RURAL AUTHENTICITY AND AGENCY ON A COLD-WATER ISLAND

Perspectives of contemporary craft-artists on Bornholm, Denmark

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ABSTRACT: Bornholm, Denmark is a small, cold-water island home to a cluster of craft-artists whose practices and ambitions contribute to the idyllic rural image of the island. These craft-artists formed an association in the wake of rural tourism development and its process of commercialisation to preserve values of professionalism, quality and rural authenticity in their crafts. This article discusses how the high standards of quality in their association gives them agency to define their interactions with tourists in a way to simultaneously preserve their artistic integrity and make profit from their industry. These actors thereby harness tourism to their advantage, contributing to the redefinition of their island's rural authenticity. During two periods of fieldwork on Bornholm, 19 local craft-artists were interviewed and participant observations were carried out. This article provides insight into aspects of perceived spatial identity and agency in the context of cold-water islands with rural landscapes.

KEYWORDS: Craft-art, Bornholm, rural tourism, authenticity, agency, social capital, countryside

Introduction

Baldacchino (2006a, 2006b) observed cold-water island destinations to be characterised by spectacular and pristine nature auspicious to exploration and by low numbers of inhabitants who have kept aspects of their cultural traditions alive in their peripheral location. This contrasts to warm-water islands where often rapid tourism development ends up undermining local environments and traditions, encouraging tourists to enjoy a standardised holiday in the sun (Baldacchino, 2006ab, Butler, 2006: Dann, 2006). The dynamics of tourism on cold-water islands tend to operate in relation to myths of cultural experiences, adventures and discoveries in line with idyllic conceptions of rural landscapes. Rural landscapes are themselves the result of interplay between various images, discourses, localities and practices diffused and consumed through rural tourism development (Daugstad and Kirchengast, 2013; Frisvoll, 2013). The commodification of rural elements is thus central to tourism on some cold-water islands, which in itself challenges the possibility of an authentic experience as rurality is staged, packaged and sold to please tourists in search of the idyllic countryside (Kneafsey, 2001; Sims, 2009).

Croes, Hyun and Olsen (2013) argued that most studies discussing the dynamics of authenticity and tourism on small islands neglect the role of local stakeholders in

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negotiating the perceived spatial identity. In this article, I examine the contribution of a local stakeholder group in re-creating some aspects of the rural idyll in the products and interactions its members have with tourists on a northern European island. This process is described through the work of rural geographer Michael Woods (2009; 2007) who saw the countryside as the result of local and extra-local networks, and through the application of the concept of social capital (Aldrich, 2012; Hopkins and Becken, 2014; Lesser, 2000). This study therefore follows in the footsteps of scholars claiming that local actors can modulate the outcomes of tourism to preserve varying degrees of cultural distinction, and form new positive identities in the wake of global changes (Amoamo, 2011; Ateljevic, 2000; Oakes, 1999; Sue and Teo, 2008; Tucker, 2003). By doing so, this article contributes some insight into the concepts of perceived spatial identity and agency in the context of cold-water islands with rural landscapes.

Small islands in the northern European context are often characterised by rural landscapes. One can think of the Shetland Islands in Scotland, the Isle of Man in Britain, and Gotland in Sweden to be reminded of idyllic nature and traditions. Bornholm, Denmark, with its picturesque fishing villages, sandy beaches and other preserved natural areas, is one such island which represents for many of its visitors simple living and family vacation (Larsen, 2006)(see Figures 2 and 3). Located in the Baltic Sea (Figure 1), the island, with its population of 39,829 permanent residents (Statistics Denmark, 2016), hosts around 750,000 tourists during its summer tourist season (Larsen and Rømer, 2013). These tourists are mostly Danes and Germans, staying over in hotels and campgrounds, and often returning every summer holiday to its coastal towns. When its fishing industry began collapsing in the 1970s, coming to a stop in the 1990s, Bornholm underwent major economic restructuring. Several European and national programs were implemented to counter the island's collapsed economy, many of which aimed at boosting the tourism industry (Ioannides and Petersen, 2001; 2003). The restructuring stimulated the development of various micro-businesses involved mostly with specialised foods, hospitality and handcrafts, which now characterise Bornholm's economy and destination brand (Ioannides and Petersen, 2001; 2003; Manniche and Larsen, 2013).

