rules for tourism are characterised of weak regulation for co-organisations, tourism as regional policy and politicisation of the commercial tourism project. The field of co-organisations is characterised by a division into the administrative sub-field and the professional sub-field and meta-competition within these fields. This division creates different conditions to the dimension of individual regional co-organisations. In the case of a co-operation based on business-like relationships at a tourist destination a meta-organisation uses a solid cultural connection to solve a public/private dilemma and internal decoupling of functions.

The main conclusion of the thesis is that public responsibility for the organisation of tourism is a strong normative institution with little support in an equivalent regulative institution. The organisation at tourist destinations is characterised by an illusion of management, renewal by re-organising and fields as management tool. The use of a meta-organisation, with a solid cultural connection and loose coupling of several institutional processes that are distinct from each other appears to be a model that can be developed for the organisation of tourist destinations.

Key words: Organisation, Co-organisations, Tourism, Tourist Destinations, Institutions, Organisational fields.