

Session proposal for the RGS-IBG Annual Meeting: Tuesday 3rd July - Thursday 5th July 2012, University of Edinburgh

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### **Field-configuring Events – Evolution, Structuring or Dissolution of Cultural and Creative Industries through temporary spatial proximity**

**Field configuring events (FCEs)**, sometimes also referred to as field maintaining events (FMEs) (Dobusch et al. 2010), is a relatively new approach in considering dynamic aspects of field emergence, structuring and declining mechanisms, which evolved out of research on institutional, organizational, and professional fields (Davis / Marquis 2005). FCE, broadly defined, represent temporary social organizations such as tradeshows, professional gatherings, technology contests, and business ceremonies. These FCE can be understood as gatherings in which people from diverse backgrounds and with different purposes assemble on a one-time, sporadic, irregular or periodically basis in order to reveal new products, develop industry standards, create social networks, acknowledge accomplishments, share and interpret information, or execute business (Lampel / Meyer 2008).

At the same time, they embody a **critical and understudied mechanism** shaping the emergence and developmental trajectories of these industries, markets, professions, and technologies. Research on FCEs is still at an early stage. Most pioneering work has been done by scholars from management and organization studies (Farjoun 2002, Meyer et al. 2005 etc.).

Interestingly, this approach can open up **new possibilities** in economic geography when considering the – so far understudied – **dynamics of creative fields** (esp. Scott 1999, 2006, 2010) or to put in other words FCEs in cultural and creative industries. The existing research, on the one hand, confirms this view that events such as art fairs and biennales, film and music festivals are important within creative fields (Entwistle / Rocamora 2006, Anand / Jones 2008, Delacour / Leca 2011). On the other hand, this literature almost entirely **neglects the spatial dimension**. Only very few authors made contributions from a specific spatial perspective (Lange 2011, Sedini 2011).

Conventional FCE are fairs and festivals. They share four common characteristics according to Moeran / Pedersen (2011): First of all, they are *spatially bounded*, that means they are usually surrounded by a particular location – whether in an indoor exhibition hall, park, or around a town or city, or a combination there of. Secondly, they are *temporarily bounded* in terms of duration and regularity. Thirdly, they are *socially bounded* bringing together people who are closely involved in the production or consumption of the exhibited products and services. Forthly, they are *functionally unbounded* meaning that they serve multiple purposes.

Some of these issues have been intensively investigated upon in economic geography with respect to trade fairs as temporary clusters in manufacturing industries by Bathelt and surrounding scholars (f.e. Maskell et al 2004, Bathelt / Zakszewski 2007, Bathelt / Schuldt 2010, Schuldt / Bathelt 2011).

Nevertheless, there is almost no research – with few exceptions (f.e. Power /Jansson 2008) – in economic geography on the **emergence, structuring or dissolution of such temporal gatherings in cultural and creative industries** (f.e. design fairs, music or movie festivals etc.). Moreover, many FCEs in cultural and creative industries do not

necessary share the above mentioned characteristics as FCEs can take place in virtual contexts or without specific time and space frames.

Against this background and in order to introduce this approach in economic geography, we encourage to participate in this special session. Studies to be presented should include one or more of the following aspects:

a) Theorizing FCE or FME from a spatial perspective by approaches related to the emergence, structuring, institutionalization, decline or deinstitutionalization of those fields.

b) Proposing new methodologies for investigating FCE through dynamic concepts of collecting data (f.e. temporary proximity measures).

c) Introducing studies with empirical evidence on the spatial importance of constituting FCE that contribute to the formation of new emerging fields, maintaining mature fields or dissolutions of fields in cultural and creative industries.

d) Developing implications for local and regional governments how to attract FCE in order to agglomerate international participants and spur the local economy.

**We invite you to present a paper in this session. Please submit an abstract of up to 300 words to Lech Suwala ([lech.suwala@geo.hu-berlin.de](mailto:lech.suwala@geo.hu-berlin.de)), Dominic Power ([dominic.power@kultgeog.uu.se](mailto:dominic.power@kultgeog.uu.se)) or Bastian Lange ([bastian.lange@geo.hu-berlin.de](mailto:bastian.lange@geo.hu-berlin.de)) by 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012.**

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Selection of Literature:

Anand, N. and Jones, B. C. 2008. 'Tournament rituals, category dynamics and field configuration: the case of the Booker Prize'. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45, 1036–60

Bathelt, H./ Schuldt, N. 2010. International Trade Fairs and Global Buzz, Part I: Ecology of Global Buzz. In: *European Planning Studies* (Vol. 18) pp. 1957-1974.

Delacour, H. and B. Leca 2011 'A Salon's life: field configuration, power, and contestation in a creative field,' pp. 36-58 in B. Moeran and J. Strandgaard Pedersen (eds.) *Negotiating Values in the Creative Industries: Fairs, Festivals and Competitive Events*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dobusch, L./Schüßler, E. S./Wessel, L. (2010) Backstage: Organizing Field-Configuring Events in the German Music Industry. Paper präsentiert beim 26. EGOS Colloquium, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal, 30.Juni -2. Juli.

Entwistle, J. and A. Rocamora 2006 'The field of fashion materialized: a study of London Fashion Week.' *Sociology* 40 (4): 735-751.

Lampel, J. and A. D. Meyer 2008 'Field-configuring events as structuring mechanisms: how conferences, ceremonies, and trade shows constitute new technologies, industries, and markets.' *Journal of Management Studies* 45 (6): 1025-1035.

Lange, B. (2011): Field configuring Events – Spatial politics and professional scene formation in the design segment of Berlin. In: Koch, G. (eds.): Arbeit & Alltag, Campus Verlag (in print).

Maskell, P./ Bathelt, H./ Malmberg, A. 2004: Temporary Clusters and Knowledge Creation: The Effects of International Trade Fairs, Conventions and Other Professional Gatherings. SPACES 2004-04. Fachbereich Geographie, Philipps-Universität Marburg: Marburg. Web Site: <http://www.spaces-online.com>.

Meyer, A. D., Gaba, V. and Colwell, K. (2005). 'Organizing far from equilibrium: non-linear change in organizational fields'. Organization Science, 16, 456–73.

Moeran, B. and J. S. Pedersen 2011 'Introduction' to their edited Negotiating Values in the Creative Industries: Fairs, Festivals and Competitive Events. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Power, D. and J. Jansson (2008) 'Cyclical clusters in global circuits: overlapping spaces in furniture trade fairs.' Economic Geography 84 (4): 423-448.

Scott, A. J. (2006): Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Industrial Development: Geography and the Creative Field Revisited, Small Business Economics, 26, S.1-24