In the early 2000s the development of the arts and craft cluster garnered attention from local politicians who were seeking to boost tourism on Bornholm by branding the Hasle municipality as a center for craft-art. This sparked the grassroots formation in 2002 of the Arts and Crafts Association Bornholm (ACAB).[1] This association comprises ceramists, glass-makers and -designers, textile and knitwear designers, woodworkers, jewelers and potters who, through professional training, can be argued to have elevated their craftwork to the status of art. The position of their medium as craft and art at the same time complicates a clear definition of the term craft-art. The craft aspect positions their work as made for everyday use and sold on the marketplace, while the art aspect implies a distinct individuality disinterested in pleasing the masses (Alexander, 2003). The interrelation of these two worlds during Bornholm's tourist season inevitably becomes a theme of this article. Importantly, ACAB membership is based on a selection process in order to keep high quality standards of artistic professionalism within the group and exclusivity to craft-artists established permanently on Bornholm. The ACAB is meant to provide a competitive advantage to its members on the international craft scene and during their island's intensive tourist season by enabling them to pool resources as they seek to profit economically and develop an artistic identity.

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[1] See Arts and Crafts Association Bornholm website: http://www.acab.dk/en

The focus of this article is on how the craft-artists part of this cluster use concepts of Bornholm as idyllic, friendly and traditional to their advantage as they seek to gain from tourism development on their island, yet preserve their professional artistic interests, through collective and individual strategies. Through 19 qualitative interviews with ACAB craft-artists and participant observations on the island, I demonstrate that these craft-artists use the standards of quality in their association to negotiate the meaning of their encounters with tourists in search for rural authenticity on Bornholm. These rural actors therefore contribute to the construction of an image of the countryside that works to confirm a perceived rural idyll.

Figure 1 – Bornholm's position in the Southern Baltic and locations of its main towns (source: GraphicMaps)

Rural Authenticity and Agency

There are many physical elements contributing to the materiality of rural spaces: natural resources, low population density, agricultural patterns, food production and recreational infrastructure, just to name a few. It is important to remember that rural spaces are nonetheless also imagined entities, taking shape through particular discourses of rurality produced, reproduced and contested by the media, policy-makers, academics, lobby groups and the general public (Cloke, 1994; Halfacree, 2006; Mormont, 1990). These images can diffuse impressions of a playground and ideal living space (Baylina and Berg, 2010; Short, 2006), an under-developed space in need of economic growth (Philips, 2007), the theatre of resource extraction (Desbiens, 2013) and a space exclusive to certain social groups (Belle and Valentine, 1995; Neal and Agyeman, 2006). One of the most powerful and enduring image of the rural space in the European context is the rural idyll, implying a

space of peace, spirituality and tranquility, often referred to as the countryside, in opposition to the fast-pace of the city (Avraham, 2003; Baylina and Berg, 2010; Bunce, 2003; Jepson and Sharpley, 2015; Shields, 1991; Short, 2006). Cold-water islands, especially in the northern European context discussed here, are well-known to exude, to varying degrees, idyllic notions of escape from city life (Baldacchino, 2006a, 2006b) and, as such, the type of tourism some of them foster can be described and analyzed through the concept of rural tourism. Rural tourism is usually defined as functionally rural, exhibiting small-scale enterprises, traditional social structures and ways of living, agrarian economies and non-urban settings (Lane, 2009). The rural idyll is significant to rural tourism as the latter is based in signs and symbols related to particular traditional practices, products and lifestyles embedded within rural places (Ray, 1998; Kneafsey, 2001).

Rural spaces have increasingly become spaces of consumption in the European context with the decline of primary and secondary economic activities, and the simultaneous growing interest in rural tourism (Kneafsey, 2001; Sharpley, 2004). Policymakers in peripheral places like Bornholm often consider rural tourism to offer a realistic alternative to their ailing economies, trusting that the development of tourism activities and infrastructure will fill what is perceived as an economic void (Cawley and Gilmore, 2008; Ioannides and Petersen, 2003; 2001; Lane, 2009). Accordingly, it has become a significant field of interest in tourism research to gain insight on the structures and potential of rural tourism to generate development in regions impacted by economic restructuring (see for instance: Saxena and Ilbery, 2010; Saxena, Clark, Oliver and Ilbery, 2007; Oliver and Jenkins, 2003). The peripheral nature of some rural areas does not make things easier. In the case of cold-water islands, Ioannides and Petersen (2001) explain that the problem of fostering tourism is amplified as climatic conditions, seasonality, lack of tourist infrastructure and challenging accessibility often restrict tourism development. Attracting tourists to rural areas thereby become a significant and complex challenge.

