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Nordic Innovation Centre

Storytelling and Destination Development

- **Possibilities and drawbacks of using storytelling as a means of developing and marketing Nordic tourism destinations**
- **Five selected Nordic cases**

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Title: Storytelling and destination development

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Abstract:
The objective of this study is to scrutinize the possibilities and drawbacks of using storytelling as a means of developing and marketing Nordic tourism destinations. On the basis of five selected Nordic cases, the study sheds light both on the ways in which storytelling is practiced and how stakeholder cooperation unfolds and seeks to determine the prerequisites for using storytelling as part of a destination development strategy. Drawing on the literature on storytelling as well as theory on inter-organisational relations, the study develops a theoretical model which centres on four closely interrelated elements: types of stakeholders involved; stages of the storytelling process; outcome of the storytelling process; and destination development. The theoretical model serves as a central tool for the cases presented to illustrate the issues at stake.

The five cases consist of rich sets of data: interviews with main stakeholders; collection of industry documents, marketing material and media coverage; observation of stakeholder meetings; and participant observation of storytelling events. The findings point to the importance of a location-based story to conceptualize, substantiate, and commercialize a destination. Findings suggest that some cases are characterized by individual stories of many qualities in terms of dramaturgical principles and customer involvement, however, an overall story framework is non-existent which makes the storytelling initiative poorly suited as a means of destination development. In other cases, a more holistic, coordinated story can be identified that ties the individual stories together and on this basis a common identity for the destination seems to materialize. The nature of stakeholder relations helps explain why some storytelling practices have destination development potential whereas others have not. Dedicated leadership, multi-actor involvement and two-way communication appear to be prerequisites for the destination development potential of storytelling activities.

Executive summary

The objective of the project:
The objective of this study is to scrutinize the possibilities and drawbacks of using storytelling as a means of developing and marketing Nordic tourism destinations. On the basis of five selected Nordic cases, the study sheds light both on the ways in which storytelling is practiced and how stakeholder cooperation unfolds and seeks to determine the prerequisites for using storytelling as part of a destination development strategy.

The study has achieved this objective by:
- Producing five Nordic case analyses on specific storytelling destination based on qualitative research methods.
- Developing a theoretical model which establishes an understanding of destinations as laced with stories and how stories can form constituent parts of destination marketing and development.
- Giving a critical view on possibilities and drawbacks of storytelling in destination development with particular focus on storytelling practices and stakeholder co-operation.
- Learning from experience across Nordic destinations through comparative analysis.
- Working in close cooperation with selected stakeholders and disseminating knowledge from the case studies.

Method:
The empirical data collected relate to five different cases, one from each Nordic country, and focus on various tourism-related storytelling efforts. The five cases are at different stages, some in their introduction stage, others in growth or maturity stages of development. Interviews were conducted with all in all 83 stakeholders, in addition to a number of informal talks with both stakeholders and visitors from the five case study areas. These were complemented with desk research analysing industry documents, marketing material and media coverage in relation to each case. Furthermore, observations of storytelling practises and stakeholder meetings have been carried out in the Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Iceland cases. The Finnish case was in a start up phase and no observations could be conducted, instead field studies of potential storytelling areas were practiced. For the Swedish case, a quantitative questionnaire study of 52 respondents with focus on visitors" experiences complemented the interviews. Based on thorough analyses, critical moments in the storytelling processes are identified and analyzed from a development and marketing perspective. The research group has worked in close contact with both public and private stakeholders in each case during the data collection process.

Main results:
The theoretical model of this research project is founded in storytelling literature, primarily marketing related contributions, as well as theory on inter-organisational relations and revolves around four closely interrelated elements: types of stakeholders involved; stages of the storytelling process; outcome of the storytelling process; and destination development. Based on this model, storytelling is depicted as a multi-actor, multi-level process leading to destination development. A story, on which a storytelling approach is founded, has to be: a) accepted by those who are involved in the storytelling process, b) location-based and, c) subject to conceptualization and commercialization.

A constituent part of conceptualization and commercialization is to establish a narrative environment where co-production between stakeholders and customers is central as this ensures customer involvement and a richer destination experience. The process oriented theoretical model proclaims the significance of strong leadership and stakeholder participation and involvement. The importance of seamless communication in all directions cannot be over-emphasized. An equally vital aspect is the preservation of a core group of enthusiasts who energise the development process.

In general, the cases analyzed are characterised by individual stories of many qualities for instance in terms of high level of engagement on the part of the individual storytellers, using dramaturgical principles, sense stimulation and achieving customer involvement. However, not on all dimensions and in all aspects are the cases exemplary. Especially the link between storytelling and destination development is less developed in some of the cases, which indicates that skilful storytelling practices are not sufficient for storytelling to function as a means of destination development. Excluding the storytellers and storytelling locations from the strategic decisions of a storytelling planning process, as well as lack of interaction horizontally among storytellers is a serious limitation to storytelling as a destination development tool. In other cases a relatively holistic coordinated story can, however, be identified that ties individual stories together and on this basis a common identity for the destination evolves. These cases are typically characterised by flat organisational structures where information flows freely facilitating ongoing learning processes. All five cases demonstrate the potential for innovative destination development through a storytelling approach, however, whereas some cases realise this potential others do not due to less than optimum strategic planning and stakeholder relations.

Conclusions
In each Nordic country, stories exist on which a storytelling approach to destination development and marketing can be based. The lessons learned and practices suggested are:
1. A storytelling approach used for destination development and marketing is a long term, multi-actor, multi-level process. All stakeholders and all activities have to be in tune with the storyline.
2. In order for the storytelling effort to have an impact on destination development, the destination management organisation (DMO) must establish active and on-going collaborative linkages with the tourism industry of the region
3. A level of theatrical expertise is necessary in order to successfully communicate the stories both verbally and through displays. Such expertise can facilitate high level of interaction between visitors and storytellers.
4. Storytelling efforts may facilitate local community building and thus be important for destination development.

Recommendations
Recommendations for practitioners:
Stories can act as a framework for coordinating and packaging activities, transportation, accommodation and dining if they communicate the core values and attributes of a destination in an understandable way. Here, the story becomes a verbal and visual metaphor which shows the total offering. Advantages from the destination and companies" perspective are:
- The destinations and companies themed through storytelling can gain visibility in the overall marketing of a destination and a region. There might be a multitude of

companies on each given marketing portal, however, the companies with a story have a chance to stick out.

- It makes it easy for the companies to communicate with each other in a network established around a storyline.
- The collaboration around a storyline can offer an ideal framework for the companies to develop and test new products on the market.
- All companies involved in the storytelling and storylines development can be visible, no matter size, economy and reputation.
- A story about the destination can give the destination a unique competitive advantage.

Recommendations for further studies:

1. Five different cases in the Nordic countries were analyzed in this project. A follow-up study may focus on ways in which Nordic storytelling destinations could be packaged and branded. Different story themes such as history, food, nature, architecture could be analyzed.
2. A central aspect of storytelling and destination development is customer involvement and active participation. There is paucity in our understanding of who wants to be immersed in the service experience processes and in what way, and when. These questions could be linked to customer segmentation.
3. It would be instructive to study the communicative strategies of storytelling in more details. On the basis of recordings of storytelling activities, techniques both for building a story line and for interacting with the audience may be outlined, and this could form an important basis for product development in future.
4. Further studies could explore the ways in which a research-based approach to cultural heritage can complement and be fruitfully combined with storytelling destination development.
5. It would, furthermore, be relevant to scrutinize the dynamics of collaboration around a specific theme of storytelling and how private tourism service providers could integrate the theme of the storytelling destination into their products.
6. The knowledge dynamics of storytelling networks would be highly interesting to study in further detail, as knowing how networks get wiser is an important tool for future development. To what extent do storytelling networks use, share and generate knowledge and at what levels of the network does this take place; do they make use of local and/or distant knowledge sources; and what types of knowledge are put to use?

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Future Nordic tourism excellence is dependent on ingenious approaches that can identify actors, resources and activities and combine these in value enhancing processes. Destination development and marketing models, branding, network, cluster and system theories are all approaches that are used in the Nordic countries. The latent logic of these marketing approaches is that each area/destination/country has a uniqueness that can be refined to a level that excels the competitors. In this research project destinations are approached through telling a story relating to it, hence stories are discussed which have the potential to enhance the identified qualities of a destination. The potential of storytelling as a new method of „wrapping" the tourist destination offers is developed in this research project and it is considered a way of facilitating a new forum of interaction and co-operation between various actors in a destination and thus a catalyst of new innovation system arrangements.

Destinations compete to attract tourists and the quality of attractions is decisive for success. Monuments and buildings like Sveaborg Castle and Gamla Stan, nature phenomena such as the Blue Lagoon and Prekestolen, amusement parks such as Legoland and Astrid Lindgrens Värld are all examples of attractions that are used for destination development and marketing. Most places, however, lack these kinds of major attractions, and when dealing with limited resources and lack of investors other approaches become topical. There is an obvious need to identify new innovative ways to destination development and marketing and to that end the storytelling approach is here analyzed.

The traditional tourism packaging model, including the coordination of transportation, accommodation, dining, and activities, is not refuted. However, one has to bear in mind that today it is imperative to develop offerings or value propositions that create a total experience for the customer. Framed under the term the "experience economy" (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) tourist business development is moving away from products towards processes taking place around the tourists that lead them to actively construct their own consumption experience through personalized interaction. When viewing tourism in this light the customers become co-producers in the tourism experience as they are not merely interested in buying the product but also buying the stories behind the product (Mossberg, 2007). Successful organizations allow for this co-production, creating attractive offerings to the tourists across industries and occasionally across destinations. Storytelling may be a salient means to that end.

In recent years storytelling has gained increasing attention as a global marketing trend in the tourism industry. Studies have shown that a real or fictive story about the destination can give the destination a unique competitive advantage and the tourist a more meaningful experience (Chronis, 2005; Mossberg, 2008). Destinations can be viewed as storyscapes i.e. "commercial environments where narratives are negotiated, shaped, and transformed through the interaction of producers and consumers" (Chronis, 2005, p. 389). Stories can act as a framework as they can communicate identified core values and attractions in a destination in an understandable and memorable way. Through the story, the destination can create desirable meaning in relation to their town, region, museum, restaurant or specific event. The focus on so-called literary and film induced tourism is a branch of this general framework of storytelling and destination development. In addition concepts developed around traditions

like textile, cheese, meals, and furniture are stories being told (Macleod, 2009). The story becomes a verbal and visual metaphor which shows the total tourism offering, but for that a good story needs to have an arena, characters, and a structure, centred on an unbroken story line.

At tourism destinations characterized by multi-scalar, multi-level networks of stakeholders, the development of a storytelling concept necessitates close contact between a wide range of stakeholders: destination management organisations (DMOs), public administration at municipality or regional level, public and private attractions, various types of tourism-related service providers and actual storytellers. Different interests and agendas will characterise these stakeholders and managing such inter-organisational relations has proven crucial in a wide variety of development contexts (Thorelli, 1986; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992; Therkelsen & Halkier, 2010). Uniting different interests and thereby ensuring commitment to the storytelling concept would seem an important first step towards managing stakeholder relations (Therkelsen & Halkier, 2010), just as providing the stakeholders with a means of mutual communication seems to be a second salient step.

1.2 The objective of the project

The objective of this study is to scrutinize the possibilities and drawbacks of using storytelling as a means of developing and marketing Nordic tourism destinations. On the basis of five selected Nordic cases, the study sheds light both on the ways in which storytelling is practiced and how stakeholder cooperation unfolds and seeks to determine the prerequisites for using storytelling as part of a destination development strategy.

1.3 Selection of the cases

Five cases were selected, one in each country (Figure 1). In all cases there was a common interest to find out whether storytelling has contributed to destination development, if stakeholder cooperation has been improved and if new ways of storytelling have been developed. Cases in different development phases were sought, at the introduction, growth and maturity stage to establish the role of time and experience in innovative product development. The Finnish case is in the introduction phase as no storytelling tourism product is yet developed; however, central actors in the region have shown interest in developing a storytelling concept as a means of destination development. The Swedish case is a relatively new venture with storytelling activities launched for the first time in autumn 2009 and repeated at a larger scale in autumn 2010, which places this case in a stage of growth. The Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic cases represent the most established storytelling activities, as they have existed for 10, 6 and 5 years respectively, and being at a stage of maturity facilitates discussions of past experiences and development over time.

Figure 1. The Five Nordic Cases

ICELAND – The Settlement Centre of Iceland

A centre in Borgarnes with permanent exhibitions, performance space where sagas are told, restaurant, guided tours, museum shop. Also courses in medieval studies in cooperation with educational and research centres.

Maturity phase

www.landnam.is

FINLAND

– The Neanderthal Family

A story about a Neanderthal family who might have lived in the Wolf Cave area located on the border between the municipality of Karijoki and Kristiinankaupunki some 120,000 years ago.

Introduction phase

www.susiluola.fi

NORWAY– The Medieval Week

A medieval festival in Numedal with more than 35 arrangements; concerts, guided tours, lectures, plays, storytelling nights, opening of privately own medieval buildings.

Maturity phase

www.visitmiddelalderdalen.no

SWEDEN – The Shell Fish Tour

An annual event in Bohuslän with shellfish activities and packages covering seashell safaris, lectures, seashell menus, guided tours, and hotel stays.

Growth phase

www.westsweden.com

DENMARK - The Tales of Limfjorden

34 story arrangements around the Limfjord divided into four themes; history, maritime, craft and industry, temptations.

Maturity phase

www.visitlimfjorden.com

2. Theoretical Model on Storytelling and Destination Development

Culture and cultural heritage is a vital resource for contemporary tourism and regional development (Grundberg, 2002). Mattsson and Praesto (2005), who describe the successful building of the Swedish heritage destination "In Arn's Footsteps", based on Arn the fictitious knight in Jan Guillou's novel, argue that local history and identity is a meaningful tool for regional development since it can create local involvement and entrepreneurial spirit (p. 163). Culture, religion, history, fantasy and sagas are of major interest today (see e.g. Gustafsson, 2002; Larsson, 2002; Mattsson & Praesto, 2005). Yet a challenge and a dilemma for many destinations is to balance history as science and history as tourism experiences and hence a level of commercialization (see e.g. Grundberg, 2002; Haugaard, 2004).

The theoretical model developed in this project (Table 1) illustrates how storytelling activities may lead to destination development by involving different stakeholders at different stages of the storytelling development process. To understand stakeholder relations, theoretical inspiration is drawn from policy analysis and network theory (Halkier, 2006; Hogwood & Gunn, 1986; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992; Therkelsen & Halkier, 2010; Thorelli, 1986), whereas storytelling literature is naturally used for illuminating the constituent parts of the storytelling concept development (Chronis, 2005; McCabe & Foster, 2006; Mossberg, 2008; Suvantola, 2002) Table 1 is to be read from left to right and top down. Actors, activities and resources have to be identified, integrated and organized in a storytelling process to facilitate concept, marketing and network development, and to contribute to destination development. In the best case scenario the meeting of interests, ideas and knowledge may lead to a common storytelling concept that works in the interests of the individual stakeholder as well as the destination as a whole by providing innovative tourist experiences for profitable markets.

Agenda setting, design and implementation constitutes a traditional distinction between key phases in policy-making (Hogwood & Gunn, 1986; Therkelsen & Halkier, 2010) and appear to be useful also in the context of destination-based cooperation on storytelling efforts. As storytelling is studied in the context of local and regional tourism destinations, public tourism organizations, local municipalities and regional councils are likely to be central stakeholders in the agenda setting phase. Also central private and public tourism stakeholders (e.g. restaurants, hotels, food producers, attractions, museums, nature advisors) may play a role when the agenda of the storytelling activity is set, i.e. when the overall theme of the story is created, the individual participants and stories identified, target groups determined and matters of financing and ownership settled.

Moving into the more concrete design phase, the organization behind the storytelling initiative may be formalized into a steering committee which may consists of many of the same actors already involved in setting the agenda for the process, but may also be supplemented by those who are to implement the story – the storytellers. The design phase involves more concrete concept development: creating the story line, designing the servicescape (i.e. physical location), packaging and programming the activities, for instance offering a number of storytelling activities in combination with a meal and accommodation or making a programme for on-stage storytelling activities, music and other performances. Creating awareness for the storytelling offer with point of departure in a marketing plan as well as prolonging the storytelling experience through souvenirs and other relevant products (e.g. food) are also central activities of the design phase.

