



Challenges and prospects of Danish service towns in the new urban geography

Fertner, Christian; Groth, Niels Boje

Published in:
Book of abstracts

Publication date:
2012

Document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Fertner, C., & Groth, N. B. (2012). Challenges and prospects of Danish service towns in the new urban geography. In *Book of abstracts: EURA Conference 2012* (pp. 82-83). Vienna.

153 Challenges and prospects of Danish service towns in the new urban geography

Christian Fertner, Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Niels Boje Groth, Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

globalisation, urban competition, socio-spatial effects, neighbourhood, Spain

Many small towns in Denmark lost population and functions in recent decades. The service towns established between 1850 and 1940 take a considerable share of those. In that time almost 500 new towns emerged all over the country to serve the new export-oriented agricultural production as regional service centres. This development was accompanied by new communication and transport technologies including railways, which gave the towns the Danish name "stationsby" ("station town"). Many experienced rapid growth in population and economic activities, which first levelled off with the crisis of the 1930s and later with the introduction of the car as dominant mode of transport. After a municipal reform in 1970, some of the railway towns became administrative centres in the new larger municipalities followed by a pronounced growth. However, most of the service towns are still very small: 40 % have below 1000 inhabitants, only 10 % have more than 5000 inhabitants.

More recently, with the emergence of functional urban regions around the biggest cities, their position as regional centres was weakened. Also, with the restructuring of the municipalities in Denmark in 2007 and the closure of several town halls, many service towns lost political and functional magnitude. In this context we will elaborate on the following research questions:

- How can Danish service towns be empirically defined – also in opposition to e.g. traditional trade towns?
- How was the situation and prospects of the service towns influenced by the emergence of the new functional urban geography and the administrative reforms?
- What are the major challenges in urban development these towns are confronted with?

We use historical register data as well as land use data to draw a broad picture of the development of Danish service towns. This research is part of a project on the current situation and future prospects of service towns in Denmark, started in March 2012.