Artisanal and traditional localised modes of production of goods are key elements of rural tourism, attracting tourists who are searching for consumption choices more sensitive to cultural and environmental preservation (Daugstad, 2008; Everett, 2012; Murray and Kline, 2015; Sims, 2009). Mitchell (1998) argued that the production and consumption of rural good and services stems from the reproduction of images of escape from modern life that entice city people to get closer to the products and techniques of a land which they feel alienated from. The countryside is ultimately commodified through the actions of diverse stakeholders diffusing idyllic images and staged experiences for the purpose of consumption (Daugstad and Kirchengast, 2013; Frisvoll, 2013). Accordingly, Halfacree (2006) concedes that rural spaces are simultaneously imagined, material and practiced. The locality, its representations in outlets such as the media and political discourses, and the everyday lives of its inhabitants are all interlinked in the emergence of rural spaces (Halfacree, 2006). Importantly, as Kneafsey (2001) highlights, local residents take part in the process of imagining, representing and commodifying the countryside, and thus it is relevant to study the layers of social formation that make up a particular place to understand how it becomes a site for rural tourism.

Questions pertaining to the construction of the rural idyll relate to the identification of rural authenticity during the tourist experience (Frisvoll, 2013). Tourist scholars have long rejected the idea that in, a globalised world, objective authenticity of the type MacCannell (1976) and Boorstin (1961) spoke of could be found anywhere in particular during the tourist experience (Zhu, 2012). Wang's work on authenticity (1999) is well known, proposing the notion of existential authenticity, where authenticity lies within the one

who experiences a place and its culture. In this regard, engaging in non-ordinary activities and interacting with new cultures is in itself part of the process of authentication for the tourist (Cohen and Cohen, 2012; Wang, 1999). As Cohen (2002) argued, the focus of authenticity is less problematic when it relies on the multiple meaning the tourists assign to their experiences. When encounters with objects and humans in tourist spaces are conceptualised as activities or interpersonal relations, rather than mere sightseeing, authenticity resides in the performativity of tourism (Zhu, 2012). Along the same lines, Rickly-Boyd (2012) talks about an 'aura' to define a type of authenticity that interlinks artefact, practice, experience and meaning. Other scholars have defined authenticity as something negotiated, where it is institutionalised through the power, practices, traditions and knowledge of various actors (Wall and Xie, 2005; Xie, 2011).

These definitions of authenticity are useful for analysis but Frisvoll (2013) warns that any conception of authenticity in rural tourism needs to consider the locality, ideas and practices that fashion the countryside itself. Without such attention, Frisvoll believes, the researcher can reproduce problematic cultural myths of the countryside as a bastion of idyllic authenticity. Tourism is part of a bigger phenomenon involving local actors with multiple other places around the world in various ways. A dynamic conception of the rural idyll is important in rural tourism as the countryside is formed through extra-local relations that preclude any idea of an idyllic and authentic countryside. Woods (2007, 2009) proposed the idea of a global countryside to explain the multiple relations that tie rural places to extra-local discourses and structures. Inspired by Massey's (2005) relational approach to space, Woods (2007, 2009) explains that every rural place is remade according to its particular relations with the world outside (see also: Cloke, 2006; Halfacree, 2006; Heley and Jones, 2012; MacCarthy, 2007; Marsden, 1998; Murdoch, 2003, 2006).

Many rural actors have responded to socio-economic changes and political incentives by innovating and restructuring their spaces to engage in the service economy as tourist entrepreneurs (Hjalager, 1996). Rural tourism represents a chance for local actors to produce and distribute goods and services that reflect their local values, identity, belonging and autonomy (MacDonald and Jolliffe, 2003). The participation of local stakeholders in rural tourism is a result of their agency in harnessing local and extra-local processes to their advantage. Bell, Lloyd and Vatovec (2010) argue that the way local actors engage with manifestations of globalisation cannot be interpreted as their submission to forces beyond their control. Woods explains:

> *The impact of globalization on rural localities is revealed not as domination or subordination but as negotiation, manipulation and hybridization, conducted through but not contained by local micro-politics.* (2007: 487)

Local actors have the ability to create networks, adapt their value systems, and form internal structures, becoming meaningful agents in the production of their space (Chaperon and Bramwell, 2012; Jackiewicz, 2006; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001).

Tourism scholars such as Amoamo (2011), Ateljevic and Doorne (2003), Oakes (1999), Su and Teo (2008) and Tucker (2003), in a similar fashion, have all explained, through different case studies and theoretical approaches, that the outcomes of tourism can be modulated in various ways by local actors to preserve varying degrees of cultural originality and to form new meaningful identities. The concept of social capital is important here as it implies that networks and social relations are significant factors determining local agency. In this regard, it is through various forms of interaction,

cooperation and connections that trust and reciprocity is developed and that common goals can be achieved (Aldrich, 2012; Hopkins and Becken, 2014). Rural actors are connected to extended family and social networks and other aid and supportive groups where they together create the norms of compliance, participation, and trustworthiness that will reflect their cohesion (Aldrich, 2012; Hopkins and Becken, 2014). Importantly, social capital is dynamic as social relations constantly evolve, and thus requires maintenance to retain its value, as Lesser (2000) concedes. Agency and identity are, as such, continually renegotiated through social relations.

