Invitation to PhD defence

Rural Outskirt Mobilities
A CASE STUDY OF NATIONALPARK THY

by

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TIME AND PLACE
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 31ST, 2016 AT 1 P.M.
AALBORG UNIVERSITY,
RENDSBURGGADE 14, ROOM 4.513
9000 AALBORG

Following the defence the Department of Architecture, Design and Media Technology will host a reception. Everybody is welcome!

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Associate Professor Daniel Galland (Chairman), Aalborg University, Department of Development and Planning

Research Director Åsa Aretun, The Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute, Unit Mobility, Actors and Planning Processes

Associate Professor Pia Heike Johansen, University of Southern Denmark, Danish Centre for Rural Research, Department of Environment and Business Economics

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SUMMARY
This PhD was initiated from the many discussions on “Udkantsdanmark” that gained speed throughout 2010 and onwards. The discussion was grounded in the challenges that came from the fact that public services (e.g. hospitals, public administrations and education) was centralised in the cities and left the rural areas with depopulation, and more and more decoupled from economic growth. This further lead to a number of challenges e.g. empty houses and closing of shops and schools and further a number of mobilities challenges like longer distances, less foundation to maintain the infrastructures and public transport services and too few market forces to roll-out a proper broadband connection. An area that contain all these elements is Nationalpark Thy, which therefor, and from the fact that it also holds some potentials from the nomination as Nationalpark, has been chosen as case area.

Besides the discussion on ‘Udkantsdanmark’ the PhD was initiated from a growing research field of mobilities studies – ‘the new mobilities paradigm’. The essence of ‘the mobilities paradigm’ is to understand the production and reproduction of society through mobilities optics and further to investigate “how mobilities produce and re-produce norms, meanings and cultures” (Jensen, 2010b). Also ‘mobilities’ are not understood in a singular form, but instead in a plural form as ‘Mobilities’, which imply that the new mobilities research field particularly considers how various forms of physical, virtual and experienced mobilities interact and affect the development of societies.

The thesis showed how mobilities perspectives is lacking in rural studies and further how the rural perspective lacking in mobilities studies. With only little existing knowledge about Rural Outskirts within the research field of mobilities and only few studies of Mobilities in Rural studies the objective for this thesis has been to approach the Rural Outskirts and the challenges that they are facing from the cross disciplinary mobilities perspective. This has guided the thesis to be centred on the following research question: “What does mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirt area?”

The broad research question, the little knowledge on mobilities in rural outskirts and the little use of rural outskirts as research area within mobilities studies sat the foundation for a cross disciplinary approach and a “Mobilities Assemblage” served as the theoretical framework. The mobilities objective includes a relational understanding of the world which, together with a cross disciplinary approach walks hand in hand with the pragmatic view point of the world and a mixed-method-design has been used to gather impirical information.

The knowledge gathered through the mixed methods design in a case study of Nationalpark Thy was analysed using the Mobilities Assemblage as a framework. The answer to the research questions can be summarised in the following concluding headlines:

1. Mobilities Bring New Perspectives on Rural Outskirts.
2. Physical Mobilities are Vital for Nationalpark Thy.
3. The Combination of Virtual and Physical Mobilities Makes it Possible.
4. Proximity to Assets Trivialise Long Distances.
5. The Residents in the Rural Outskirts are Not a Uniform Mobilities Group.