The implementation phase is the actual execution of the storytelling activities primarily by the storyteller, but also the storytelling location provider (e.g. museums, farms, dairies or

breweries where the story is located) as well as various service providers that are not central to the storytelling activities (in some cases hotels, shops, cafés). These may contribute to the storytelling offer in a more or less coordinated way. What is being told and how that fits into the overall storytelling concept, by means of what communication strategies, including the level of audience contact, in what physical surroundings and at what time of the day, week and year constitute central parts of the execution of the storytelling. Stories immerse people in plots and characters (McCabe & Foster, 2006) and this is of importance since contemporary visitors do not merely encounter the physical space of a destination yet they create their own experiential space using their individual motivations and interpretations (Suvantola, 2002). As argued by Chronis (2005), a story performed in interaction with visitors becomes a puzzle with many different pieces that visitors interpret, shape, and try to put together when forming their experiences of the destination since "…service providers do not simply teach history and tourists do not only learn about the past. Rather, through their interaction, marketers and tourists *perform* history by means of negotiation, narrative completion and embodiment" (Chronis, 2005, p. 400). Finally, the "why" signifies the reasons storytellers, storytelling location providers and service providers have for being involved in storytelling activities, which may tally with those of the steering committee if they have been included in the design of the storytelling concept, but are more likely to differ if they have been excluded from earlier stages of the process. The consequences of inclusion and exclusion of stakeholders are highly central to study in the context of this research project.

Table 1. Theoretical model – Storytelling and destination development

STAKEHOLDERS (local / non local) (public / private)	STORYTELLING PROCESS	OUTCOME OF STORYTELLING PROCESS (year 1, 2, 3…)	DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS
A *Stakeholders* - Initiators - Decision makers - Owners	A *Agenda setting* - Theme - Selection of stories and participants - Selection of target groups - Ownership - Financing	*Further concept development* - Storyline and communicative strategies - Servicescape design - Number & type of storytellers/location providers - Packaging *Marketing output* - Earnings - Number and types of guests - Media coverage/attention *Inter-organisational outcome* - Cooperation (create / strengthen / destroy) - Knowledge & skills (new ways of using existing resources / use of new resources)	*Economic* - New ventures - Extend season - Destination brand *Socio-cultural* - employment - training - infrastructure - image & identity *Environmental* - strengthen / weaken / no change
B *Steering committee* - Combination of A & C stakeholders / actors	B *Design of the storytelling concept* - Storyline - Servicescape design - Program & packaging - Internal & external communication Souvenirs		
C *Actors* - Storytellers - Storytelling location providers - Service providers	C *Implementation* - What? - How? - Where? - When? - Why?		

Outcomes of the storytelling process may be related to further concept development, marketing and inter-organizational dynamics in terms of cooperation and knowledge generation. Development of innovative storytelling concepts may come about through experiences obtained from the first and then consecutive years of running the storytelling activities as well as adding new knowledge to the development process by including new stakeholders and/or consultancy input. Marketing is related to earnings that the storytelling activities may generate which is closely intertwined with the number and types of visitors attracted. Also media coverage and attention may represent salient marketing in terms of strengthening the image of the storytelling activities both in potential and actual customer groups that may lead to visits or revisits of these. Also in terms of securing public support and

private interest in entering into or remaining in the network of stakeholders, media attention may play a role. Finally, the inter-organizational dynamics of the storytelling process may be to create new cooperative relations between stakeholders or strengthen already existing ones. In both cases added value is likely to be generated in terms of new knowledge, skills and interpersonal relations, the latter being an intangible entity but nonetheless important for generating trust and willingness to cooperate in future (Therkelsen & Halkier, 2010). In the worst case scenario, cooperation may also be destroyed if for instance the storytelling process is handled poorly, if interests are too diverging or if interpersonal relations are completely out of sync. As mentioned above, knowledge and skills may be obtained through cooperation which may benefit the individual stakeholder as well as the destination as a whole. Finding new ways of using existing resources and identifying new resources to be exploited and new skills to be acquired, may be the outcome of cooperating with other stakeholders as transfer and development of knowledge often materialize through interacting with others (Halkier et. al., 2009).

In terms of destination development, the storytelling process and its outcomes may have economic, socio-cultural and environmental consequences. By establishing new concrete cooperative ventures between stakeholders, their involvement in developing the destination overall may be strengthened thereby leading to a better cooperative environment at destination level. Furthermore, if storytelling activities are placed outside the main season, extension of the season may be a positive outcome for the destination, which may result in a more economically sustainable tourism trade. Storytelling activities in and out of the main season may also influence the destination brand and given that this results in a stronger brand for the destination, this may benefit not just the stakeholders involved in the storytelling activities but also the tourism trade at large. Moreover, in case of successful storytelling concepts, the destination may be strengthened socio-culturally in terms of better employment and training possibilities in the tourism sector, improved infra-structure between possibly remote locations and possibly an improved image among real and potential visitors. A strengthened external image may in return rub off on the local population‟s attachment to the place. Finally, environmental consequences of storytelling offers may be felt – negatively if the offer is such a success that the environmental quality of the destination is compromised, positively if the activities make the guests more environmentally aware and change behavioural patterns.

All in all, this theoretical framework may shed light on what happens when various public and private stakeholders come together in an effort to develop a storytelling concept for a destination. Who are involved in developing, designing and implementing the storytelling concept with what interests and ambitions may help explain the outcome not just of the storytelling activity in itself but also of the larger scale tourism development of the destination.

3. Five Nordic Storytelling Cases

As will appear from the subsequent analyses, the five Nordic storytelling cases selected are at different stages of development: three are at a stage of maturity (Norway, Denmark and Iceland) having constituted destination-wide storytelling efforts for several years; one case is at the growth stage (Sweden) as it was started in 2009 and has shown significant expansion for 2010; and one case is at an introduction stage (Finland) as discussions on whether and how to set up a storytelling effort at the destination are still ongoing. These differences across

the cases will facilitate discussions on the role of time and experience in innovative product development.

3.1 The Norwegian case: The Medieval Week in Numedal

Many Nordic destinations focus on medieval themes offering tourism experiences related to culture, history and religion. The medieval festival *Middelalderuka* (the Medieval Week) in Numedal represents the Norwegian case study. The medieval story is the framework of the festival and Numedal is here viewed as a storyscape inviting visitors to take part in different perspectives of the story told by various actors during the arrangements throughout the whole valley.

Data collection was conducted by a combination of observations and interviews before, during and after the festival of 2009. Focusing on one festival gave opportunities for in depth studies of a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, 2009). The festival web site, programmes, arrangements, number of visitors from 2001-2009, and a county evaluation of the project in 2004 were studied. A non-probability sample of respondents to interview was constructed by referral sampling (Burns & Bush, 2006) after initial contacts with the county and the festival committee. As the study proceeded thirteen people were interviewed. They represented the county, The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments (Fortidsminnesforeningen, 2010), the regional museum, members of the festival committee, employees from the three municipalities, the open air museums, private medieval farm owners, performing artists, non-profit organizations and volunteers.

Individual semi-structured interviews were used covering a range of issues such as the development of the festival, the respondents" roles in planning and/or implementing and the concept of storytelling related to the different festival arrangements and the destination. The respondents described their view of storytelling and the festival in their own words. Both personal and telephone interviews were used and the case description was sent to seven of the respondents to comment on.

3.1.1. Background – the creation of the Medieval Week

Numedal is a unique valley with the highest number of preserved wooden buildings from the Middle Ages in Norway. There are more than 40 preserved medieval farm buildings and four stave churches in the valley. The one-week summer medieval festival has taken place throughout the valley since 2001 as a development project financed by the three Numedal municipalities and the county.

Numedal is approximately 80 km west of Oslo in the county of Buskerud. There are three Numedal municipalities; Flesberg, Rollag and Nore og Uvdal with a total of 7.000 inhabitants (*bygdefolk*). The 130 km long valley shows a varied topography with agricultural country side, forests and steep mountains along the winding river Numedalslången. Winter tourism is popular and in 2009 the region of Numedal and Kongsberg had around 60.000 visitors and 58.300 guest nights in the winter season and 27.000 visitors and 58.600 guest nights during the summer season (Reiseliv Buskerud, 2010). Second home tourism is also an important part of Norwegian leisure and tourism and Numedal with its mountains, forests and river is an attractive region with a growing number of second homes *(hytter)*. In 2009 second homes in the region were inhabited by 8.500 so-called *hyttefolk* (Reiseliv Buskerud, 2010).

In the 1990s occasional medieval themes were offered in tourism as e.g. guided medieval bus tours through Numedal arranged by Laagdalsmuseum in Kongsberg and Olsok-concerts in the stave churches arranged by The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient monuments. Olsok is an official Norwegian flag-flying day on the 29th of July celebrating the death day of the saint „Olav den hellige" and the christening of Norway. However in the late 1990s the county of Buskerud started a „Kulturpakkeprogram" in order to develop the regional tourism industry in innovative ways with projects focused on the unexploited nature and culture resources of the region. The project Numedal *Middelalderdalen* (i.e. the Medieval Valley) was launched in 1999, as one of four projects, aiming to develop the destination and increase the number of visitors by strengthening and uniting the external profile of medieval history and traditions and by creating a mutual arena that enables improved cooperation among the culture and tourism sectors. Yet the project also had the internal purpose of encouraging creativity and strengthening the identity of the valley inhabitants. The use of medieval history was planned to be linked to present-day activities to generate growth in Numedal. A common profile including logotype, colours, typeface and the motto: smell-feel-see-experience-take part, was developed. The logotype and medieval symbols are used by the Numedal municipalities and local firms in many ways such as e.g. displays, web sites, stationery, business cards, and souvenirs. One of the main activities within this „Kulturpakkeprogram" in Numedal is today the one week summer festival *Middeladeruka* (the Medieval Week).

3.1.2. Organisation and stakeholders

The festival is now an annual event held every summer around the national celebration of Olsok. A mix of nature-based and cultural storytelling arrangements are offered following the motto: smell-feel-see-experience–take part, where visitors experience the medieval story of Numedal in different ways. All 35 arrangements in 2009, e.g. concerts, guided walks, lectures, plays, family arrangements, and openings of privately owned medieval buildings, use the uniquely preserved medieval settings of the valley as arena. The sunburned and tarred medieval buildings are in focus during the festivals as main attractions as well as arenas or settings for the different arrangements (Markussen, 2002). The actors involved in telling the story of the medieval valley are representatives from the municipalities, tourist attractions, and museums, The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient monuments, local firms, university lecturers, private farm owners, local non-profit organizations and volunteers.

The Medieval Week is a joint project for the whole valley with a network of stakeholders with different roles. The driving forces and financiers of the festival are the county of Buskerud and the three Numedal municipalities. The festival is aiming at both profiling Numedal as an attractive destination and to strengthen a local identity by focus on using existing regional cultural heritage that is „unique" or „exotic" i.e. here the medieval treasures of Numedal (Eskilsson & Högdahl, 2009).

The network of major stakeholder roles of the Medieval Week categorised following Getz, Andersson & Larson (2007) includes: festival organisation, co-producers, facilitators, suppliers and venues, allies and collaborators, regulators and audience.

The festival organisation co-ordinates, plans and implements the festival consisting of internal stakeholders as owners or investors, directors, employees, volunteers, members and advisors. In Numedal the festival committee consists of five members representing the three Numedal municipalities, The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient monuments, and the regional Laagdals museum in Kongsberg. All committee work is part time jobs performed within the members" main jobs. The municipalities and the county jointly finance the festival

(in 2009, NOK 250.000).

Co-producers as independent organisations and individuals participating voluntarily and take on roles other than sponsor, supplier, or venue. These include e.g. restaurant tents, municipalities that provide streets and parks, firms and organizations taking part in markets. Local trade and industry are often participating by co-producing the total festival offering. The use of the festival profile or logotype as co-branding enhances the co-production. In Numedal co-producers are selected by the festival committee and municipalities. Many active non-profit organisations (as music, dance, local history, and friendship organizations), members and volunteers arrange e.g. workshops, guided walks, music, dance, local food, and exhibitions mainly at the different folk museums. Around 200 volunteers from different local organisations were supporting the festival of 2009. Other co-producers are owners of private medieval buildings since they open their farms for visitors and storytelling arrangements during the festival.

Facilitators as non-participating resource providers make the festival possible as e.g. state, municipalities and different grants or gifts. Media may also take on the role as facilitator when covering the event. In Numedal the county provides funding for the event together with the municipalities. The festival committee cooperates with local and regional media to market the festival. The festival web site is linked to articles and reviews.

Suppliers and venues represent the costs of the festival and include e.g. performers (paid musicians and actors) and the arenas for the events. In Numedal these roles are mainly the paid performances that take place in the stave churches, at the folk museums, at larger municipal halls, and at private farms. The festival committee plan, book, and market all the major performances.

The roles of *allies and collaborators* refer to inter-festival collaboration and sharing of experiences. In Numedal other festivals and destinations are used as inspiration and benchmarking. Links to other festivals are displayed at the festival web site.

Regulators refer to the need of approval and cooperation required such as local authority, police, fire brigade concerning the number of visitors and their safety. In Numedal there is a close cooperation with the local municipalities and The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient monuments.

The *audience* is often the major stakeholder of the festival since financing often is dependent on the number of visitors. In Numedal the target group consists of tourists (Norwegian and foreign), second home owners as well as local inhabitants. The mix of arrangements is carefully planned to attract visitors of all ages. The number of visitors to the festival in 2009 was 6.700.

It is difficult to map all festival actors hence there are often „free-riders" as firms that do not cooperate with the festival network yet benefit by marketing and selling products or services during the festival (Getz, Andersson & Larson, 2007).

The network involved in telling the story of medieval Numedal can be viewed as "… a negotiation field where different actors and stakeholders contribute to the story produced and marketed. Who is involved in the negotiations is of pivotal importance for the inwards and outwards profiling of a place" (Eskilsson & Högdahl, 2009, p. 68). Studies show that networks are crucial since successful destinations are based on interrelated stakeholders that understand the concept of the destination and are committed to cooperate in offering a holistic

experience to visitors (see e.g. Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Morgan, Elbe, & Curiel, 2009; Swarbrooke, 2001).

3.1.3. Understanding and application of storytelling

The authentic story of the Middle Ages in Numedal is the unifying storytelling concept that frames all the festival arrangements. The unique setting with the preserved medieval buildings is of importance when planning the programme since the medieval buildings are of major importance as main attractions, and as scenes for other arrangements. The festival committee sets the frames and carefully selects the main festival arrangements and authenticity is valued. The arrangements are planned to follow the festival motto and use the surrounding storyscape to offer visitors co-creative experiences that involve many senses, not just hearing and seeing but also e.g. to feel the heat and smell of blacksmiths" fire, to smell and to taste fresh baked bread, to touch the ancient buildings, or to try out different kinds of plays or handicrafts. The story nights and concerts in the medieval buildings create an atmosphere that touches many senses of the visitors (Markussen, 2002). The opportunities for visitor involvement and co-creation vary among the different arrangements. Traditional lectures and concerts are often followed by less formal question time that often turns into new stories and storytellers. There are several workshops during the festival where adults and children can try out different handicrafts, preparing traditional food, dancing or medieval plays. The arrangements of the folk museums are planned to offer experiences in which all visitors can take part. Festival visitors in Numedal do not wear medieval dresses and this is contrasting e.g. the Medieval Week on Gotland (Gustafsson, 2002).

The day by day festival programme invites visitors to spend several days in the valley in order to experience different medieval arrangements. Due to the geography and distance each arrangement is planned to a specific day and time. The number of arrangements, visitor involvement and resources differ among the three folk museums and municipalities.

The medieval buildings are present in the festival arrangements as e.g. scenes for plays and story nights, as main attractions for lecturers, as starting points for walks and tours, as concert halls. Visitors can experience the preserved buildings and take part of stories painting the medieval life in Numedal. Archaeological findings or other properties are used in some stories. There is no festival dress code each storyteller chooses how to dress. Some wear traditional dresses, aprons, or hats. Authenticity is valued yet the storytellers have their own scripts and often add personal comments, folklore and local legends.

During festivals history may come alive as embodiment of physical impressions of music, smells, tastes, crowds of visitors, street life, and visual sights in the co-creation of experiences in an „enchanted zone" (Gustafsson, 2002, p. 131, 267). In the festival programme of 2002 there was a special co-creative arrangement of a *live* – a medieval live role play in which the visitors were invited to take part. During a weekend five to ten instructors were prepared to take on active roles in the role play. Medieval costumes for twenty visitors were made and role descriptions prepared. The role play was successfully pre-tested among friends and families of the committee, both children and adults. Many interested visitors called and wanted to *watch* the role play as audience – hence not improvise and take an active part. The experience of the committee in 2002 was that visitors of the medieval week in Numedal then were not ready or prepared for such new arrangements as to improvise stories in live role plays.

The medieval story and the different arrangements invite festival visitors to use their senses, to interact, shape and co-create their individual experiences of the storyscape of Numedal.

Visitors do not merely listen and learn there are several opportunities offered to take active part and use history (Sandström, 2005) in e.g. workshops and hence co-create memorable festival experiences.

