

Summary

This public industrial PhD develops and examines the use of a festival as a platform for citizen involvement in the construction of a UNESCO Global Geopark in Odsherred.

An ethnographic survey showed that Odsherred Kommune tried to establish a Geopark primarily through the establishment of dissemination signs, designation of Geopark sites, and through a strictly coordinated visual and oral narrative –

without an active involvement of citizens as co-designers.

Based on an experimental and creative design approach, the thesis shows how a festival can be used as a platform for the involvement of citizens in the construction of a Geopark.

The primary development effort was to make space for citizens to develop their own events as a part of the festival. With Geopark Festival as a design experiment, the suggestion was that the citizens should find themselves in new

positions and influence a project that addressed themselves – in order to change the construction of Geopark Odsherred. At the same time, the festival should challenge a democratic ideal of conversation as the key to citizen involvement, and in contrast, put the people's everyday practice and creative urge into focus.

The festival thus acts as a practice-based contribution to promoting sensible participation of many and very different stakeholders, based on the participants' own resources, everyday experiences, aspirations and local context.

Within the constructive design research, proposals often take place through the creation of prototypes. In that connection, the thesis argues that there is a productive aspect with regards to understanding the festival as an analytical

prototype on Geopark Odsherred. The argument is explored by examining how the small events in the festival are used in a prototypical search of the boundaries of Geopark Odsherred as a field of possibilities, as well as possible prototypes of

Geopark Odsherred are identified with concrete examples.

The design experiment is analyzed on the basis of a praxiographic approach, primarily theoretically grounded in the ontological turn in STS, as well as traditions in performance studies, anthropology, and constructive design research.

Finally, the use of the festival as a prototype is reflected as a more general methodological approach addressed to other public institutions working with citizens involvement in the development of rural as well as urban landscapes.