Sims (2010) claims agency can be seen in the redefinitions rural actors fashion as they make sense of extra-local pressures. Products such as foods, drinks and crafts, to be used in hospitality, retail and restaurants, are positioned in wider chains of production in the effort to offer local goods and services appealing to tourists (Sims, 2010). These chains of production link those providing customer services to other actors and processes, often forcing them to reformulate their values and practices as rural stakeholders for practical reasons (Brandth and Haugen, 2011; Burton and Wilson, 2006). Sims (2010) highlights the tensions that are created between the ideal and practicalities of producing, supplying and consuming local goods as different actors modify their definition of 'local foods' to surpass practical issues as their relations with other actors in the chain of supply evolve. She found, for instance, that local suppliers who developed their businesses to the extent that they could no longer get the ingredients they needed for their shops, cafés or restaurants from local producers would modify their status as local suppliers in terms that could accommodate these practical changes.

Figure 2 –A view of Gudhjem (author's photo)

Figure 3 – Tourists in Svaneke (author's photo)

Ateljevic (2000) coined the term "circuits of tourism" to argue that consumers and producers negotiate the nature of the product at stake, within particular social and institutional realms, eventually producing and reproducing discourses and practices that uphold this construction. In that sense, tourists and rural actors work in concert to redefine the countryside as a hybrid space, while constructing an image of the countryside that works to confirm a perceived rural idyll. Tourism is a socially constructed activity that gives meaning to places in various real and imagined ways through multiple performative interrelations (Hultman and Hall, 2012). Accordingly, through the case study of arts and crafts on Bornholm, I explore the way rural tourism has enabled the creation of a local brand based in hand-made, local and professional crafts appealing to the producer and consumer alike. More precisely, I explore the agency of these craft-artists in affirming their aspirations for their island's cultural landscape.

Methodology

This study is the result of two sets of fieldwork on Bornholm, which I carried out during autumn 2013 and autumn 2014. The first visit lasted three weeks and the second five, during which I interviewed at their workshops, boutiques or homes 19 of the 64 members that made up the ACAB at the time of research. The interview method is useful when seeking to understand a phenomenon experienced by particular individuals (Kvale, 1996). It was also important to visit the craft-artists in their context of involvement as in-place methodologies that situate conversations and observations in the emotional and active realm of the subject better reveal lived-experiences (Anderson and Jones, 2009; Anderson, 2004; Bondi, 2005; Nash, 2000). Visiting these individuals in their realm of involvement

meant I was often given tours and explanations about their creative work and the techniques they used. This, at times, created an excess of data but was used to foster a positive rapport with the respondents. There were two main questions guiding the study, which could be explored more in depth with open-ended questions during the interviews. These main questions were 1) what does it mean to be a craft-artist on Bornholm and 2) what is it like living on the island during the tourist season? As I was interested in the development of discourses of agency and authenticity, the interview questions subsequently centered on the everyday practices of my respondents, for example: How did you establish yourself on Bornholm? What do you like about living here as a craft-artist? What is challenging? Who are your customers? How has the ACAB been helpful to you?

The interviews lasted on average a little over an hour in length. I recorded each interview and transcribed them myself later to start the analytical process. I took notes after each interview to capture the context of each respondent, also for the data analysis process. All the interviews were done in English, which generally did not pose any problem since the participants were mostly proficient in the language. My knowledge of Swedish, a language similar to Danish, did help solve some minor confusion at times. The autumn period was a good choice for fieldwork because it is then that the tourist season winds down on Bornholm, leaving time for the craft-artists to participate in interviews. Yet, as the tourist season was not completely over, it made it possible for me to gather first-hand observations at various local galleries, museums and events before most of them closed down for the winter. These observations were noted down as field notes. Besides the interviews and observations related to the craft-artists, I complemented this study with interviews (also done in English) with two key actors in the promotion of the arts on Bornholm. Those were the director of the Bornholm Art Museum (who is also a member of the jury determining ACAB membership), and an officer at Destination Bornholm, the island's official tourist association. These two interviews and the many observations were done to establish a holistic picture of the relation between the local arts and crafts scene and rural tourism on the island. The data collected was analysed to form narratives about the meaning of the participants' actions and thoughts. Narrative analysis involves the collection of stories from individuals about their experiences in order to shed light on their identities and to attempt to understand how they see themselves (Freeman, 2004). After reading and re-reading transcripts and field notes, three analytical categories were formed: negotiating authenticity, finding bargaining power, and malleable identities.