3.1.4 Destination development

Morgan et. al. (2009) argue that studies of tourism and the experience economy often use famous theme-parks with mega investment as examples that offer visitors memorable experiences. Yet most destinations struggle with funding and investments and the offering of tourism experiences are often based on collaborations in networks with private and public actors, small towns and regions that have to "overcome competitive rivalries" (p. 213). This is evident in the joint process in Numedal to create a regional cooperation with private and public actors around a common theme using the unique historical and cultural treasures of the valley. The importance of a well-coordinated creation of the regional historical scene is pointed out by Mattsson and Praesto (2005) and the use a celebrity factor to create awareness and interest. In Numedal the celebrity factor is applied in selection of the artists for the major concerts.

Another challenge for the Medieval festival is to fulfil the two goals of increased visitation and strengthened local identity. The festival storyscape in Numedal provides opportunities for locals, second-home owners, and tourists to „share experiences and facilities" (Hjalager, 2009, p. 277). This sharing of experiences may have effects on strengthening the local identity yet also affecting the local identity of second home owners. Medieval themes and tourism offerings in which one can participate are of interest to contemporary visitors and the number of visitors and arrangements during the festivals show an increase from 12 arrangements and 2.000 visitors in 2001 to 35 arrangements and 6.700 visitors in 2009. The number of visitors for each specific arrangement is evaluated every year. Respondents describe the development of visitors as mainly locals and second home-owners the very first years and then gradually an increase of other Norwegian and foreign visitors. The festival programme, the web site and the arrangements are in Norwegian yet respondents point out that there are many foreign visitors. The festival website is updated with reviews, photos, films and YouTube sequences of many arrangements during the festival week.

The festival is now a regular event in the region every summer and has left the phases of introduction and growth and moved into a maturity phase. Some initial members of the festival committee have left and others filled their roles. The members of the festival committee express that their planning skills, contacts with media, use of website, stakeholder networks and overall festival knowledge are improved year by year. Yet they do emphasize the need of a full time project leader since the number of participating actors, arrangements and visitors increases. Supporting staff from the local municipalities are linked closely to the committee and around 200 volunteers support the festival arrangements. The three municipalities all take active part in the festival yet there are differences in ambitions and resources.

Interviews also indicate that the Medieval Week is viewed as a municipal project with a very strong focus on culture and less focus on tourism, local trade and business. Respondents point out that the spin-off effects and opportunities to develop new innovative ideas of the festival are not yet fully utilized. Some respondents mentioned the need to add new perspectives, ideas and skills to the festival committee. Local volunteers who act as guides, service staff, storytellers and lecturers do mention their strong commitment and ambitions to take part in the festival yet there are problems with financing and sufficient information, and knowledge

of medieval history and traditions. Some respondents feel that they are at distance from the festival committee and not involved in any planning or evaluation merely the implementation.

Results of this case study can be compared with the results of an early evaluation of the project *Middelalderdalen* and its effects on the region performed by the county in 2004 (Kulturelle reiselivsprosjekter i Buskerud, 2004). Results indicated that close cooperation with the tour operators and tourism sector of Numedal was not reached and that the development of new offers and arrangements to strengthen the medieval profile was not taking place apart from some restaurants adding medieval and traditional food to their menus. The development of skills and knowledge of medieval story and traditions among actors in the cultural and tourist sectors was evident. The aim to increase the number of visitors to the region had positive results at the culture institutions of Numedal yet the tourism sector was not really actively involved in the project and did not gain from this. The number of visits by local inhabitants and second home owners though did increase. The analysis of recognition of the brand or profile of Numedal - the medieval valley did show low recognition among inhabitants of the county. The evaluation in 2004 finally pointed out that the project the Medieval Valley was not really established among the main tour operators of the region and the close cooperation among culture and tourism was not reached and this may be due to the fact that the project was launched by the cultural sector and not by the local trade and industry.

However the results from the evaluation of 2004 and the interviews of this case study in 2009-2010 indicate the need of a stronger network including active cooperation with all the major stakeholder roles, especially the tourism sector, local trade and industry, mentioned earlier in the case description. Visitors are invited to take part of the festival arrangements throughout the valley yet packaging is limited. The festival arrangements are not packaged in cooperation with tour operators, hotels, or restaurants of the valley. Though there are links to online-booking of accommodation via the festival website. Respondents of the case study in 2009-2010 in Numedal also express a need for more cooperation, improved internal communication and medieval knowledge to develop their storytelling arrangements further.

3.1.5. Analysis of the Medieval Week

The Norwegian case demonstrates a festival in its maturity phase with a variety of storytelling arrangements that in different ways embody the medieval life in Numedal. The festival arrangements are offered throughout the whole valley coordinated by an experienced and committed festival committee. However findings indicate the need to further develop the network to improve internal communication and also to include other stakeholders from tourism, local trade and business in order to fully utilize the spin-off opportunities of the festival. A further analysis of stakeholders, the storytelling process, and the outcome of storytelling and destination development of the Norwegian case follows by means of the theoretical model in Table 2.

Table 2. Analysis – the Medieval Week

STAKEHOLDERS	STORYTELLING PROCESS	OUTCOME OF STORYTELLING PROCESS (year 1, 2, 3…)	DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT
A *Initiators & Decision makers* The county of Buskerud, The Numedal municipalities, The regional Laagdalsmuseum, The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments	A *Agenda setting* One main theme – the medieval story Arrangements carefully selected by the festival committee Target groups: Tourists (Norwegian and foreign), second home owners, local inhabitants, of all ages	*Further concept development* Concept developed Customer involvement and Co-creation Top-down info Web site *Marketing output*	*Economic* Limited number of spin-offs and innovations due to the festival Increased visitation during summer season Destination brand *Socio-cultural*
B *Steering committee* The Numedal municipalities, The regional Laagdalsmuseum, The Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments	B *Design of storytelling concept* One overall storyline Storyscape – use of the unique preserved setting Arrangements planned following the storyline and the festival motto Souvenirs Media contacts Internal/external communication Web site	Increasing number of visitors & arrangements *Inter-organisational outcome* Cooperation among. A & B Mainly top-down info from A/B to C Limited cooperation and communication among storytellers Knowledge transfer limited among festival stakeholders	Image & regional identity Municipal collaboration *Environmental* Issues of preservation and sustainable tourism
C *Storytellers* Museums, private companies, guides, actors, lecturers, musicians, volunteers, local farm owners	C *Implementation* Individual stories following the main story Varying elements of storyscape		

Stakeholders of the Medieval Week:

The county initiated the project to profile Numedal as a Medieval valley based on unique cultural heritage and the earlier experiences of occasional medieval arrangements. Initiators and decision makers (A) involved are the county, three municipalities, a regional museum, and the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments. The festival was first launched in 2001 and has now left the initial years and moved into a maturity phase with an

established festival, experienced committee, and an increasing number of arrangements and visitors. The steering committee (B) consists of five members (none full time employed) who are representing the three municipalities, The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Norwegian Monuments and the regional museum. The majority of members of the committee have been involved since the start in 2001. A project leader from the county assisted the committee during the first three years. During the festival a festival hostess is employed to give information about Numedal and the festival by telephone and e-mail, and to book tickets to some arrangements.

The initiators, decision makers (A) and steering committee (B) partly represent the same stakeholders of the Medieval Week. The county initiated the project and financed a project leader the very first years during the introduction phase of the festival. Today the county is not represented in the steering committee yet still partly finance the festival. The committee still has its original five members. The committee express a need for more resources, and a full time project leader.

Who is included in the network and who is not is of importance (Eskilsson & Högdahl, 2009). Respondents outside the committee point out the strong cultural and municipal focus and call for a wider involvement in the committee with representatives from the tourism sector, local trade and industry. The major stakeholders‟ roles of the festival, described earlier as festival organisation and co-producers, need further reinforcement. Yet there is a strategic dilemma to balance the use of history in tourism as mentioned in the case description (Mattsson & Praesto, 2005). A strategic decision in this matter will affect the complement of stakeholder roles.

The actual (C) storytellers are a mixed group of stakeholders of whom some express a „distance‟ to the festival committee and to what is planned an evaluated. There are however respondents who have multiple stakeholder roles and are involved in the festival as decision makers, members of the festival committee and storytellers.

The storytelling process:

Initiators and decision makers set the agenda (A) by planning the strategy for the Medieval Week in the late 1990s. Two goals of increased visitation and strengthened local identity were set and one main theme, the Middle Ages, was selected based on the unique preserved buildings (Eskilsson & Högdahl, 2009). These buildings are of major importance as main attractions and as scenes for other arrangements. The initiators and decision makers further set the agenda by a common profile, the festival motto and the target group. The mix of festival arrangements is planned to attract visitors of all ages.

The design of the storytelling concept (B) is based on one theme that frames the whole festival. The different arrangements and storytellers give different perspectives of the Middle Ages in Numedal e.g. the church ceremonies, the handicraft, the architecture, music and dances, plays, food, family life and clothing. All the arrangements are carefully selected following the festival theme and motto. The major arrangements including concerts, exhibitions, musicians and actors are jointly discussed, planned and marketed by the committee. The different arrangements at the local folk museums of each municipality are planned locally in cooperation with employees of the municipality, local firms, organisations and volunteers. The local organisations and volunteers are invited to meetings to discuss how they can contribute at the folk museum during the festival. The three municipalities all takes turn in arranging the formal opening of the festival and opening concerts. However the number of arrangements, resources and visitor involvement differ among the three

municipalities. The internal communication among decision makers, steering committee and storytellers and local organizers are seen as mainly top-down.

The storyscape design uses the unique medieval settings and the preserved buildings throughout the valley. Private farm owners open up their farms for visitors during the festival yet due to preservation visitors are not allowed to enter all buildings. The use of medieval properties to create a storytelling setting or atmosphere varies among the arrangements. The storyscape as the historical scene of Numedal is overall well coordinated and planned throughout the valley (Mattsson & Praesto, 2005). Respondents do mention limited resources for dresses and other properties which if remedied, would enhance the stories being told.

The official festival web site (www.visitmiddelalderdalen.no) displays the festival programme but also additional information about the stave churches, the folk museums and private medieval farms, Numedal sights, experiences, legends and stories. The festival programme is updated daily with reviews of arrangements during the festival and links to local media, YouTube and facebook. On-line booking of accommodations and other experiences is also available by a link to Reiseporten Numedal (2010). The festival web site is managed by an employee of one of the municipalities.

Marketing communication is planned by the committee and contacts with local and regional media are established. The media contacts and the use of the web site have developed during the years. Yet some respondents ask for more professional marketing of the festival.

During the implementation (C) of the various arrangements the storytellers tell „their" stories based on individual scripts and personal experiences. There is one story yet many different perspectives of the Middle Ages are told throughout the valley during the festival by different storytellers from professional actors, musicians, historians to local farm owners and volunteers. The cooperation, communication, and knowledge transfer between storytellers are limited. Each storyteller plans his/her own script and due to the specific arrangement, the storyteller or the group of visitors, the level of authenticity may vary yet all stories are linked to the medieval Numedal. Some storytellers use medieval costumes others merely a hat or an apron, old music instruments, or properties to create their storyscape often adjusted to fit a specific group of visitors. Guides of the stave churches are provided with a script of the authentic architectural and religious details but are also encouraged to create a good story by adding personal comments. Private farm owners mention that they use several scripts that are adjustable to the specific target group.

Outcome of the storytelling process:

The festival is in a maturity phase as an established local event with increasing number of visitors. However as any recurring festival the Medieval Week need to offer something new each year to get returning visitors and media attention (Hjalager, 2009).

There has been a gradual development of the festival concept during the years. The selection of arrangements for all ages is of importance and the number of co-creative offerings has increased. The celebrity factor is applied in selection of artists and other festivals are used as inspiration. As mentioned in the case description evaluations of number of visitors of all arrangements are done. Yet no formal evaluations of visitors" festival experiences or active stakeholders" experiences involved in the festival are performed.

The target groups are tourists (Norwegian and foreign), second home owners, and local inhabitants of all ages. The festival programme, arrangements and web site are all in

Norwegian yet there are foreign visitors in the valley during the festival. The music concerts and dance shows may be experienced without translation. Guides and farm owners offer presentations in other languages and there are brochures of stave churches and folk museums in several languages.

The festival arrangements are not packaged in cooperation with tour operators, restaurants, or hotels in Numedal. Though there are links to online-booking of accommodation via the festival web site. There are opportunities to cooperate with local stakeholders and offer packages that e.g. include concerts, walks, plays etc. with a meal, experience or different kinds of accommodation. Cooperation around creation of packages may include several stakeholders and hence have effects on local entrepreneurial spirits. Visitors need to go by car through the valley – innovative ways to link the arrangements may also prolong the visitors stay in Numedal.

Respondents outside the committee feel that the communication of the festival is mainly top-down. The knowledge transfer and communication are limited among the festival stakeholders. Committed and enthusiastic volunteers express a need for more knowledge of medieval history, and storytelling.

Destination development:

The outcome of the medieval week may be linked to the increased number of visitors in the region during the summer season. The medieval festival is enhancing the destination brand of the medieval valley by the web site, media reviews, the programme and all other promotion materials, displays and souvenirs that are used by the festival stakeholders to promote the festival and the destination.

Respondents describe the development of visitors during the years as initially mainly locals and second home owners and gradually other kinds of visitors from Norway and from other countries. The evaluation in 2004 indicated a stronger local identity among inhabitants.

Respondents state that the number of spin-offs and innovations, new ventures and employments due to the festival are limited. This can be contrasted to Hjalager"s (2009) studies of the numerous innovations generated from stakeholder relationships around the Roskilde Festival e.g. tourism, educational, managerial, and business spin-offs and festival professionalization.

The network of the Medieval Week needs efforts to create interrelated stakeholders that understand and can implement the storytelling concept in successful ways (e.g. Bornhorst, et.al., 2010, Morgan, et.al. 2009; Swarbrooke, 2001) in order to further develop the destination. Stakeholder cooperation, packaging, internal communication and knowledge transfer are suggested as means for further destination development.

3.2. The Danish case: The Tales of Limfjorden

The Danish case study has investigated the tourist product *The Tales of Limfjorden* (TL) where a number of different actors tell 34 different stories each week throughout the main tourist season. The individual stories all relate to local characteristics in the particular destination but within the overall product frame which intends to tie the area around the Limfjorden together.

The purpose of the case study has first and foremost been to examine how storytelling is understood and implemented within this specific Danish tourism context. To achieve this, organisational and network related issues concerning the management and coordination of TL have been important to investigate, just as the influence of the storytelling effort on destination development of Limfjorden in general has been scrutinized. Consequently, the case study focuses on the following three main topics: Organisation and network, the understanding and application of storytelling and destination development.

The study consists of 12 in-depth interviews with stakeholders and storytellers together with participant observations of 6 storytelling arrangements. Selection of interviewees as well as stories to observe was done with the widespread geographical range of Tales of Limfjorden in mind, aiming to represent all local destinations involved. Interviews at stakeholder level included the management of the network association and the coordination of TL together with stakeholders at destination level (tourist agencies - one from each political region). In relation to the particular stories, the management of the storytelling location and storytellers were interviewed and observations were made in the same locations. This provided the opportunity to compare the storyteller"s perception of the storytelling location with the researcher"s own experience. Some of the interviewees, furthermore, represent several levels – one of them being a member of the organisational committee, manager of a storytelling location and storyteller. In addition to the field research, secondary information have been gathered through desk research in form of promotional pamphlets, the network website and a number of internal documents such as meeting minutes, list of stakeholders and the TL information portfolio and product guidelines. Furthermore, internal statistics have been used to estimate the number and profile of visitors.

3.2.1 Background

At destinations around the fiord *Limfjorden,* a number of different actors under a common brand – *"The Tales of Limfjorden"* – tell stories related to local characteristics. The stories are subdivided into the 5 themes: history, nature, craft and industry, the maritime and temptations, and through these stories the listeners are offered: "*a unique glimpse into the nature, history and culture of the Land of Limfjorden"* (Netværk Limfjorden, 2009, p. 2 [own translation]). The TL stories have been told since 2005 and seem like a mature tourism product and consequently the present case study of TL will be able to provide an understanding of storytelling based on the years of practical experiences that the stakeholders have gained through the application of storytelling in relation to product and destination development.

The TL product is established within a geographical area that stretches across two political regions, it involves a number of local destinations and, furthermore, includes many different stakeholders. The product is managed within the framework of a cooperative network and therefore organization and stakeholder relations within the network of Limfjorden are central to consider.

Though Limfjorden is located closely to the coast of the North Sea and thereby next to a major Danish tourism area, the coastline of the fiord itself seems to lack major tourist attractions to encourage more holiday stays. The purpose of telling stories is to create a product that would make people aware of the qualities of Limfjorden in order to make them want to move around the area and at best spend their entire vacation there. This stated aim makes it highly relevant to study how the concept of storytelling is understood and practised by the individual actor as well as in the network in general with reference to destination development.

