

ABSTRACT

Hugues Jeannerat and Olivier Crevoisier, HCU Hamburg and University of Neuchâtel

Experiential value and territorial staging systems

The rise of the 'Experience Economy' described by Pine and Gilmore (1999) points to the development of a particular form of economic valuation. It reflects a particular social order of market organised around 'experiential quality conventions' whereby consumer's experience becomes a commercialised output. In this view, the experience is regarded as an end product and as what is charged for.

This conceptual approach undeniably provides a pertinent framework to understand the increased economic value made out of leisure, entertainment and hedonistic consumption. However, considering consumer's experiences only as a market output may lead to a too exclusive and partial understanding of today's economic processes. In a number of situations, the experiential engagement of consumers is also a resource - or a market input - that contributes to the valuation of goods or services within the commodity chain and to the establishment of various quality conventions.

This contribution seeks to provide a broadened reflexion on the place of experience 'staging' within economic processes. A stage is regarded as a particular locus where production resources become experiential resources through a particular stage setting and where consumption resources become economic resources through an experiential engagement. The concept of 'territorial staging system' is proposed to emphasise how various stages are contextualised across time and space according to particular forms of quality conventions.

The cases of fine watchmaking, of solar technologies and of sustainable finance in western Switzerland are used to illustrate three particular territorial staging systems. In the former case, experiential engagement contributes to co-create and legitimate conventions of authenticity in the valuation of watches. In the case of solar technologies, conventions of sustainability thanks to technology link producers, users and media in staged experiences of testing or using new, cleaner technologies. In sustainable finance, conventions of responsible commitment contribute, at the level of the industry, to restore the image of the industry.