The contact information for ACAB members can be found on the association's homepage. During my first round of fieldwork, the craft-artists I contacted individually for an interview formed a representative sample of the members of the association, considering their various media, experiences and ambitions. Once I interviewed these 9 individuals, I started working on my exploratory findings. During my second round of fieldwork, I contacted each craft-artist of the ACAB that I had not interviewed individually via email, briefly explaining my project and asking for an interview. In order to generate as much of a representative sample as possible, I contacted some particular non-responsive individuals twice or approached them in person instead. In the end, the individuals interviewed were: 5 glass designers, 1 woodworker, 1 textile designer, 1 knitwear designer, 1 potter and 10 ceramists. There are by far more ceramists in the association than any other type of craft-artist, and so naturally more were interviewed. Within this sample, there are the two co-founders of the association, with one also being a former longstanding chairwoman, and another the current chairman at the time of fieldwork. Only 5 of the craft-artists interviewed, 2 of whom working as partners, could be considered as running businesses that provided them with full-time employment. These business-oriented craft-artists are

the only ones who have their designs outsourced and/or reproduced by employees. Most of the ACAB members have a second job or subsist from the earnings of a spouse. 10 of the craft-artists interviewed worked other jobs or subsisted through the earning of a spouse. 5 of them were established as full time craft-artists. In terms of nationality, 3 of the craft-artists interviewed are originally from Bornholm, with all the other ones having moved to the island later in their lives either for professional reasons, to follow a spouse or because of the appeal of the place. 15 are of Danish origins, 1 Japanese, 1 Swedish, 1 American and 1 German. All the participants, like most craft-artists on Bornholm, are permanently established on the island. The interview participants were selected from different locations around the island to capture any difference their location could imply, since the localities on Bornholm differ in their touristic appeal. All participants were given a pseudonym.

Findings

Rural tourism on Bornholm is important to the development of the craft-art cluster. While all craft-artists wish to enjoy a rural lifestyle and live their lives doing their art all day, the two do not go hand in hand as a livelihood strategy. While some craft-artists have turned fully to lifestyle entrepreneurship to subsist from their art in a highly toured countryside, most craft-artists have resorted to smaller production output, mostly in the spirit of doing all their pieces by hand. Nonetheless, all artists on Bornholm sell during the tourist season as the visitors who come to the island represent a good pool of customers. Importantly, tough, it also became clear through my fieldwork that the tourists are not just a good source of income to the craft-artists, they also represent an audience for the craft-artists to share their creativity. This quotes from Alex, a ceramist with a small workshop next to his house, highlights the interrelation of these two different purposes of participating in rural tourism as a craft-artist:

> *You have to make things that appeal to people. I feel that even though they (the tourists) are not buying, they come in to see special things they have never seen before. That encourages me a lot. It gives me comfort that I am on the right track. When you can see the results in the account it is also good. It gives you relief. We also rebuilt the roof, made some rooms, so we have loans in the bank to pay.*

Deener (2009) came to a similar conclusion in his research on street artists at Venice Beach, California explaining that the individuals he studied negotiate market-oriented practices in their pursuit of an artistic lifestyle. His participants did not directly associate tourist-oriented art to an authentic artist identity; rather they saw it as a means to sustain a particular lifestyle with the intention to eventually build an artistic identity beyond tourist interactions (see also: Jenkins and Romanos, 2014; Sheehan, 2014). It is in a similar fashion that the craft-artists of this case study chose to commercialise their creative spaces for economic and professional reasons. In the rest of this chapter, I explore how this commercialisation process is embraced by the craft-artists in ways that preserves their artistic values, giving them some agency over the development of discourses of the rural idyll behind rural tourism on Bornholm. Three themes are presented: negotiating authenticity, finding bargaining power, and malleable identities.