The distances between the different local destinations around the fiord are highly manageable by car, and the destinations with lack of attractive tourism accommodations may instead endeavour to profit from day-trip excursions. At the same time one could imagine that it would be beneficial for the areas with many holiday cottages to expand the offerings, i.e. tourist activities and attractions, to make it even more desirable for tourist stays. In other words, there seems to be a potential for widespread tourism cooperation across the entire area of Limfjorden in order to create a flow of tourists between the local destinations, which seemingly is also one of the intentions behind TL: *"Of course, you could choose to go on one or more of the tales within the area of your vacation – but you´re also given the opportunity to follow 5 different routes across the length and breadth of the entire land of Limfjorden."* (Netværk Limfjorden, 2009, p. 2 [own translation]). Storytelling appears as an overall product frame that aims at integrating different destinations and stakeholders across the inlet area and consequently at creating the opportunity for the tourist to experience more of Limfjorden than the limited site chosen for a vacation stay. This makes it highly relevant to investigate whether the concept is built around single or integrated stories in order to shed light on whether the product encourages tourists to follow a "route of tales".

3.2.2. Organisation and stakeholders

As outlined above, the TL storytelling product is established within a geographical area that stretches across two political regions, involves a number of local destinations and includes many different public as well as private stakeholders. At management level the product of TL is handled within *Netværk Limfjorden,* a network association whose main purpose is to develop and promote tourism in the area of Limfjorden. The network is managed by a committee consisting of public and private tourism stakeholders and political representatives. After some turbulence due to political reform that changed the field of responsibility of the regional DMO in Northern Jutland, the product is now coordinated by the local Tourism Agency in Struer while an employee at the Region of Central Jutland functions as secretary, handling all administrative tasks. The organisational structure of the network means that the coordinator and the secretary have to handle all product coordination and administration as part time jobs besides fulfilling their main jobs as director of tourism and regional employee respectively. A wish for a more formalized structure integrating an independent secretariat is expressed by a number of stakeholders within the network.

Naturally, TL involves a number of actors providing the actual telling of stories. These actors make up a diverse group of organisations counting tourist attractions (e.g. historical museums, nature parks etc.) and companies from other business sectors (e.g. dairy, brewery, farms) – all in all big, small and micro sized organisations and a mixture of public and private organisations. The storytelling locations are chosen by the tourist agencies in the particular local destinations and the selection is primarily based on whether the story represents something unique and extraordinary within the given destination area. Whether a story turns out successful is judged by the number of visitors during a season, and the stories within the different themes and destinations may vary from one season to the next. While the tourist agencies have to pay for the actual number of stories they want to be a part of TL, the storytelling locations are not required any payment, they get to keep all income from entrance fees of the story arrangements and obtain increased marketing exposure through the promotional pamphlet, press releases and the joint website. Nonetheless, this does not appear to be a motive for being part of TL. Generally limited interest exists in becoming a storytelling location which could be due to the risk of failing visitor numbers and the demand for providing a story each week throughout the season.

The internal communication of the network indicates that it mainly functions top-down. An external communicative secretary has been hired to maintain the communication of the network such as regular newsletters, press releases and a new website which has increased the internal flow of information, and this is believed to have made network activities more visible to the stakeholders. However, only limited information passes the other way – from the storytelling locations and individual storytellers to the management level of TL. This mainly occurs in the annual evaluation meeting in which only a few storytelling locations and storytellers are represented. The low attendance among these actors is, in fact, accepted by the management as they consider the meetings time and resource consuming for storytellers who already invest a lot of resources in just telling the stories. Consequently, stakeholders do not seem to consider mutual communication as a central element. The only motivator for active involvement in the network presumably comes down to the interest of the individual and his/her enthusiasm for the cooperative aspects, which a large share of storytellers do not consider important for the telling and/or selling of their particular story. A low sense of ownership for the overall product seems dominant and personal relationships appear only to exist among those regularly attending the meetings and primarily at management/committee level of the network causing decisions to be made mainly at this level. This leads to a one-way communication flow where several actors are mere recipients of information and guidelines.

3.2.3. Understanding and application of storytelling

Within TL, storytelling is practiced by a storyteller delivering a tale by mouth to a group of listeners, and basically storytelling is conceived to be a tool to communicate knowledge and authentic information in an interesting and appealing way. Drama, humour and a mixture of facts and fiction together with personal telling appear as the primary building blocks in creating a good story. This means, that although the stories are founded in historical facts and authentic reality, fictive elements such as anecdotes, tall stories and legends are clearly being used to gain advantages in relation to delivering a good story; it "spices up" the story and makes cultural history become more alive, exciting, relevant and colourful and ensures that tourists are not (just) being given a guided tour. The historical facts do not only stem from historical documents and publications but are often based on personal tales, told by people living in the area, and mixed with the storytellers" own personal perspectives.

The TL storytellers make up a diverse group of people with very different backgrounds. At the same time characteristics such as passion and enthusiasm for telling their particular story are common denominators that often originate in professional pride and belonging to a place which seem to advance a personal engagement in telling a story. Thus, a good story is not just about its content but also about the way it is told. Apparently the majority of storytellers also promote this aspect by taking point of departure in the particular group listening to the story and adjusting the story according to the specific segments, interests and backgrounds of the participants, e.g. by addressing the children with a particular story. Although the changes presumably merely consist in selecting one anecdote in preference of another, the storytellers insist on not having a final manuscript for their story seeing that it endangers the liberty of the storyteller and makes the story rigid and boring – not only to the audience but also to the storyteller, who risks losing his/her engagement in telling the story if it merely becomes routine. Another important aspect lies in the relationship between the storyteller and the listeners where friendly and personal contact to the listeners is essential in order to capture their attention and encourage them to participate by asking questions.

Besides asking questions, other aspects of engagement and involvement appear as well. Most

stories involve a walk with a number of telling stops along the route and during the small breaks, i.e. walking from one place to another, the participants often start telling on their own, talking and socializing with other participants as well as the storyteller. One of the main purposes of telling the stories is, in fact, to make the tourist interested in the topic and to pass the story on to others or even to encourage people to seek further information on their own. The stories, furthermore, often take their point of departure in the physical location and surroundings where several storytellers attempt to paint a picture of what the place looked like at the time the story took place, pointing out directions or spots of interest. In other stories, participants are allowed to try out objects or enter buildings that are central to the story. Hence, several stories seem to involve more than just the sense of hearing but also the senses of seeing and touching, and using the surroundings as part of the story might even foster an authentic sense of being present in the historical stage of the stories – a sense of place.

In some stories, other properties and activities also enter the stage. On one occasion, the story is told while sailing down a narrow canal, and in others, samples of drink and/or food are offered either as an integrated part of the story (being a product of the storytelling company) or as refreshment independent of the story content. The food/drink served in relation to the actual story seem to contribute to the story content and may even enhance the effect of the story. The product is often offered for sale at the place but besides that it is not actively promoted as a souvenir in that no "take-home" products are given to the participants in order to prolong the experience and create a word-of-mouth effect.

Some storytellers have tried involving the listeners through activities but the main group of visitors at the TL stories – middle-aged and older couples – is apparently unwilling to participate actively and prefer listening with the opportunity for asking questions as the only involvement. Only in one story observed, did the storyteller dress up as the main character of his story, and he believes that it animates the storytelling – another storyteller agrees that theatrical elements are suitable for telling a story but stresses that it requires another audience and that the storyteller has a natural talent for acting, which are the reasons why he does not do that.

Digitalized storytelling arrangements in form of podcasts have been considered by the organisational committee - the main reasons being that digital stories can be told independent of time and place, do not require a certain number of participants and thereby offer the opportunity to experience the stories outside the main season. Concerns, however, exist among storytellers about losing the personal touch in form of face-to-face contact and the living aspect such as adjustment of the story according to a specific group of listeners. Letting the storyteller be the one telling the story via digital media to keep e.g. the original "twinkle", dialect is, however, considered by the committee as one way of making up for this concern. Furthermore, recordings of extracts of storytelling activities are considered as marketing tools to be used on the webpage or in commercials on the radio, and these digital teasers could be a step towards more and better marketing, which several TL stakeholders wish for.

As it appears, several storytellers intend to engage the visitors by involving other senses such as sight, touch, taste and smell and a good story is conceived of as a telling that uses fictive elements to spice up the content; this seemingly results in stories with a stronger emotional appeal than a traditional guided tour and is one of the main reasons why the tales told around Limfjorden can be classified as good stories. However, the general visitor participation is still concentrated on a talk-and-listen relationship where the story aims at catching the attention of the listener, make them interested in the topic and consequently have them ask questions, telling themselves and/or even look for further information. The stories do not engage the

participants as actors or co-creators of the story – only on occasions where the guests participate and contribute to the story with his/her own story or guide the storyteller in an unforeseen direction, could it be justified to classify the participants as co-writers. But this kind of engagement is not, however, a general characteristic of the TL stories.

3.2.4. Destination development

The local destinations around Limfjorden are naturally connected by the water and it seems a very reasonable initiative to join actors and destinations within the framework of a common tourist product in order to develop the area as one tourist destination. Despite a common TL promotional pamphlet presenting all the stories as one product, a dominant position in the joint website (www.visitlimfjorden.com) and a number of press releases sent to national, regional and local newspapers, the product is still a niche product that mainly functions as a supplementary offer to the tourists visiting the area. Hence, although TL might result in some word-of-mouth effect as a consequence of providing a good experience to its visitors, there is no evidence that it in itself attracts new tourists to the area. Despite the fact that several stakeholders believe that more marketing would be a way to solve this, the narrow target group of TL, i.e. older Danish couples travelling without children, seemingly also influences the limited pull effect of the product. In order to obtain status as an independent tourist attraction, TL has to be developed further and considerations related to this particular issue are being among stakeholders as stories provided in other languages by use of digital media and storytelling arrangements offered to groups are initiatives to be implemented in 2011. Besides that, it might be worth promoting and developing stories that would be attractive to an additional segment within Danish tourism – families with children for instance – in order to establish TL as a tourist attraction in its own right.

Seen from an organisational and a collaborative perspective, stakeholders believe that the network has contributed to more solidarity among the different destinations around Limfjorden and the new website clearly furthers the appearance of Limfjorden as one destination. Nonetheless, the distribution of TL stories reveals that the network does not cover the whole area but is clearly centred at the western end of the fiord, not involving the two major municipalities Aalborg and Viborg, and the storytelling product thus only partly has established Limfjorden as one destination. Although stakeholders and actors seem to agree that TL to some extent has joined the destinations around Limfjorden into one destination, the lack of engagement in the network cooperation, of strong personal relationships and a sense of ownership towards the overall product appear to be impediments in relation to developing an integrated destination. Furthermore, research reveals that issues related to the TL product in general were on several occasions addressed by focusing on the specific local destination or the individual stakeholder‟s own product rather than TL as one consistent whole, and hence the general picture of TL is that it hardly classifies Limfjorden as one united destination but several destinations collaborating and gathering independent tourist products within a common framework.

The product set up has the intention to present a number of stories integrated geographically or thematically so that tourists are inspired to visit more than one storytelling activity either by staying in one local destination and attend stories from different themes or pursuing a specific theme across destinations around Limfjorden. In practice, however, statistics show that only a minor part of the visitors actually visit more than one story. One reason might be the fact that only a few storytellers seem to promote the other stories. Besides that, the different story themes apparently do not foster an integrated story product either; the settled themes – history, craft and industry, nature, the maritime and temptations – leave a very broad

scope for telling a story and presumably they do not inspire the tourist to follow a "thematic route" of stories. In order to promote that routes of stories are followed, the stories seemingly have to be more integrated and linkages between the individual stories more visible.

All in all, the Danish case of *Tales of Limfjorden* demonstrates sound storytelling practices which appeal to the emotions and senses of a delimited target group of Danish empty nesters. User involvement is limited and communication technology is not applied in the present storytelling practice, which to some extent finds its explanation in the group of tourists targeted. A number of public and private actors are involved, and whereas commitment seems to be relatively high in relation to the individual storytelling product, it seems relatively low in relation to the overall product, i.e. route of storytelling activities along the fjord. Hence the storytelling product does neither seem to contribute to destination-wide cooperation nor destination development to any significant extent. Reasons for this will be scrutinised further in the analysis section below.

3.2.5 Analysis of Tales of Limfjorden

As demonstrated above, the individual stories of the overall tourist product have many qualities particularly in terms of high level of engagement on part of the individual storyteller and the usage of dramaturgical principles and sense stimulation. However, in terms of constituting an overall tourist product that could be instrumental in developing the destination of Limfjorden, TL has several shortcomings. Subsequently, explanations to these shortcomings will be sought by means of the theoretical model in Table 3.

Table 3. Analysis – Tales of Limfjorden

STAKEHOLDERS	STORYTELLING PROCESS	OUTCOME OF STORYTELLING PROCESS (year 1, 2, 3…)	DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT
A *Initiators & Decision makers* Tourist offices Politicians Museum	A *Agenda setting* 5 broad themes Stories identified by tourist offices Financing: tourist offices not storytellers Target groups: DK 45+	*Further concept development* Limited – top-down infomation *Marketing output* Limited earnings 5.000 guests *Inter-organisational outcome*	*Economic* No new ventures No strategic destination brand Attempt at extending season *Socio-cultural*
B *Steering committee* Tourist offices Politicians Museum	B *Design of storytelling concept* No overall storyline No servicescape design Programming through themes Market communication not integrated with product	Cooperation between A & B Top-down information from A/B to C No cooperation between storytellers Knowledge & skills Use & exchange of local knowledge among A & B	No additional employment No training courses *Environmental* No change
C *Storytellers* Museums, nature guides, private companies, local volunteers	C *Implementation* Individual stories Elements of servicescape Programming not practised	Limited generation of new knowledge Use of knowledge among C, no exchange	

In terms of stakeholder roles, the initiators and decision makers involved in TL are tourist offices, local politicians and one museum, which for the most part have an interest in destination development but first and foremost of the individual destination and not the larger supra-destination of Limfjorden. A historical museum is the only representative of a storytelling location and is the closest the implementers (i.e. storytellers) get to having a representative in the agenda setting group of stakeholders. The initiators and decision makers double as the steering committee and so strategic and tactical decisions on: what stories to include, how to theme them and what market communication to use etc. are made without the direct inclusion of storytellers. Top-down communication of decisions is made e.g. in the form of directions like "10 steps to good stories", which provide little basis for knowledge sharing between the strategic and the operational level of the network. Single attempts are made at including the storytellers by inviting them for an annual status meeting, however,

basically no storytellers show up for this event ostensibly due to lack of time. This is fully accepted by the organisational committee which shows a lack of insight into the benefits of knowledge sharing across organisational divides. This point is further illustrated during the collection of data for the present case study: the researchers suggested a workshop for storytellers as input for their future storytelling practices and opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas with the other storytellers of the network. This offer was never responded to by the daily manager of the network. Hence less than optimal stakeholder relations seem to be an important reason why TL does not become a means of destination development.

Also the storytelling process helps to explain why TL functions poorly as a means of destination development for the Limfjord area. TL consist of 34 individual stories that have been selected by the tourist offices involved on basis of how well they fit into the five themes of TL. Hence the stories have all existed prior to the development of the TL storytelling concept, which means that focus has been on combining existing products in a new way rather than developing new products. As the case study has shown, the individual story has many narrative qualities, which may have been a salient reason for not developing new stories, however, well-functioning isolated entities may not necessarily function well as part of a larger concept. The organisational committee has made the strategic choice of keeping product development at a minimum by using already existing stories. This seems to be an important reason why the overall storytelling concept appears weak. Moreover, the five themes: history, nature, craft and industry, the maritime and temptations are very generic in nature and therefore do not function well as the defining elements of a concept that should catch tourist attention and provide a unique experience of the Limfjord. No overall storyline across individual stories are created just as no common servicescape design links up the stories. From the strategic level the intention was to programme the storytelling experience, in the sense that the individual storytellers were supposed to promote the other stories told within the same theme, however, this does not seem to work in practice, most likely due to lack of knowledge of the other stories in the network. Finally, the market communication of the product is not well integrated into the overall concept either, as the website and the pamphlet mostly consist of factual introductions to the topics of the stories and facts about the storytelling arrangements (e.g. who the activity is aimed at, whether own transportation is required, whether reservation is needed), and close to no storytelling based promotion appears.

