

Pori Jazz for Professionals -seminar, Research meeting

University Consortium of Pori

July 16, 2013

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The Role of Festivals and Events in the Regional Development of Cities – Cases of Two Finnish Cities

Abstract

Culture and the creative industries have been acknowledged as providing a critical competitive edge in regional development at the cultural, societal and economical levels. Art and culture therefore constitute a tool for regional planners and a means for strategic planning where, for example, the leverage role of events and festivals for regeneration and improvement of the host regions have been perceived. The culture-led strategic planning for cities and regions has traditionally focused on the cultural and creative industries in general, but there is an increasing tendency to incorporate more specific types of cultural production and consumption.

Aim of the paper is to take a discursive view to examine the role of festivals and cultural events in the level of regional development and strategy-making. The particular focus is on the meanings attached to their importance and potential in both the discourses of public strategy documents and the views of festival managers at operational level in festival management. The empirical analyses of case study cover two Finnish regions: Pori and Seinäjoki. The paper further enhances understanding of festival

management in identifying discourses in regional strategy making. This knowledge will help festival and event organizers to cope with external stakeholders and their varying demands in networked production, which could support the longevity of their event. Public authorities, on the other hand, will be able to use the analytical information on festival production in their decision-making with regard to regional strategy development.

Keywords: Festival management, regional development, public strategies, discourse