Negotiating Authenticity

The flow of tourists coming to Bornholm in the summer is ideal for finding customers interested in buying local crafts. That the craft-artists get this pool of customers directly at their door is moreover a chance to avoid having to sell through intermediaries. Getting to sell their craft in their own spaces or through local channels that they trust not only enables them to avoid high commission prices, but to meet the people who buy their art. Victoria, a ceramist in her fifties established as a full-time artist, relates her interaction with her customers directly to her integrity as a professional artist:

> *When the customers walk out the door in the big shops in Copenhagen, they forget about me. It would have been different if I had a workshop in Copenhagen, then they would maybe go from Ilums Bolighus to see me, but here I don't see them (the customers in Copenhagen). So I said screw them and earning so much money on me those shops. Now, I have everything home and just sell here. I don't want to sell myself for nothing anymore.*

Many craft-artists perceived that their customers during the tourist season are interested in the interaction that buying local affords them. Rebecca, a knitwear designer with her own boutique in a popular touristic location, said she has many recurring seasonal customers who ask about her new collection when they visit during their holiday. These people not only want to buy, they also want to know how she herself is doing. She believes this interest relates to the personal interactions tourists seek when on holiday in rural places:

> *It's like when you have a favorite place somewhere, then you like that somebody will recognize you and say*: *"Oh, how nice that you are back!" That you have these relations to people (matters), because you can go to very beautiful places, but if you don't meet people, it will not get important for you. That's a part of the story of the shop: they like my stuff, but they also want me to be* here.

This account reveals that for some of these craft-artists existential authenticity (Cohen, 2002; Cohen and Cohen, 2012; Wang, 1999) is very significant, as they believe that social interactions give their products a special meaning during the tourist experience. The creative spaces of the craft-artists become meeting spaces, fueling a discourse of rural spaces as idyllic bearers of authentic products and experiences (Baylina and Berg, 2010; Short, 2006). This interaction is largely infused in notions of idyllic rural authenticity where the properties of the craft matter just as much as the location and friendliness of the craft-artist. There was consensus throughout the interviews amongst the craft-artists that their customers during the tourist season were particularly interested in buying crafts that were local and handmade when they came to Bornholm. Emily, a ceramist in her sixties, thinks the interest of these tourists in their crafts has to do with the creation process:

> *They can go to a lot of other places to buy cheap and sometimes really nice things. But I think here it is a story. We are making it from the start, we decide how it should look, how we are making it, fire it (in the kiln) and then sell it. Mostly, it is not possible. So many people are involved in making a thing; making a bit, sending it (down the production line), making a bit, and*

> *sending it (further down the production line). So I think the craft is done in*
> *one of the last places where we are making everything from start to finish.*

The craft-artists see, to different degrees, their creative spaces as spaces of resistance to chains of mass production and their standardised consumption products. In their view, rural tourism fosters a type of interaction that helps them preserve values that are important to them as professional artists. Dann (2006: 25) explains that cold-water islands are spaces of "*contact with the other*" as their tourists seek encounters with the traditional and natural, rather than the comfortable and familiar usually associated to resort islands of the south. Similar to previous research on rural tourism, in this context, that tourists get to experience the stories and lives of local craft-artists, adds to their experience of authenticity in a space opposite to urban lifestyles (Daugstad, 2008; Everett, 2012; Murray and Kline, 2015; Sims, 2009). As for the artists, similarly as Sheehan (2014) explains with her case of street artists in New-Orleans, certain types of artist identities are formed through prevalent discourses and practices not solely associated with ideals of art, but also those related to tourism. The search of the craft-artists for artistic integrity is interlinked with the search of the tourist for idyllic rural experiences, which reinforce a romantic discourse of rurality where the localised, handmade, personalised and interactive materialise in the space of the craft-artists, to his or her benefit.

Finding Bargaining Power

Many craft-artists associated their fruitful interactions with tourists to the positive influence of the brand they have created by forming a professional association. To get membership in the Arts and Craft Association Bornholm (ACAB), an aspiring individual must submit an application to an independent jury composed of three respected members of the art community in Denmark. These jurors follow strict guidelines as they evaluate the originality and uniqueness of the works submitted by the applicants. Moreover, that the applicant is permanently established on Bornholm and that craft-art is to some degree his or her primary occupation is also evaluated. Sara, one of the co-founder of the association, described the decision to make the selection process external, and also anonymous, as a way to keep unity within the association, preventing frictions within the group over matters such as preference and taste. One of these juror is the curator of the art museum on Bornholm, who, through this anecdote, testified to the dedication of the jury to upkeep high standards of quality:

> *It is very difficult because some people (who apply for ACAB membership) you*
> *know their work, but we try to do it (as if we didn't know them). A good*
> *example was a glass-blowers who left the island. We knew his work and it was*
> *marvellous. He has presented a lot of collections around the world. He settled*
> *on the island and applied for a membership. I don't know if he wanted to test*
> *us or something, but he sent us horrible work and we rejected him. Of course,*
> *the board of the association (said): "You know who you are rejecting?! He is*
> *one of our most famous glass-blowers!" Sorry, but the work he submitted; it*
> *didn't fit. Half a year later he came with a new collection, which made it.*