The outcome of TL seems overall to be fairly limited in terms of all three elements identified in the theoretical model. The marketing output is restricted to a total of around 5.000 guests per year for the 34 stories. These are each offered between 5-25 times during the main summer season, which generally leaves the storytellers and the storytelling locations with very limited earnings on these activities. Whether limited success in terms of marketing output is one of the reasons that concept development has been kept to a minimum during the six years that TL so far has existed, is hard to say on the basis of the data available, however, lack of concept development seems clearly to be a consequence of the inter-organisational relations characterising this network. Top-down stakeholder relations with directions given from decision-makers organised into a committee to the storytelling locations and storytellers means that the operational level of the network has limited influence on the strategic level. Moreover, it is not just vertically but also horizontally in the network that interaction and with that exchange of knowledge and ideas is at a minimum, in that the storytellers and storytelling locations do not meet and exchange experiences either. The basis for developing new knowledge in the TL network is, of course, present in the steering committee as it consists of different competences and interests (local tourist offices, local politicians and a museum), and

external knowledge has recently been brought into the organisation in the form a communication consultant that is responsible for press releases, the website and the pamphlet. However, the potential for knowledge generation and exchange that this network holds is not exploited to the extent possible due to its top-down organisation. An interactive communication platform facilitating mutual information and exchange of knowledge and ideas across the strategic and operational level of the network could be instrumental in improving the inter-organisational relationship, however, information technologies are not a solution to the problem per se – the need for and willingness to cooperate closely have initially to be realized by the stakeholders involved.

On the basis of analyses of stakeholder relations, the storytelling process and its outcomes, it has been demonstrated that TL holds the potential of destination development as it includes a number of skilful storytellers highly engaged in the individual stories that they deliver. However, these resources are not at present developed into a storytelling concept that can help develop the destination of Limfjorden, but rather stand out as individual storytelling products marketed via common market communication platforms. Hence the economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits (and drawbacks) of destination development do not materialise in TL. Firstly, TL does not seem to foster new corporations in terms of product and promotional developments and it does not create, or contribute to, a strategic branding effort for the whole destination. The ambition of extending the season through storytelling activities during autumn and spring holidays has so far been realised only to a limited extent, as these activities have only been able to attract a few visitors. Secondly, TL has not so far resulted in increased employment neither at the storytelling locations nor at the coordinating /administrative level of the network. Moreover, TL does not involve any form of formal training courses for the storytellers, and more informal training in terms of mutual knowledge sharing is not facilitated to any notable extent either. Thirdly, environmental impacts is less relevant to discuss in the context of a storytelling product that involves limited product development and generates few visitors.

3.3. The Icelandic Case: The Settlement Centre of Iceland

3.3.1. Introduction

The Settlement Centre of Iceland (I. Landnámssetur, www.landnam.is) is in Borgarnes, a town of two thousand inhabitants in West Iceland, approximately 75 km drive from the capital, Reykjavík. The centre presents the story of the settlement in Iceland in the ninth century. It also tells the story of the Viking and Iceland´s first poet Egill Skallagrímsson. These stories are told focusing on two old books, *The Book of Icelanders* and *Egil´s Saga.* The Book of Icelanders (I. Íslendingabók) is the first book written in Icelandic by Ari "the wise" in the early 12th century. It is a historical work telling who settled where and under what conditions. Egil´s Saga is one of forty Sagas which are prose histories mostly describing events that took place in Iceland in the 10th and early 11th centuries, in all likelihood written on either side of the year 1200. Egil´s Saga takes place in Borgarfjörður valley in West Iceland but Borgarnes sits at the mouth of the valley. It profiles a person that both appears as a violent Viking and sensitive poet and the story of his family´s pioneering and the settlement in the Borgarfjörður region which provides an insight into the tumultuous years of settlement.

The story telling tradition of Iceland draws on the unique literary heritage, the stories that in medieval times were written on parchment by educated men. The myths and legends of the

ancient Scandinavians survived better than those of any other Germanic people thanks to the extensive vernacular literature, preserved in Iceland (Andersen, 2010). The literary treasure is unique in many ways but mainly because many forms of literature and studies that survived in Iceland have no contemporary equals in European culture.

The story of the settlement in Iceland is remarkable not least for being the only example in the world where written sources exist of settlement in an uninhabited country. In the Settlement Centre stories from the past are lifted out of the parchment and told in manifold manifestations, both through the complicated visual and interactive mediums of today and the simple methods of the storyteller who captures his audience without the help of any tools. Both methods, and everything between, are used in the Settlement Centre to get tourists to understand and experience the island‟s history and cultural heritage.

In the Icelandic country report published by the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre (in English) a detailed account is given of the methods used in the Settlement Centre to tell stories as well as the vision of the entrepreneur‟s behind the Centre and their ways of furthering tourism in Borgarnes and the whole of West-Iceland. Those findings are based on 12 in-depth interviews and 19 shorter interviews with those involved, key entrepreneurs and public and private stakeholders. The aim of the below is to provide a summary of these points demonstrating the impact of storytelling evolution on tourism and destination development in the region of West Iceland.

3.3.2. Background

Tourism in Iceland has grown remarkably the last twenty years and is now the third largest source of foreign currency after energy intensive industries and fisheries. Tourist arrivals have multiplied in the recent years, more than doubling, for instance, in the ten years period between 1997 (201.000) and 2007 (459.000) (Jóhannesson, Huijbens & Sharpley, 2010). Assuming an annual increase of 6.8%, as has been the case in Iceland for the past ten years, one million visitors can be anticipated in 2020 (Statice, 2010). Although tourism is a volatile profession in a country where nature often trips the tourist, it is in many people‟s opinion the most promising trade especially now in times of economic recession (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010).

The great majority of travellers visit Iceland because of its special nature set in terms of the country‟s „island-ness‟, „remoteness‟ and „otherness‟. Tourist surveys in recent years have nevertheless indicated a growing interest in the history and culture of the Icelandic nation (Statice, 2009). On the most general level this growth in cultural tourism follows a worldwide trend which, among other things, can be traced to the fact that a new generation of tourists, tired of package holidays and theme parks, is looking for „authentic‟ experiences (Karlsdóttir, 2005).

As Icelandic visitor survey‟s started picking up on this, tourism entrepreneurs in the country were soon to follow. Reflecting this is the marked increase in all manners of small exhibitions and centres all around the country in the last ten years. The Icelandic government has responded to this trend in various ways. The parliamentary confirmation of the Icelandic Tourism Plan 2006-2015 states for example that culture, in its broadest sense, shall be one of two tourism foundations, the other being nature. Albeit seemingly all-encompassing, grants have been channelled to the establishment of culture-based tourist services, building up various storytelling destinations. It can be stated though that the build-up of culture-based

tourism in Iceland has not been systematic but rather arbitrary. This individual evolution is a typical description of the Icelandic governmental *laissez faire* attitude to tourism (see: Jóhannesson, et.al., 2010). Contrary to the authorities in many other countries the Icelandic authorities leave the grass root pave the way and then write policy, laws and regulations in accordance with the way the paving went. The Icelandic way has the merit though that it enables diehards to get their ideas into action as the case of the Settlement centre demonstrates.

Although no coherent monitoring or cataloguing of culture-based tourism attraction exists, it seems that the medieval heritage of Iceland forms the focus of many of them. This heritage mainly rests in books and is neither visible nor tangible. Archaeological remains are rare but instead there is a vivid description of the past in the old literature. Historical sites in Iceland are filled with memories instead of buildings. Hence, tourists can visit historical places without seeing anything at all until a storyteller or a tourist guidebook recites the story. Promoting this basic part of Icelandic culture that is connected to one of the world"s smallest native tongues, poses a veritable challenge to the tourism industry. The ancient heritage, the manuscripts, can be viewed in museums, but old tomes on their own have little interest for the tourist. Culture-based tourism in Iceland therefore revolves around objectifying the Icelandic cultural legacy and making it visible and tangible through storytelling.

3.3.3. Organisation and stakeholders

The idea for the Settlement Centre was born in 2003 to a well-known, thespian couple living in Reykjavík. They had travelled the country as tour guides in summer experiencing the incipient culture-based tourist services currently sprouting in manifold forms. The couple had long standing experience in telling stories, each in their own way; him as an actor, director and play write; her as an actress, who has doubled as a television news reporter and as a public relations person. For various reasons the couple chose Borgarnes but both locals and the municipal authorities received them open-heartedly. The municipality proved invaluable in providing the fiscal foundation whilst the entrepreneurs lead the way with professionalism and passion. At the opening of the centre in 2006 the municipality owned 80% of the centre compared to the entrepreneur"s 20%, but four years later the percentages have been turned around. Like most other privately-owned cultural bodies the Settlement Centre receives some governmental funds but needs to apply for it every year. The goal is to for the Centre is to receive a permanent subsidy from the State.

From the outset the Settlement Centre has enjoyed its proximity to Reykholt in the Borgarfjörður valley where Snorri Sturluson the most famous medieval writer of the Nordic countries, wrote some of the major works of Germanic medieval literature. The tourist service and research centre Snorrastofa operates there. Their scientific approach to Icelandic history and culture along with the artistic approach of the Settlement Centre have produced a creative co-operation mainly in the area of local and international education on the Icelandic literary heritage.

Countrywide the Settlement Centre participates in network of storytellers and storytelling destinations called the Icelandic Storytelling Association (www.sagatrail.com). They operate both inwards and outwards, inwards by creating an identity among members and outwards by bringing attention to the role of storytelling in tourism in Iceland. It can be said that the association connects the grass root to the regulatory framework of the authorities and the loudspeakers of the media.

The Settlement Centre also participates in regional tourism development in co-operation with

other Western Iceland tourist services. Their collaboration emerged from the introduction of cluster thinking by the Icelandic Trade Council, through a series of workshops around Iceland in 2005-2009. The region to host the first workshop was West Iceland and the result was a cluster called All Senses, working under the motto *Competition through Co-operation*.

The Settlement Centre has been awarded numerous prices and awards for various facets of the operation, starting with the design of the logo, the renovation of the house and facilities, to the Gríma-award for best leading actor and best leading actress. Furthermore, it has received a commendation for its part in preserving the Icelandic language.

3.3.4. Storytelling practice

The centre operates out of the two oldest buildings in Borgarnes with a modern conjoining glass building which also joins the centre with nature and the story of the earth itself, with exposed cliff outcrops forming the back wall of the reception. In these buildings the two permanent exhibitions can be found as well as the Saga Loft Theatre, a restaurant and a gift shop (Table 4).

Table 4. The activities of the Settlement Centre

Activities	Present	Future projects
Permanent Exhibitions	The Settlement Exhibition in Borgarnes The Egil's Saga Exhibition in Borgarnes	The Gylfaginning Exhibition by the Deildartunguhver The Saga Age Exhibition in Þingvellir
Guided tours	Nine cairns marking sites where stories of interest are to be found Guided tours to historical sites	
Smart guide: Computerized guiding	Three guided tours (seven hours) in Borgarfjörður in four languages	24 hours guided tour through all of West Iceland
Courses in Medieval Studies	Courses and study-circles for locals	On-line courses for Icelanders and foreigners
The Saga Loft Theatre	Solo-plays, monologues, stand-ups, music, meetings	Solo-plays, monologues, stand-ups, music, meetings
The Medieval Baths	Fund-seeking, designing	A large-scale project of erecting medieval baths and exhibitions by Deildartunguhver
Restaurants	Búðarklettur (Borgarnes)	Restaurant (Medieval Baths)
Gift shops	Hlaðhönd (Borgarnes)	Gift shop (Medieval Baths)

Permanent Exhibitions

The two permanent exhibitions set up at the opening of the centre are the backbone of its operations. The one based on the settlement of Iceland uses numerous maps and model replicas of equipment and means of transportation. The latter exhibition is founded on the dramatic Egils Saga and thus the exhibition is modelled on a staging of a play with various local artists contributing the props. In both of the exhibitions audio-guides, in nine languages, are available. An abridged version for children is also available. The target groups counts foreign tourists and Icelanders of all age groups. It is already a public policy of the Centre that the exhibitions should not only allow for guests already familiar with the stories or Sagas, but should especially take into consideration those who do not and may even lack interest in the

subject matter, before entering the exhibitions.

Theatre, Restaurant, Museum Shop

Visitor numbers to the permanent exhibitions are excellent over the summer months but drop sharply in winter – indeed seasonality is a huge problem in Icelandic tourism. To counter this, a small theatre is open throughout the year. The stage or The Saga Loft, as it is known, seats 80 guests and has been a success with two monologues influenced by Egils Saga, stand-up comedy, storytelling sessions and musical happenings. The entrepreneurs of the Settlement Centre have themselves initiated all of the shows. The theatre has become one of the most popular stages in the country and has promoted huge interest in the making and staging of monologues, the specialty of the Saga Loft. All the shows have only been performed in Icelandic. The theatre as well as the restaurant is available for meetings and/or conferences, and local dances/celebrations. The restaurant also acts as an important attraction for the Centre during winter. A shop in the Centre carries a good selection of books on Iceland and Icelandic design.

Guided Tours, Cairns and Smart Guide

The Settlement Centre has recently outsourced some of its operations. The Smart Guide, called the third permanent exhibition, is a tourism innovation. It is an automatic guide in the form of an ifon (telephone), with a satellite link-up. Users receive guidance via ear piece, when driving or walking, be it through a historical Saga-site in the region or the landscape at large. Also available is a tour with an expert guide, in the flesh, through the famous historical sites in Borgarfjörður. Those sites have also been marked with cairns on which one can read the respective history of the places in question.

Educational Impact

The Settlement Centre receives schoolchildren; indeed, both monologues and the permanent exhibitions are inspired and refer to subjects that schoolchildren learn in elementary school as well as in schools of further education. The Centre also offers local people, in cooperation with West Iceland Adult Education Centre and Snorrastofa, courses in Icelandic medieval literature. The courses have now been expanded for another level and similar courses are now in being prepared for Distance Education to reach other countries.

Future Projects

The Settlement Centre has ambitious projects on its drawing board, some of which include expansion to other places in Iceland. The largest project is to take place 30 km from Borgarnes at Deildartunguhver, the biggest hot spring in the world. Fundraising is already underway to finance extensive development of spacious facilities and for the development of technology needed to build many types of hot baths of medieval character but with all modern amenities and comfort. In this the Centre envisions the merging of health and wellness tourism with culture-based tourism. Exhibitions on the Icelandic culture of bathing will be permanently open on site, as well as an exhibition on the ideology of Nordic mythology as depicted in the works of Snorri Sturluson, but Reykholt, is only some 10 km from the Deildartunguhver hot spring. Yet another ambitious idea is to stage, in Þingvellir the ancient Parliament of Icelanders, a permanent exhibition on another period of Icelandic history: Saga Age, in the vein of the exhibition in the Settlement Centre.

3.3.5. Destination development

Around two million people are estimated to travel through Borgarnes annually, but most of them are Icelanders only driving through the outskirts of town or stopping at highway diners. No statistics exist on the increase of tourists into the town since the Settlement Centre opened its doors, but people say they notice a marked increase reflected in sales and other services. Other aspects not easily measured are the psychological ones. The museum is a jewel of the town´s architecture and the people of Borgarnes are proud to have one of the most popular theatres in the country. Since the entrepreneur couple is eager to co-operate in all the local activities a lot of spin-off projects can be traced to the Settlement Centre. The most significant is though the opening of the Puppet Art Museum in May 2010 which is located in another cluster of old houses a spear throw away from the Settlement Centre. The founders chose Borgarnes mainly because of the proximity to the Settlement Centre. With the Settlement Centre and this development the inhabitants" self image has changed and many feel that their town need not be a traditional low wage area but can be an area for manifold cultural innovations.

The Settlement Centre in Borgarnes has mainly concentrated its efforts on telling the stories of settlement in Borgarfjörður. The entrepreneurs have themselves instigated the stories being told. They have written the scripts for the permanent exhibitions and engaged actors to take part in the staging of the plays. They have themselves also initiated shows in the small theatre and they have also written guides and descriptions about the region of Borgarfjörður, for the Smart Guide. Furthermore, they give guided tours in a bus, as well as receiving and servicing groups, selling tickets, lending a hand in the kitchen, if needed, in between meetings with prospective investors, writing applications and overseeing daily operations. They are the face of the Centre and interviewees in the research do not make a clear distinction between the centre and the entrepreneurs behind it. Cooperation with other parties is of course extensive and necessary. The entrepreneurs engage a large number of artists as well as locals to help out in various projects. The interviewees agreed that it has been crucial for the Centre that the entrepreneurs moved their home to Borgarnes and participated fully in local social interaction. In this way The Settlement Centre has become a cultural centre for the local people, who feel that they own a part in its success. The Centre has mutually beneficial ties to Snorrastofa, which hosts similar projects but in quite different ways as Snorratofa analyses medieval history and literature scientifically, while the Settlement Centre does so from the perspective of the arts. The entrepreneurs present all their ideas to resident scholars in Snorrastofa even though they feel free, as artists, to tell stories as they see fit.

No official policy exists on how the history of Iceland is to be recounted to foreign visitors. It is safe to say that the policy on museums is also quite weak. A large share (over 50%) of governmental grants towards museums goes through the Budget Committee of Alþingi instead of being allotted by authorities in the field of museum policy. This contributes to an inconsistent distribution of finances as the Budget Committee does not have a clear overview. This arrangement does however have a positive side to it, as it offers the entrepreneurs room to flex their wings. The entrepreneurs of the Settlement Centre do belief that they would in all likelihood not have been given the chance to develop their project if a strict museum policy had be in place in Iceland.

