Culture centered business networks: a perspective for in-between-city

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Abstract

Introduction:
 The in-between-city is an internationally known phenomenon beyond the urban periphery. As Sieverts (1997) defines it presents a type of built-up area between the old historical centers and open countryside, between place as a living space and the non-places of movement, between small local economic cycles and the dependency on the world market.
In order to contribute to both cultural and economic development of such places, this paper considers the idea of establishing cultural centered business networks using local potential.

Methodology/Approach:
Since 2007 Altenkirchen, Germany, an association of 42 municipalities with 24 thousand inhabitants, have been surveyed by an international team of urban planners concerning the possibilities to maintain and develop cultural potentials, that might create local identity and solidarity and even stimulate local economy. After first top-down approach, which considered building a cultural center in the area itself, the team realized, that none of the previous determined goals could be accomplished.
The second approach, a top-down initiation of bottom-up suggested an identification of the cultural and tourism potentials in the region. These were successfully accomplished, through collection of the socio-economic data, and semi structured interview with local stakeholders.
As the survey had shown, the region had many cultural and tourism potentials, but all carried out with a small firms or solo-performers.
In order to make them and their region stronger, the team decided to take an alternative approach starting-up a cultural-tourism network AKulTour.net.
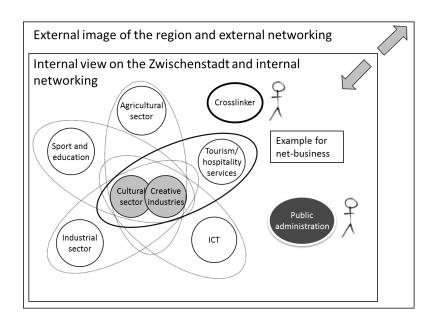
Figure 1 Model of the culture based networks and their influence on the image and the development of the In-between-city[1]

Findings:

(1) Cultural centered networks in the in-between-city do not emerge from all alone, they need an impulse (most often given by local policy bodies)

(2) The leap from the group of regulars to the real business network concerning the location such as In-between-city is huge but it can present the base required for future successful networking.

(3) If the network wants to achieve long term effects they need time to grow.

Further research is still needed concerning the methods to start, establish and guide ´cosmopolitan´ event-networks – Porters theory of network business might be a good starting point.

Keywords: in-between-city, network model, economies of scale

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[1] Source: Real Estate Development, TU Wien

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