Sheehan (2014) explains that, traditionally, tourist art has been perceived by Western society to be of lesser value than 'real' art as it is a commodified product, losing its special status. As Sara explained, it was important to keep high standards in the art of the

associations' members in the face of tourism and its process of commodification, as the latter always risks taking away the appeal of their art as 'real' art. She told the story of a previous grassroots attempt to gather the local craft-artists in a network to help them pool resources as they tried to market and sell their crafts during the tourist season. She is convinced that the lack of standards of quality in that network was detrimental to the project. She recalls the arrangement of a space in a lighthouse where they put their crafts together on display for tourists to buy. As the quality of the craft-art on sale diluted without any standards preserving its quality, so did the success of the venue amongst tourists. During her interview, Emily deplored the outcome of this unsuccessful project, explaining that:

> When it gets too much 'souvenir in a bad way', the high quality artists leave and then you have to get more people in and it just gets worse and worse and worse in that way. So it is very important that in the ACAB we have these criteria for quality.

The ACAB is a successful mechanism for preserving quality as part of the arts and craft brand on Bornholm in the light of amateur competition. Indeed, many craft-artists explained that they find bargaining power in the discourse of quality and locality the ACAB imposes with its high entrance criteria. These entrance criteria of the ACAB work to define the crafts of its members as special compared to the work of amateurs or to serial reproduction. Victoria finds the distinction the ACAB membership brings to her craft crucial during the tourist season, as these two quotes show:

> It's what you want. It's not a hobby, it's serious. It's quality. It's professional. It's a stamp for this is the good art and there is a difference. But if the ACAB wasn't there they (the tourists) wouldn't know about that.

> I have many people who actually say: "We went to many places and it was all (bad). We were so tired we didn't want to go in any more places because we were getting so disappointed". Then, I say: "I have to tell you that we have the ACAB. We have different levels (of competence) here for people who make these kinds of things".

The craft-artists find agency to direct the tourist towards their product with the brand the ACAB creates for them. The importance of social capital for reaching common developmental goals is here visible through this local endeavor (Aldrich, 2012; Hopkins and Becken, 2014; Lesser, 2000). These individuals' ability to form a network and uphold it through their connection to a jury, interactions with external agents in the art world, and internal cooperation as colleagues is a means to reach collective professional, lifestyle, and economic ambitions. With the standards of quality they have put in place and cohesively adhere to, the craft-artists have the ability to take advantage of tourism, instead of letting it dictate the meaning of their identity. As Woods (2009; 2007) concedes rural spaces are ultimately the result of the actions taken by local stakeholders as they respond, through micro-politics and networking, to processes related to globalisation, in this case the growth of tourism and the spread of standardised products. The strategic reliance on rural tourism to pursue simultaneously artistic and economic ambitions does not translate in the dependence and subordination of craft-artists to its standardising dynamics as a global phenomenon. As Amoamo (2011), Ateljevic and Doorne (2003), Oakes (1999), Tucker (2003) and Su and Teo (2008) proposed, these craft-artists can modulate the outcome of

tourism as they seek to preserve cultural originality in the face of global changes that increase commercialisation and standardisation.

Malleable Identities

Some craft-artists demonstrated an ability to redefine certain practices and meanings to take advantage of tourism professionally and economically. Foremost, because there needs to be significant output produced to respond to economic needs, craft-artists can find themselves responding to tourist demands for more affordable pieces that might not fulfill their creative aspirations. Caroline, a ceramist who works at a restaurant during the tourist season, explains that this strategy does not mean that she has to resort to making cheap tourist product that reflect predefined images of Bornholm, in this case the island's famous round churches. She can still, as a professional craft-artist, show her creativity in the more commercially-oriented creations she makes to profit some more from tourism:

> *Of course if I know that this sells, I do some extra of this kind. But I am not really sitting here and making round churches because that would be a tourist thing. I do what I want to do. But I think that it is good to have some more of the small things.*

Julie, a glass-designer, has responded in a dramatic way to market demands, focusing her production process on increased output to live successfully from her creations. Julie has reconciled an identity as both a successful craft-artist and business woman, and does not see why this should impact the authenticity of her creation. Julie sends her designs to be reproduced abroad in a factory in China and owns three different shops around the island where she sells these creations. Julie calls herself a glass-designer as she is always the one behind the design of her crafts, though these are blown and crafted by the hands of others. Similarly to other craft-artists outsourcing designs, Julie supports that she can conciliate her passion for business with her success as a glass designer. These two quotes attest to this:

> *Did you see the candle-holders there? I made them twenty-years ago and we sold so many. I am so proud of that product. We sold thousands and thousands. That could keep four women busy producing them. That gave me a lot of freedom to create other things. I can be very proud of a unique piece, but I was really proud of that little product because it was the best. It was the candle-holder for tea candles that sold the most in Denmark for years! Why shouldn't you be proud of a product like that?*

> *I create glass (pieces) because I can't help it. I have to. I love it! Actually, I found out that it was much more like me to blow glass and run the business.* I have a lot of joy seeing people buy my stuff. I found out this is me.