3.3.6. Analysis of the Settlement Centre

Summarized below (Table 5) are some of the findings of the Icelandic case tentatively placed

in the framework devised under the terms of the project.

Table 5. Analysis - the Settlement Centre Iceland.

STAKEHOLDERS (local / non local) (public / private)	STORYTELLING PROCESS	OUTCOME OF STORYTELLING PROCESS (year 1, 2, 3…)	DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS
A *Stakeholders* Initiators were the thespian couple from Reykjavík – private entrepreneurs Decision makers were them but support and involvement of the municipality Owners were first the municipality, then the initiators	A *Agenda setting* Sagas and vernacular culture The stories are selected in terms of relevance to the site, using actors from Reykjavík The target groups are the traffic going through the town The theatre and exhibit is 80% owned by the initiators, and 20% by the municipality.	*Further concept development* Guiding innovation Artist involvement Packaging is through innovative uses of media technology *Marketing output* Financial sustainability Visitors foreign Good relations with media *Inter-organisational outcome* Facilitate co-operation Explorative in marketing	*Economic* Branching out Addressing spatio-temporal concentrated visitation Theming of the region *Socio-cultural* They employ locals Training is limited Architectural gem – making locals proud Growing awareness of the town¨s potential as a tourist destination *Environmental* New facilities and infrastructure
B *Steering committee* Entrepreneurs dominate Professional theatre expertise	B *Design of the storytelling concept* Sagas Servicescape professional theatre Trails and guiding Good media relations Themed local Souvenirs		
C *Actors* Storytellers in the theatre loft Guided tours Restaurant and souvenir shop	C *Implementation* Exhibits and guided tours Theming the region Spin offs are developing. Spirit of the initiators		

3.3.7. Concluding points

Storytelling and destination development can be a vivid interplay between the local community, culture and tourism services as is the case with the Settlement Centre. The Icelandic literary heritage is recreated in a way that gives visitors an insight into the story of the Borgarfjörður region but also prompts local innovative capacities in other services offerings.

The Icelandic case demonstrates a growing interest and varied manifestations of culture-based tourism in Iceland. The case presented and similar culture-based tourism and storytelling destinations in the country mostly build on the rich cultural heritage found in the mediaeval literature, recounting the Germanic and Icelandic Sagas as well as stories of the Settlement of Iceland, and the country"s folklore. Both strands form the basis of the wealthy vernacular culture of Iceland which maintains a well-spring of stories which have vivid resonance in Icelandic contemporary culture. Tourism entrepreneurs have considerable freedom to interpret and develop destinations from these rich sources, as tourism in Iceland functions in a considerable public and private policy vacuum. This weak institutional framing results in a plethora of storytelling destinations and service offerings.

What the case demonstrates, on the other hand, is the necessity of expertise in both storytelling and the uses of material necessary to make stories come alive. Also the case demonstrates the need for a consensus to be reached with the local community on the development of the destination and the stories being told. In addition to the community consensus to be reached the storytelling destination entrepreneur must demonstrate an active interest in regional tourism services and collaborate with the tourism industry in the region in order to secure resonance of the storytelling destination in other tourism services offered in the region. This active interest has produced spin offs and others interested in tapping the cultural resources of the region. Therefore we argue for the regional and nation-wide collaborative frameworks to be set up for storytelling destination development, one that is in active communication with other tourism service offerings.

3.4. The Swedish case: The shellfish journey

A global trend in destination marketing is to focus on local and traditional food. Tourism organizations have used food events and developed local food concepts around stories to promote their destinations. The Swedish case is about using local food and storytelling in destination marketing and development. More specifically it focuses on building a strong brand around sea food with the aim to strengthen the attractiveness of Bohuslän on the west coast of Sweden. The project started in Spring 2008 and the first shell fish event took place in Autumn 2009. For the 2010 event, in late October, the number of actors involved has increased, the event has been extended from a weekend to two weeks, and the area for the event has been extended geographically with more municipalities involved.

The purpose of the case description has primarily been to follow the process as it unfolds, describing how it started, how the concept development was carried out, how the first year event was perceived as well as how the activities were continued.

The research was a process of progressive problem solving guided by the researcher. For the evaluation of the first year event twelve interviews with stakeholders were carried out as well

as a customer survey and participant observation during the event. The interviews were followed up by meetings with stakeholders to investigate the progress of the project.

3.4.1. Background

In North Bohuslän, four shellfish academies have opened: the Prawn Academy in Strömstad, the Lobster Academy in Hunnebostrand, the Oyster Academy in Grebbestad and the Mussel Academy in Lysekil. In addition, academies for crayfish and crab are also being considered. The aim of these academies is safeguarding local traditions and promoting the high-quality products in various arenas. They wish to build up a knowledge bank and promote research, as well as support increased cooperation between interested parties, in order to benefit from the potential attractiveness of shellfish.

The project started in spring 2008. The academies, together with interested parties from tourism offices and some restaurants, decided to seek money for a preliminary study from Leader Ranrike (EU). The application was accepted and the goal of the preliminary study was to develop a concept that could be turned into an action plan for how the organizations could work together under one brand to guarantee a high-quality culinary product using locally-sourced raw ingredients. One sub-goal was to increase interest in visiting the region during the low tourist season.

The established working group assumed that there are huge opportunities for creating new products and developing new seasons with help of shellfish. Contributing players believed that they are sitting on a unique resource that is currently not being fully exploited. Valuable in this first phase was the creation of new networks and the insight of new ways to work together with shellfish as the common denominator.

More funds were sought from Leader Ranrike (EU) to implement the project. A number of meetings and workshops took place. It became clear that the shellfish academies are strong organizations individually, but they need a common platform that illustrates and strengthens both the raw ingredients that they represent and the qualities and values associated with the original environment of the raw ingredients. None of the academies had paid staff – all were dependent on highly interested and involved volunteers. All participants agreed that Halloween was suitable for the event. The timing was good, bearing in mind that many people have a day free and the children are on school holiday as well as many activities associated with the beginning of the lobster season are over and the Christmas food season has not yet started.

3.4.2. Organisation and stakeholders

This initial work can be regarded as an innovation process in multiple stages, continued from May 2008 to February 2009. A steering group that included a project manager (a director of a tourist office), process manager and project assistant was formed. Participants included the Academies for mussels (Lysekil), lobsters (Sotenäs), oysters (Tanum), prawns (Strömstad) and the Salmon Association in Munkedal. The participants also invited representatives from companies, such as restaurants and municipal tourism offices. Together, these organizations represent around a hundred companies and a thousand private individuals.

It was suggested by the project participants that all restaurants serving fish and shell fish were allowed to be involved. To be able to succeed only very high quality shell fish were to be served. Therefore, the distributers of shell fish were approached and convinced about participating in the project. In addition to restaurants and shell fish distributers, retail

associations were also asked to be involved. Other participants were accommodation establishments such as hotels, boarding houses, B&B and youth hostels as well as attractions such as the fish laboratory and Havets Hus which offered guided tours, etc. Each destination associated with the academies developed its own programme. All in all about 45 organizations and companies were involved in the first year "Shellfish Journey".

Five target groups for visiting the event were selected based on following arguments:

- Local population. It was important to include and get support from the local population if this project is to be a success.
- Second home owners. It should be marketed as a short holiday for second home owners when they can do some work on the cottage and have the opportunity for some fun activities.
- Solo visitors. It should be a "short-break" for people looking for activities, as well as some peace and quiet, over a weekend.
- Visitors who travel on an organised trip. Is was assumed that instead of an opera trip to Stockholm, a culture tour to Skåne, etc., a trip to Bohuslän could be of interest for some. Packages could be organised by travel agents.
- Media. It was pointed out that the media to a large extent affect the individual's image of different places. Therefore it was particularly important that the media were invited to and reported on the Shellfish Journey.

After the first year event, The West Sweden Tourist Board arranged a number of meetings to discuss the ownership and organization of the project. They also appointed a new project leader who coordinates the project. The academies who initiated and owned the project in the development phase are not the owners any longer. The ownership has been taken over by the municipalities in the area. The reason is that the academies are run by volunteers who are not interested in running and coordinating the event. The project participants are positive about the fact that the West Sweden Tourist Board took the coordination role.

3.4.3. Storytelling practice

The concept was developed during the workshops and all agreed that it should be based on storytelling around shell fish and shell fish dishes. All participating restaurants should have shell fish dishes on the menu during this weekend. It was decided that each dish must contain, three shell fish that should *always* be included. Other content could vary, but it was considered important that the academies had to be represented through shell fish meals. Each participating restaurant could have its individual table setting and they could choose which drinks to serve. However, in the restaurants there should be a description of the history of the academies, the shell fish, and the environment in which they are found. The description should be identical. The shell fish dish was considered as the basic product, but the restaurant could expand the menu with starters and serve other dishes after the shell fish dish.

Organizers of activities like lobster and oyster safaris, mussel barbeques, and guided tours at e.g. aquariums could all tell their stories but the stories should be linked to the shell fish academy at the destination. It was the same rule for all participating organizations, e.g. various kinds of accommodation facilities who could be a part of a package or offering a package by themselves

Different ways were used to communicate the fist Shellfish Journey to the target groups:

- Active marketing was by the stakeholders said to be one requirement in the first

instance, when the "product" is new and does not exist in people's consciousness.

- The "Shellfish Journey" was presented at the TUR trade fair in Göteborg in connection with an event to which the press, organisers, politicians, tourism organizations and related industries in mainly North Bohuslän were invited.
- A web site about the "Shellfish Journey" was constructed and put up on www.westsweden.com. The communication tool and database Basetool was used. On the web site all the 45 participating organizations and companies were included with their offerings, contact information and specific details about e.g. schedules.
- One type of postcard was developed as well as a brochure. The brochure showed all the packages offered as well as where to book.
- A press release was sent out and a great number of newspapers and magazines wrote about the upcoming "Shellfish Journey".

After the first event ownership and branding issues were put forward by the stakeholders. The discussions about the ownership were protracted and there was not much room to discuss the overall strategies with storytelling. When the ownership of the "Shellfish Journey" was cleared all the energy was on putting together packages for the next event.

The new project leader is now getting questions about storytelling from the producers. They want to know how to deal with individual stories related to their own brand but also to the destination brand. When the 2010 event is over, it is time to proceed with the storytelling strategies and procedures, according to the project leader.

3.4.4. Destination development and the Shellfish Journey

Two month after the first event took place the actors involved in the project and in the event were summoned to a meeting in Strömstad to discuss if they like to continue with and develop the "Shellfish Journey". At the meeting the project evaluations were presented (Bui & Wrethagen, 2010; Forslund & Nilsson, 2010). It was decided that the project should continue but without financial sources from EU. However, the West Sweden Tourist Board responded that they were willing to support the project with a project leader. The West Sweden Tourist Board views the "Shellfish Journey" as a success project as it covers many organizations and is spread over many municipalities. It also goes in line with their aim to support organizations in the region with the goal to increase tourism in the long run.

During the Strömstad meeting it was decided that the "Shellfish Journey" will be extended from a weekend to two weeks (covering three weekends). From the tourist board's point of view this decision is very positive in terms of destination development as more tourists will be attracted to the area during low season. It leads to an extended season for many tourism companies. During the first year event some tourists complained about the emptiness of the towns and that all shops were closed during Saturday afternoon and Sunday. The retailers in some towns have now decided to stay open over at least one weekend, which is an effect of the "Shellfish Journey".

To brand North Bohuslän with help of shellfish was perceived very positive. The stakeholders thought it was important to work with a long term branding strategy. They pointed out the fact that a brand cannot be built over night and that it has to be a recurring weekend, which the visitors can look forward to, talk about and build up expectations around.

New networks have been built within the municipalities across sectors. One of the stakeholders said "Now the retailers in the town have started to talk with the restaurants, hotels, and tourist attractions. This dialogue is the result of the "Shellfish Journey". It is really

needed for cooperation and long term strategies". New networks have also been created across municipalities – from North to South Bohuslän. Representatives from hotels, restaurants, shell fish distributors, tourist attractions, tourism organizations, municipalities have gathered to discuss issues concerning the Shellfish Journey and destination branding. Hotels in the region had met for the first time to discuss marketing strategies.

The communication platform and database (Basetool) has been developed and all the packages are communicated under the same brand "The Shellfish Journey" on a web site at www.westsweden.com. The layout has been developed, the communication has been coordinated and the design is much more professional compared to the first year event. It is living material and changes are done continuously with new packages, pictures, films and more. Also compared to the first year, more packages are focused on activities, which was one recommendation suggested in the report were the customers experiences were evaluated.

3.4.5. Analysis of the Shellfish Journey

The Swedish case demonstrates an event in its growth phase with a variety of arrangements. Initiators of the project were representatives from the academies together with one restaurant owner and one person from a local tourist office. They together decided to apply for money to do a preliminary study in spring 2008. The aim of the preliminary study was to develop a concept that could be turned into an action plan for how the organizations could work together under one brand to guarantee a high-quality culinary product using locally-sourced raw ingredients. The scheme itself was intended to be launched during the low season. One goal was to increase interest in visiting the region during the low tourist season.

In terms of stakeholders" roles, actors involved in the preliminary study were restaurant-owners, suppliers, representatives from tourist offices, the municipalities and the West Sweden Tourist Board, in addition to the shellfish academies themselves, who were the project owners. A steering group was formed with a project leader, a process manager (a researcher) and a project assistant. The project leader worked half time as a director for a tourist office and half time with the project. The other two in the steering group worked approximately three weeks each in the project.

Table 6. Analysis- the Shellfish journey

STAKEHOLDERS (local / non local) (public / private)	STORYTELLING PROCESS	OUTCOME OF STORYTELLING PROCESS (year 1, 2, 3…)	DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS
A *Stakeholders* Initiators were the academies, a restaurant owner and a person from a local tourist office. Owners were the academies. Working group included the academies, restaurant owners, tourist offices, suppliers, municipalities and a tourist board	A *Agenda setting* One overall theme A free selection of stories and participants Five target groups were selected	*Further concept development* Storyline and communicative strategies are to be developed Servicescape design should be discussed Number & type of storytellers/location providers should be elaborated on Packaging related to branding has to be in focus *Marketing output*	*Economic* Extended season Development of a destination brand *Socio-cultural* No employment during the first year Some training Image & identity building *Environmental* Strengthen / weaken / no change
B *Steering committee* A project leader, a process manager and a project assistant	B *Design of the storytelling concept* Companies could design their own servicescape. A logo was developed for the project. Market communication was steered from the working group No control of souvenirs	Earnings and number of guests have not been estimated. Good media coverage/attention *Inter-organisational outcome* Cooperation among the actors.	
C *Actors* Hotels, restaurants, tourist boats, service providers	C *Implementation* A Shellfish Journey was held during one weekend with 45 companies involved.	Knowledge & skills were transferred New networks were developed	

In summary, the working group assumed that there are good opportunities for creating new products and developing new seasons with the help of a shellfish theme. Contributing players believed that they are sitting on a unique resource that is currently not being fully exploited.

In terms of the storytelling process, the story or theme was discussed by the stakeholders

during two workshops. About 20 persons took part in each workshop. The process manager directed these so called café-workshops, i.e. group work with secretaries and rotating participants. This technique worked very well in this setting and all participants could easily follow the process and progress of the project. The process manager developed the concept "Shellfish Journey" based on the workshops. The concept was presented for all the stakeholders and it was decided to arrange the first "Shellfish Journey" during Halloween (30 Oct – 1 Nov) 2009. It was agreed upon that all activities and storytelling should be based on shellfish. How the storytelling was going to be carried out in detail was not discussed neither the overall strategies for storytelling connected to branding the destination.

The project leader contacted hotels, restaurants and other tourism organizations and asked if they were interested in participating in the "Shellfish Journey". The working group set the programme and made decisions concerning market communication. Everyone understood that the overall theme was shellfish but no overall storyline was developed. They were told to follow the concept (based on a shell fish dish) but they could tell their own story and adapt the concept to fit their products. The lack of overall strategies and storyline was a limitation. Also the project leader did not coach the participating actors in storytelling or told them the importance of working with storytelling in developing and communicating their own products. All companies where telling their stories without connections to each other and some did not relate to the academies. It was said that all participating companies should work with "their" academy and together telling stories about "their" shellfish. For instance restaurants in Lysekil, were the Mussel Academy is located should work closely with that particular academy.

In terms of outcome of the storytelling process is it necessary to have a developed storyline and communicative strategies. The same with the servicescape design. During the first year the companies were free to package in their ways if they followed the concept. However, packaging has to be discussed and controlled by the project leader and the main actors if the goal is to develop a destination brand. The layout has been developed, the market communication has been coordinated and the design is much more professional compared to the earlier event. However, nothing is said about souvenirs and how they can be related to storytelling of the event. Strategies are also lacking when it comes to the roles of the guides, e.g. at marine attractions and shellfish safaris. A strategy is e.g. needed about which stories to tell and the connection to the overall story.

