

ABSTRACT

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The mandatory participation in the planning process as an experience?

In the preamble of the Danish Planning Act one of five stated objectives is to involve the general public to the greatest extent possible. Hence it is mandatory for the authorities to bring forth any propositions for plans for at least eight before finally enacting the plans. The design of this process can vary from more or less anonymous announcements in the newspaper to big public events.

The planning process often offers a schism between the city planners, who wants to discuss future possible plans for an area, and citizens who protest against the project, or details in the project, according to the NIMBY-discussion (Not In My BackYard).

A recent survey carried out by Aalborg University showed that approximately 10 percent of the latest 296 proposals of urban plans have had some kind of supplementary public hearing or event. Not an optimal number, but still showing that the municipalities do not ignore their responsibility according to the preamble of the Planning Act. The survey also showed a picture of the citizens' reason to be involved in the process: No less than 3.200 persons and organisations made comments to or protests against the plans - ranging from massive protests to pointing out minor typing errors.

There is a need to get people involved in a constructive dialog in order to avoid the large number of protests. Several cities have begun to work with various forms of "events" in connections with planning of new urban areas, but the events seems scattered, and they do not seems to be intended at reducing the number of protest, nor as a result of a experience economy strategy.

This article aims at exploring the notion of Experience Economy as an enabler for the public involvement in the planning process. By merging the ideas of experience economy with the mandatory participation there seems to be an added value in form of both enhanced focus on the hearing periods and in form of branding of the city. A third component in this value chain is the cultural in heritage. The article explores the coherence between experience economy and the cultural in heritage and also whether the cultural in heritage can be used as an enabler for public participation and again also as an enabler for the cities experience economy.