Here, the identity of the artist is linked to entrepreneurial success, moreover attained through the strategic use of extra-local chains of production, and redefines questions of authorship and authenticity in the world of art (see also: Sheehan, 2014). It shows that the meaning of the authenticity of practices, objects and identities in rural areas is malleable and is more likely to result from strategic redefinitions, than to be the outcome of pre-defined images and standards. This is similarly to what Sims (2010) argued with her study

on local foods. The objective authenticity (Wang, 1999) of every craft on Bornholm can be challenged, since their materials are mostly imported, few artists are originally from the island and all artists reproduce their designs to some extent to profit from the tourist season. The brand of the ACAB reconciles the tensions behind the definition of artistic and rural authenticity by upholding a stamp of originality on the crafts of its artists based on criteria defined collectively by its members. The different craft-artist will nonetheless interpret their membership in the ACAB to suit their context and ambitions, as Julie does by running a business or as Caroline does by making small tourist-oriented crafts once in a while.

Conclusion

As Frisvoll (2013) has identified, any conception of authenticity in rural tourism needs to consider the locality, ideas and practices that together fashion the countryside. In this case study it was demonstrated how some local stakeholders play an active role in collectively and individually defining some particular notions of rural authenticity as they participate in the development of tourism. Through the creation of their association, the ACAB, the craft-artists have increased their ability to negotiate relations of trust and integrity with tourists as they commercialise their workshops because they are able to uphold a professional and local brand. Institutionalised standards of quality are thus significant for the craft-artists to negotiate, as professional artists, in their encounters with tourists in search for rural authenticity on Bornholm. Individually, new identities are created as these craft artists practically respond to the repercussions of global changes, and further attest to the social and dynamic nature of rural authenticity.

As defined geographical areas, small islands are at an advantage in creating a delimited brand easily associable to their context. As Butler (2006) observed, cold-water islands are often characterised as being specific, rather than generic, destinations, as is often the case with warm water islands. The island itself and the images it inspires due to its geographical and social characteristics are thus a significant aspect of the tourist experience in the cold-water context (Baldacchino, 2006ab; Dann, 2006). Social characteristics are created through an amalgam of relations, practice and images closely related to the lifestyles, ambitions and livelihoods of local actors. As Croes et al (2013) argue, it is problematic that most studies discussing the dynamics of authenticity on small islands neglect the role of local stakeholders in negotiating their new identities in the wake of tourism development. In an earlier article in this journal, Harling Stalker (2013) concluded her research on craft policies on three Atlantic Canada islands by observing that development schemes omitted to consider how craftspeople identify themselves, instead compelling these individuals to meet market demands and display romantic ideals of islandness in their work. Harling Stalker comes to the conclusion that these craftspeople face domination and powerlessness in the face of development policies. It must be pointed out that this characterisation was produced through the analysis of reports, and not through engaging in direct contact with craftspeople. The perspective I presented in this article stems from my direct contact as a researcher with those involved in the world of arts and crafts, and has led to a different conclusion. Identities were here shown as negotiated, rather than imposed. Agency to simultaneously participate in economic and artistic development, as well as in the production of a cultural landscape, was observed in both individual and social endeavors. In this regard I would rather argue that it is impossible to imagine the social dynamics behind the artistic and the

commercial, the authentic and the inauthentic, local and global, and rural and urban, without considering local perspectives. It is more fruitful to seek to understand how rural actors construct and diffuse a variety of definitions of their local space that suit their realities and ambitions during their interactions with tourists. This is why theoretical frameworks based in agency, networks, interrelations, and social capital have a lot to offer in the study of insular cultural landscapes.

Further research could look into the interplays and adaptations of various stakeholder groups pursuing a livelihood, lifestyle and even professional ambitions on small, cold-water islands. This article used a case highlighting the construction of the rural idyll in the northern European context. There are other types of small cold-water islands than the ones represented as rural paradises, ones grappling with other forms of tourism. Some cold-water islands have aspects that lend themselves to the development of adventure and eco-tourism (like Svalbard in Norway and Baffin Island in Canada). The development of questions in further research related to the multitude of strategies and challenges found on cold-water islands has the potential to enlighten spatial and cultural theory in tourism scholarship.

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