Success factors for the first phases in the project were in particular the positive workshops where all companies and organizations could participate, learn and contribute. All actors were involved in knowledge transfer and the approach can be seen as "bottom up" where the project leader was a coordinator and not a director. The external researcher and the representative from the tourist board in west Sweden were seen as objective and inspiring resources and partners. The stakeholders got some training when participating in seminars and workshops, e.g. in image and network building. Valuable in this first initiating and development phases was the creation of new networks. The network was a result of inspiring persons, interesting discussions, short lectures, good atmosphere during meetings, a strong belief in the shellfish and the opportunity to work together in this project. The participants got motivated and convinced about that they could work in new ways and with some actors they before perceived as competitors.

In terms of destination development dimensions it has been decided that the "Shellfish Journey" will be extended from a weekend to ten days. This is very positive in terms of destination development and extension of the season. The "Shellfish Journey" is in October,

i.e. during the low season. The event leads to higher demand during October, usually a very slow moth for the tourism companies in the area. It means that more companies increase their opening time and extend their season.

When the first event took place it was important with an evaluation as it was of interest for many parties, like the one who has funded the project (EU and the municipalities), the actors themselves, the project participants as well as the academies. Two evaluations were carried out – one from the producers side (Forslund & Nilsson, 2010) and one from the consumers (Bui & Wrethagen, 2010).

The aim of the study from the producers" side was to find out whether there existed an interest among the producers to create a brand for the event "Shellfish Journey". The study was based on qualitative research. Twelve interviews were carried out with respondents involved in the project. The result showed that there is an interest among many of the organizations to stand behind the establishment of the brand and the particular use of storytelling in marketing. The actors meant that they have everything needed to create a brand around shellfish. They said that it will take time to build a brand but that they are prepared for that as they all share the interest for shellfish and like to extend the season in Bohuslän.

About storytelling; all agreed upon that the Bohuslän is the area which should be exposed. They looked at storytelling as a good tool for their market communication. They meant that branding through storytelling should be done by the project leader together with the various stakeholders involved. It was assumed that the brand building process will be spread over to the local population by word-of-mouth. The involvement of the local population is seen as very important for the reputation of the project. They are considered as the local ambassadors and have to be fully aware about the aim and goal of the project as well as the potential. The respondents pointed out that the process after the event should be focused on how to create the brand through storytelling. The project has only used "Shellfish Journey", which they thought is a bit difficult as it does not have to include a journey. It can, for the customer, only be a visit to a restaurant offering shellfish on the menu. The respondents meant that the name has to be discussed during the next phase of the project. Some of the actors were telling their stories but it was not done according to a plan. Neither was it coordinated by the project leader or between the stakeholders.

The aim of the study from the consumers" side was to investigate how participation in activities affects customer experience. A survey was carried out during the "Shellfish Journey" and the data was collected with help of a questionnaire. Also three personal interviews with customers of the "Shellfish Journey" were conducted.

The results point out that factors, such as personnel, other customers and the physical environment are of great importance in creating strong experiences of the "Shellfish Journey". The experience was evaluated differently by the customers, depending on whether they had participated in activities or not. Among those who participated in activities one hundred percent would consider returning and would also recommend the "Shellfish Journey" to others. Among the remaining customers who only enjoyed seafood meals in restaurants, not everyone would consider to return or recommend the tour to others. In this group 86 % would consider returning next year and 91% would recommend the tour to others.

The conclusion from the customer survey was that the customers who participated were satisfied and the ones who took part in activities where even more so. Those who participated in activities evaluated the "Shellfish Journey" with exclusively high grades.

Both evaluations pointed out the potential of shellfish and storytelling in branding the destination. The stakeholders liked to continue working in this project and the customers were very satisfied with the "Shellfish Journey". As activities were shown to be very important for high satisfaction, the "Shellfish Journey" should focus on offering more activities as well as encourage more people to come as it was shown that the interactions between customers are of great importance. Strategies around the name of the event and how storytelling should be implemented has to be developed for future events. The stakeholders think it is important to work with a long term strategy when developing the product, packaging with help of storytelling, communicating the offers, and building the brand.

Another positive effect is that the Shellfish Journey should be extended from North Bohuslän to also cover South Bohuslän. This means that the event being expanded considerably. Also the interest from companies to participate in the project has grown. According to the project leader, the participants are much more creative when putting together packages. They also work more in networks compared to the first year. It is an increased number of packages from various actors, some old and some new. It is an ongoing process with very creative participants. It is too early to say something about socio-cultural and environmental effects but the whole project is focused on tourism organizations and politicians with great interest. All stakeholders, actors and involved municipalities are aware of that this project can result in destination development in the long run. Leader Ranrike consider the "Shellfish Journey" as one of the most successful projects they have been financing.

3.5. The Finnish Case: The Neanderthal Family

Tourists to the municipality of Karijoki come to visit friends and relatives, and to experience local traditions and the countryside atmosphere. Kristiinankaupunki, one of the municipalities next to Karijoki, is proud of its authentic and picturesque wooden town, one of the best preserved in Scandinavia. Both municipalities, but especially Kristiinankaupunki, have well organized tourism industries, and the level of entrepreneurship is reasonably high. Tourism development in the area has though not accelerated as one could have expected and new projects have faltered. Therefore, new approaches to tourism development are of a particular interest.

The purpose of the Finnish case is to analyze the potential of storytelling as a mean for tourist destination development, and a source for innovations by answering the questions;

1) How do tourist actors understand a storytelling approach to destination development in general and the "the Neanderthal family" in particular? Can storytelling be used to develop the area around the Wolf Cave (i.e. the area that geographically belongs to the municipality of Kristiinankaupunki, but is owned by the municipality of Karijoki),
2) Which actors and what resources are decisive for a successful destination development based on a story,
3) How do the actors perceive themselves as a part of the story in terms of involvement, investments, and co-operation,
4) What possible problems do the actors recognize in this early phase of the process,
5) How should destination development based on a story be organized?

The research has mainly been carried out through 12 personal interviews and 6 telephone interviews with people working in different tourism related companies and organizations located in regions nearby the Wolf Cave. All these were in-depth, but this case does also

benefit from secondary data and field studies. The selection of the informants was determined by the objective to obtain an idea of the predominant perceptions among relevant actors.

Today no written stories exist about the people who lived in the Wolf Cave some 120.000 years ago, be it the Neanderthal people or not. This case study focuses on the start up-phase of a story based destination development process. The informants told us how they think a story of the Neanderthal family should be practiced. The Finnish case, The Neanderthal family, is not yet implemented. Consequently, research focus in this case study is put on the current situation and what is in the future.

3.5.1. Background and prerequisites

The potential to develop the Wolf Cave area, located on the border between the municipality of Kristiinankaupunki and Karijoki, by the means of storytelling was accentuated as a result of the excavations done in the area. Evidence show that people might have lived there during the last Pleistocene interglacial, findings which prove that the Wolf Cave is the oldest known human dwelling site in Northern Europe (www.susiluola.fi). The discovery of the pre-historic dwelling site has in the past benefited tourism in the area (Edén, 2001; Eskelinen, 2005). However, today the development has reached a phase of stagnation and one can conclude that tourism development has been weak during the last years.

The Wolf Cave is experienced by the informants as something with great possibilities, as the oldest dwelling place in North Europe (Hjörungdal, 2006). It is perceived as a very unique attraction that should be taken advantage of considering that the area does not have many other flagship alternatives. The nature area where the Wolf Cave is located is with its stone fields, rock formations and special plants also valued as something that clearly adds to the value of the destination.

Nevertheless, associations connected with the attraction are not unambiguous. Even if the destination in the first place is associated with opportunities, it is evident that the inconclusiveness with developing the attraction has fanned the emergence of emotions like frustration and disillusionment. That the history of the Wolf Cave is unclear to a certain degree and that the geologists still need to verify, by means of geological evidence, that Neanderthal people actually have lived there spreads a confusing message and triggers ambivalent feelings.

Furthermore, the lack of unambiguous evidence of the habitat of the Neanderthal people has caused fierce discussions between two camps, those who believe that the Neanderthal people have lived there and those who doubt. A majority of the actors in the region still believes in its potential, but sees the Wolf Cave concept as it is today, as insufficient. It is in general experienced as something that, in spite of the current problematic situation (lack of scientific proof), must be further developed.

The excavation of the cave (which has been known by the locals for decades) started in year 1997, but has now been on hold for many years due to lack of funding. The business sector realized its potential very soon and many of development projects for the area have been initiated. The sad story is that no break through projects with long term effects has been launched. Lack of coordination of activities has been presented as one of the main reason for the weak results (Eskelinen, 2005).

To use storytelling as a tool for destination development is according to the informants perceived as something positive and an approach that could be applied to the area. The benefit

of a storytelling approach is explained by its potential to awaken interest, as a topic to gather around, and its flexibility. It is also thought that a story linked to the cave would enhance the experience and strengthen the memory of the place. Especially the actors who work with storytelling themselves (e.g. through guiding) seem to have strongly internalized the value that comes with stories.

However, it is realized that developing a story requires a certain starting point, a good story as well as necessary resources, actors and structures. The ingredients of the story have to be well planned and the business aspect recognized. The informants, especially those in direct contact with the tourists, discuss the aspect of how to commercialize the story. Even the quality of a story is an issue for discussion and the business minded entrepreneurs have their opinion, i.e. a good story attracts visitors.

3.5.2 Organization and stakeholders

The development of the Wolf Cave area has been project driven as stated above. The first project was initiated in May 2001. A working group consisting of representatives from the municipalities of Kristiinankaupunki and Karijoki, National board of antiquities, Geological Survey of Finland, Ostrobothnian Museum, The Finnish Environment Institute, Kristiinankaupungin Matkailu (local tourism organization), Bothnia Tourism Association and Åbo Akademi University was founded. The project was managed by two project leaders representing the culture sector, and sponsored by the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia. The task of the appointed project secretary was to develop a strategic plan for the area. The plan, which was presented in December 2001, has not been put implemented as such. Only some of the action points listed have been realized (Edén, 2001).

A storytelling approach to destination development has to have a flat organization according to the informants interviewed. A project manager supported by a steering committee is recommended. The importance of inviting actors from different sectors in a private public network is stressed. The many interests have to be identified and respected. The idea of an open and dynamic innovation system presented by von Hippel (2005) seems to prevail. The list of actors to involve in the process of storytelling is long. Local school classes, professional and quasi-professional actors, design and multimedia actors, and the locals are actors listed in parallel to those classic ones, i.e. tourism actors, tourists, and governmental organizations. The municipality, the National Board of Antiquities and Historical Monuments, and the local tourism organization are also pointed out as critical actors to enrol in the project.

The municipality is considered to be an actor that would mainly support financially. The National Board of Antiquities and Historical Monuments possesses required knowledge, which makes it stand out as a potential advisor. The need of an actor, an outsider who contributes with new ways of thinking as well as owning an ability to motivate, is considered crucial. Furthermore, involvement of actors and experts from different cultural backgrounds is seen as significant. Suggestions for possible initiators for the project vary slightly. The municipality, the National Board of Antiquities and the local tourism organization are suggested as potential and essential initiators. When it comes to owning the story the interviewees have a couple of different opinions. Most actors believe that the financier should own the story. A few think an established board should, together with the project leader, decide over the ownership.

The concept to be developed for the Wolf Cave, The Neanderthal family, is to attract families. The package of services is recommended to be dynamic matching the needs and wants of different target groups. The question how to stage the story was approached by four sub-

questions, what, how, when and where. The extent of the development potential of the attraction holds different views. Actors in the tourism sector believe in a big outcome, meanwhile most public servants see a small scale development of the Wolf Cave as more realistic.

What kind of character should the story based on the Wolf Cave attraction have? That is to say the level of authenticity divides the respondents into two groups. One group claims that it should be only based on the actual background, i.e. history, while the other sees a possibility in mixing truthfulness with fiction. Valuing truthfulness seems to be a common view among the actors with scientific or municipal background, while entrepreneurs and actors working directly with tourism believe that truth and fiction can be complementary to each other.

The Neanderthal theme is clearly considered as a good option for the theme in the story. *How* it is executed is seen as something that should be adaptable to the audience. Most of the actors see most potential by developing one main story that could function as basis for sub-stories. This is seen as something that would enable adaptation according to the age of the visitors, length of stay and time of the year. Diversity of the story is something that the interviewed actors put great value on as well. A majority of the informants believes in execution of the story in a way that enables active participation of the visitor.

A majority of the informants consider summer, due to the distant location of the Wolf Cave, as the time *when* storytelling should be practiced. Opinions of *where* the story should be practiced (performed) are determined by the appreciation of value connected to the location. That the visitor physically can feel connected to the attraction is considered by many informants to add value to the story. Another group of informants say that it is more important with easy access than a visit to the real cave.

Offering packages consisting of different activities is believed to generate a substantial experience. Different tasks and workshops, hiking, theme days, walk tours, dinners, games and meeting services that are based on e.g. a Neanderthal theme are given as examples for activities the visitor could take part of. Furthermore, it is suggested that activities could be practiced through concepts like a Neanderthal trail, where the visitor would meet Neanderthal people on their way up to the actual Wolf Cave. A Neanderthal or Stone Age village is included in a more extended concept. The visitor could in this kind of setting try different activities like cooking, studying plants, producing hunting tools or own souvenirs and other workshops related to the Neanderthal theme. Visitors could be activated through drama, e.g. given tasks to act and dress according to the theme as well. A majority sees the Wolf Cave mainly as a daytrip destination and therefore does not see accommodation in the area as a necessity. Only two informants prefer storytelling through development of traditional exhibitions, where the visitor experiences the story from "outside". Additionally, comprehensive packages combining the Wolf Cave with other attractions in the region gathers support among some actors.

Development of a brand based on the Wolf Cave is thought to work only for areas nearby. That the identity of the inhabitants would be influenced of the development of the Wolf Cave is experienced as far-fetched. Informants rather attach such sentiments to the wooden house town in Kristiinankaupunki.

3.5.3. Storytelling practice

The Wolf Cave and the nearby area discussed in terms of a story about a Neanderthal family is framed by the informants as an experiencescape brought to life by the principles of

dramaturgy. The family life of the Neanderthal people would be the storyline that permeates all activities linked to the concept. Visitors to the area would in an edutainment context learn and experience the life of the Neanderthal people. A majority of the informants find it beneficial to develop one main story that is adaptable to different customer segments as well as seasons. A main story could be further developed into sub-stories interlinked to the main story. This would make the story experience versatile.

The development pace caused some discussions and two different opinions were presented. The slow-growth alternative is a development based on existing and local resources. The other alternative is more radical, and advocates a fast growth strategy based on venture capital. The project is still in its early development phase. Therefore it is important to critically asses what is needed for the project to take the next step.

Enthusiastic people who believe in the project are needed because the barriers are many and sometimes hard to overcome. No investments, an out-dated exhibition, lack of active leadership and financing, few accommodations, controversial evidence and, for the time being, unfinished excavation are just some of the obstacles that have to be managed. The Wolf Cave is not the hot topic as it was just a few years ago, which means diminished publicity and general interests.

The negative attitudes that can be found in some actor groups have to be discussed and sorted out. An open communication is considered as the best way to convert those who are sceptical to the project. The fact that the knowledge of using storytelling as a tool for destination development is limited is seen as a challenge as well. To find suitable storytellers can emerge as problematic. However, storytelling demands a number of supportive elements that together form a facilitating foundation. Multidisciplinary cooperation and finding suitable actors with the required knowledge is in this case a necessity in order to develop the destination through storytelling.

3.5.4. Analysis of the Neanderthal family

The idea of creating a story about the Neanderthal people to capitalize on has been around for some years but not implemented. This research project enabled us to unpack the inner thoughts of central tourism actors, what they think about a storytelling approach as such and how to organize for a destination development. This is a case analyzing a destination in its early development phase. The analysis will follow the structure of Table 7, and focus on stakeholders, processes and outcomes.

Table 7. Analysis – the Neanderthal Family

STAKEHOLDERS (local / non local) (public / private)	STORYTELLING PROCESS	OUTCOME OF STORYTELLING PROCESS (year 1, 2, 3…)	DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS
A *Stakeholders* Tourist firms Tourist office Tourism organizations Ministry of Education and Culture Ministry of the Environment National Board of Antiquities	A *Agenda setting* Decide on the theme of the story Decide on organizational structure Involve central actors Distribute responsibility and decide on ownership Harness financial issues	*Further concept development* Concept development *Marketing output* Media attention To create "buzz"	*Economic & Socio-cultural* Retain or increase the number of work places, sustainable business, community development
B *Steering committee* Project leader Committee consisting of people representing different interests	B *Design of the storytelling concept* Conceptualize the storytelling approach by focus on servicescape design, packaging, and market communication	*Inter-organisational outcome* Network of actors	
C *Actors* Service providers Guides Theatre Volunteers	C *Implementation* Implementing the story The question of where to stage the story is an issue. Actors to involve is an open issue		

A network approach to destination development is advocated by the stakeholders. The basic fundament for a successful destination development is a multi-level – multi-actor tourism structure (Björk & Virtanen, 2005). The local tourism actors look at their own interests, but do also recognize the importance of cooperation. Knowledge about excavations (of the Wolf Cave) and historic expertise have to be imported to the region. Friction-free co-operation based on transparent communication is considered as a prerequisite of successful amalgamation of different service (and actors). There is a recommendation that development projects should have a set of prime movers at the core, i.e. a group of self-selected enthusiasts. This group has to work without prejudices and invite other actors on demand. The emerging network has to be dynamic. Exactly who to invite and include to the core was an issue for discussion. However, the most central aspect was that the core has to be trusted, harness the strategic issues, and manage to inspire other actors. The question of formal versus informal relationships was not explicitly discussed but the implicit meaning was that the project should

be an interest to a degree that attracts and keeps the actors together.

The unique nature of the area as a pre-historic dwelling site requires a certain public involvement, in this case specified to the Ministry of Education and Culture, and National Board of Antiquities. The Ministry of Environment does also pay an interest in the area due to its status as one of Finland"s 35 National Parks. Another aspect that calls for public interference is the fact that the Wolf Cave belongs to the municipality of Kristiinankaupunki, but the land is owned by the municipality of Karijoki. The tussle between the two municipalities has caused some problems in the area. Joint efforts to merge resources and develop the area have most often come to nothing. Recommended organizational structures of story based development projects is flat, lead by a project manager, supported by a steering committee, and dynamic to maintain a certain level of flexibility. One of the misgivings discussed in relation to organization was to find a suitable manager. There are, as discussed, both benefits and disadvantages to appoint a leader from the area. Local participation is deemed to be one, if not the most important, success facilitating factor. The confidence in the storytelling approach is high on the condition that all the many different aspects which can be linked to a project can be arranged.

The storytelling process, and its success, is inherently linked to two related aspects, organization and knowledge transfer. A coherent concept based on a story is deemed conditioned by 1) organization and 2) liability. The many types of actors, the great variety of resources, and the multitude of relations has to be seamlessly coordinated. An owner of the story has to be defined. This actor or organization has to take on the strategic responsibility, and cater for the story so it will come to life. The development of the story requires involvement of a number of actors representing different backgrounds. The Tourist information, Finnish Forest and Park Service (Metsähallitus), Ministries, Universities, landowners and actors who are active in the Bötom district like the guide center, Länken Ski and the restaurant keeper of Lokalgrottan are all potential participators in the project.

The question how to design the servicescape and how to integrate various services generated different thoughts. One approach was to just focus on the cave, the nature and the remains from the inter-glacier era. The development of mankind, based on verified facts, would be the story presented in a visitor center. Those who think facts and fiction can be merged and stress the aspects of co-created experiences enlarge the scope of the storytelling approach (Björk & Sfandla, 2009). The aspect of customer immersion and inviting local people at large to be a part of the story is thus much more relevant. Diverging opinions on many central issues are problematic, even in this case. The location of the main stage, where to tell the story, caused intense discussions for example.

The outcome of a storytelling approach is discussed on two levels. The long term sustainability dimension pointed out focus on the region and how to keep peripheral areas alive and counteract depopulation of the countryside. Short term outcomes discussed by the informants focus on the good things with networks, increased media attention, public interest, and visitors year-round.

3.6. Comparison across cases

The five Nordic cases analyzed tell of storytelling projects in different stages of implementation. Thus the Finnish case shows a project in its initial phases, making manifest

the expectations stakeholders hold towards the project development. The Swedish case tells of a project that is under way and thus gives an indication of the initial hurdles storytelling and destination development might face. In the last instance the Icelandic, Norwegian and Danish cases tell of established projects faced with prospects of consolidation and/or expansion and thus give an indication of problems encountered in latter development phases.

All five cases are based on location specific stories with many qualities. The Settlement Centre of Iceland revolves around the story of the Vikings, Iceland"s first poet Egill Skallagrimsson, and unique literary treasures. A unique cultural heritage including a high concentration of preserved wooden buildings from the Middle Ages in the area of Numedal is the platform for the annual Norwegian Medieval Week. Amazing artefacts found in the Wolf Cave in Ostrobothnia, Finland, indicate that Neanderthal people might have lived as far north as Finland, and the Neanderthal family story is based on these findings. The Danish case picks up local stories to be packaged into a destination journey around Limfjorden. The shellfish journey case of Sweden is based on shellfish and shellfish dishes, and how five different academies in different municipalities managed to develop a unique weekend package.

Subsequently, a cross-case analysis is provided which scrutinises the possibilities and drawbacks of using storytelling as a means of developing and marketing Nordic tourism destinations. Factors that seem to drive success and lessons learned are addressed in particular.

The stakeholders and stakeholder structure of the five cases identify the importance of involving people with strong entrepreneurial spirit, especially in the start-up phase. The Settlement Centre of Iceland is in the hands of a thespian couple from Reykjavik. The Finnish case, which is not implemented yet, is driven by a handful of enthusiasts representing different business sectors and organizations. The Swedish case, the shellfish journey, was formalised as an EU project with a larger set of actors, however, it was the shellfish academies and a restaurant owner who wanted to safeguard their local traditions that took the initiative for the project. The Medieval Week in Numedal, Norway also has its roots in local initiatives. A similar structure is found in the Danish case, The Tales of Limfjorden, each of the 34 different stories have been told by the local people long before the Tales of Limfjorden product was designed.

Public-private cooperation is characteristic of all the cases, however, the storytelling networks that apply a flat structure seem to be the most successful in achieving close public-private cooperation and stakeholder ownership for the common storytelling effort. The importance of a steering committee that is based on broad stakeholder representation (i.e. public tourism organisations, private tourism and service providers, storytelling locations and storytellers) cannot be overemphasized as it facilitates two-way communication and knowledge sharing vertically between the strategic/tactical and operational levels of the network and horizontally between for instance the storytellers. Hence double-loop learning processes are likely to materialise. Especially the Swedish and Icelandic cases are discussed in terms of concept and geographical expansion.

The private-public relationship is also important in terms of financial issues. The Swedish case was initially supported by EU-money, and the Settlement Centre in Iceland is striving to maintain a subsidy from the state. The Finnish case lacks venture capital, which is one of the reasons why the starting date has been postponed. The Medieval Week in Norway is financed by the three Numedal municipalities and the county, and the input of public funding in the

Danish case is also decisive for its survival.

The five cases also demonstrate the importance of applying a cross-sector approach to destination-wide storytelling initiatives. In addition to all the stakeholders working in the tourism sector, artists, technicians, laboratory workers, archaeologists, musicians, and students can be added to the network. A storytelling approach to destination development is presented as an open system, which implies flexibility to involving a large set of stakeholders. The importance of volunteers should not be neglected, who through their knowledge, interest and drive are most critical for the whole storytelling approach. The input of volunteers is not restricted to just one development phase, but is critical throughout the project.

The storytelling process is resource-driven in all five cases. Nature, cultural, historical and religious resources are identified, refined, upgraded, packaged and put on the market. The storyscape is a heterogeneous mix of actors and activities often on a well-orchestrated stage, which may also include the latest communicative technology to heighten the experience. In all cases customer involvement and their active co-creation of experiences exists. However, each case involves its customers in different ways, as they target different type of customers and the skills of the storytellers vary.

The five cases aim to encompass an extensive geographical region. The 34 stories of the Tales of Limfjorden are spread out around the area of Limfjorden. In Iceland the Borgarfjörður region is the focus. The Swedish case includes municipalities in both South and North Bohuslän, the Medieval Week in Norway involves three and the Finnish case two municipalities. These geographical regions are gathered under one or several themes – in the Danish case five, the Icelandic case two, and Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish cases one theme each - and it appears that fewer themes, preferably one, strengthen the storytelling product as this facilitates a clearer message across locations and stakeholders.

Across the cases the story is the source of inspiration for the storytellers, and a common story to be identified by the visitors is a minimum criterion, even if the set of actors is mostly heterogeneous. This is taken care of in all cases by appointed steering committees which also take on the responsibility for presenting guidelines to be followed by actors involved in the storytelling network. The extent to which these guidelines work towards establishing an overall story for the destination, however, vary across the five cases, and this, furthermore, means that the destination development potential of a storytelling approach is not equally realised across the cases.

Activities used to make the story alive and invite visitors to be active in the five cases are exhibitions, showrooms, courses, lectures, guided tours, drama, role play, treasure hunt, safaris, and barbeques, to mention just a few. The extents to which dramaturgical principles are used vary across the cases and seem to be the consequence of the skills of the individual storyteller or destination manager. More resources could be used on strengthening the storytellers" expertise within dramaturgy.

The outcome of storytelling is measured on three levels: concept development, marketing, and inter-organizational activities. The dynamic characteristic of the storytelling approach to destination development is identified in all cases, except for the Finnish one, which has not yet been launched. The composition of the actors invited into and involved in the project advance from one year to another, as a result of a development in which servicescape design, conceptualization, and packaging can be infused. The marketing activities in use are

unsurprising. Brochures, advertising, and websites are used as communication tools to attract more visitors to the region. One can in this respect notice the positive feedback on the Basetool platform, which was used in the Swedish case for interaction and communication. Furthermore, increased word-of-mouth, more solidarity among different actors (and destinations), and knowledge transfer can be put on the list of positive outcomes in some of the Nordic cases, whereas other cases are less successful in achieving these inter-organisational benefits.

Destination development based on a storytelling approach revolves around new ventures, seasonality extensions, geographical expansion, destination branding, as well as local identity reinforcement. All five cases demonstrate the potential for destination development through a storytelling approach, however, this potential is not fully realised in the cases yet. The shellfish journey in Sweden can, for example, be the branding platform for Bohuslän. The region of The Settlement Centre of Iceland is starting to become known for its destinations drawing on the sagas and folklore. The tourist product The Tales of Limfjorden in Denmark can be a central instrument in developing the destination of Limfjorden but is not so yet. The Medieval Week in Numedal unites three municipalities and aims at both profiling Numedal and strengthening local identity. To evaluate the effects of a storytelling approach on destination development in the Finnish case is premature. However, one can claim that merely discussing this novel approach to destination development infused hope among the actors involved in the Neanderthal family case.

Destination development is demonstrated to be a complex issue, and the positive effects of using a storytelling approach do not come automatically. What seems to be of the utmost importance in the process of applying a storytelling approach to destination development is, vertical and horizontal communication, co-ordination and management. The catchwords identified in this process are professionalism and clear guidelines. The history of the up and running cases analyzed in this project proves that trial and error projects initiated by a few enthusiasts have to be upgraded. Resources to employ competent people in the projects have to be tapped into. Destination development cannot solely be based on voluntary work even if storytelling is inspiring and revitalizes a lot of latent resources.

4. Conclusions

4.1. Theoretical concepts revisited

The theoretical framework developed for this study has been substantiated through the five cases analyzed above. In this final chapter we will draw out the central issues identified and their implication for the Nordic tourism industry in particular and the society at large.

The main feature identified in the analysis is the network of central stakeholders in each case and their interactional dynamics. It seems that the right casting of stakeholders cannot be neglected as a success factor for the whole storytelling process. The role of strong entrepreneurial leadership seems clear from the cases presented. Still, storytelling and destination development is not a "one man show", but an outcome of different types of stakeholders interacting, of which the private – public dimension is decisive for success. Reflecting this, profit oriented companies operated by destination entrepreneurs have been analyzed as well as public actors representing the common interest of the society at large. To understand the interactions unfolding within the public and the private realms, we propose the three level structure (agenda setting, design and implementation) of the theoretical

framework, which seems to successfully capture how stakeholders interact in a Nordic context. Broad stakeholder inclusion in all phases seems decisive for ensuring commitment to a storytelling approach, and here the destination management organisation (DMO) has a particular central role to play in facilitating both active and long-term collaborative linkages.

The outcome of these dynamics is approached in the model through two scales of analysis. Firstly, on a micro scale, i.e. understanding outputs for those directly or indirectly involved in the storytelling approach, what we term business implications below. Secondly, the macro scale, i.e. understanding the outcomes in terms of the destination community at large, what we call society implications below.

It has been instructive to follow the discussion and notice how most stakeholders contribute to the process and how they can benefit from being involved. Still, or because of that, there is a need to emphasise the importance of a coherent storyline which a broad range of tourism stakeholders across individual interests can buy into and hence feel committed to implement and develop further.

Below we sum up the conclusions focusing on business and society implications.

4.2. Business implications

The NICe project shows:

- Businesses and destinations which have applied storytelling in the Nordic context are of value and interest to other Nordic tourism enterprises. The cases presented and the detailed country reports behind each can provide ample input for storytelling approaches elsewhere.

- How storytelling can be used to unleash hitherto unexplored potentials of destinations and tourism regions. A destination simply involves the host community in all its industry, activity and history. A myriad of stories can be found in each case and the five cases present different ways in which tourism stakeholders draw on these to create successful businesses and/or events.

- How storytelling can involve and create networks between organizations across sectors. Due to the imbrications of tourism and the host community in all its complexity, the telling of a story necessarily involves linking together hitherto disparate aspects of each destination, many of which on first impression bear no relation to tourism.

- How the work can be done (organizational processes and procedures). The cases demonstrate how to set up organizations and procedures to ensure destination development in line with the storytelling initiative. The importance of a joint platform of communication and consensus building, involving tourism stakeholders from all levels of the industry, cannot be over emphasised.

- How different techniques can be applied to storytelling development. The cases share an emphasis on highly engaging execution of storytelling, involving storytellers who use various dramaturgical principles and seek to involve the customer.

Most Nordic tourism ventures are small and have limited capacity to move beyond their day-to-day operating environments. Recognising the potential of networking and the critical capacity possible through consensus building, the storytelling model developed in this

research project has at least four distinct implications for the Nordic tourism sector;

1. The reorientation of existing resources and the possible enhancement of productivity on a company level resulting from that,
2. The establishment of new network systems (structures) is explicated and untapped regional potentials identified,
3. New innovations are advanced, and
4. New ways of interactive cooperation and communication with researchers in a mutual learning process are developed.

4.3. Society implications

The context of a story is unlimited. Stakeholders and activities previously not involved in tourism can suddenly become involved in a story. The potential for community involvement is seemingly far greater than in standard tourism products as the stories being told can be of a variety of origin, but more often than not tapping into local resources. In this sense modern art practices, local histories and traditions can act as a way of framing a destination, or telling its story. Folklore and myth is already being used in often innovative ways, but these can be enhanced through demonstrating links with modern day stories being told, involving the local community to a larger extent.

The five selected cases are all built on location-based stories, and many of them have received a lot of media attention. The power of attraction depends on the stories which make it difficult for others to copy. A way to gauge the potential of a story telling destination is its capacity to redress the seasonality problem traditionally faced by Nordic tourism enterprises, as most of them build their attractions on nature in summer. The Swedish and Icelandic examples have both shown how demand and visitation in the storytelling destination has grown with the success of the storytelling initiative in the off-season. Positive economic effects on society can be found with more companies involved in the tourism industry, more tourists visiting the area, new products being developed and offered, more cooperation between companies and involvement from the local population and cultural institutions.

The storytelling efforts contribute to society in mostly two of three ways. Following the framing of sustainable tourism development with focus on the economic, socio-cultural and environmental, the storytelling efforts primarily contribute in the economic and cultural sense:

Economy

- Packaging regional industries other that tourism and local resources in competitive and new ways, tapping into the dynamics and potential of the experience economy.

- Redressing the traditional spatio-temporal concentration of Nordic tourism enterprises

- Facilitating branding and destination marketing strategies through the establishment of a coherent story

Culture and society

- Strengthening the identity of a destination

- Facilitating coherence and inclusiveness

- Generating employment through extending the tourism season

Environment

- An integral part of the success of a story is often the preservation of certain environments be they of cultural or ecological significance. The maintenance of a story may contribute to environmental conservation and protection.

The key conclusion, and the one the cases seem to substantiate, is the way in which stories can tap into local resources and provide a foundation upon which a networking platform for regional tourism enterprises can be built. Thus a storytelling approach has the potential to contribute to destination development through facilitating collaboration on culturally sustainable grounds.

All in all, this project has developed a tentative pan-Nordic template for ways in which storytelling can „bundle" destinations, however, more work is needed to nuance our understanding of storytelling as a means of destination development. Not least customer perspectives on what constitutes good storytelling would be a valuable input for future development of storytelling approaches at destination level.

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Useful websites:

www.susiluola.fi

www.visitlimfjorden.com

www.westsweden.com

www.west.is

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Nordic Innovation Centre

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