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Mads Bruun Ingstrup (born 1981) is a researcher in the intersection between business administration and economic geography. His research and teaching areas are within global sourcing, international business development, regional development, and cluster development and facilitation. Mads has been affiliated with the Center for Strategy and Competitiveness, Stockholm School of Economics, in 2011 as a doctoral researcher, and with the Danish Cluster Academy REG X from 2009. He received his bachelor degree in International Business Administration and Modern Languages from the University of Southern Denmark in 2006 and his master degree in Economics and Business Administration from the University of Southern Denmark in 2008. During his studies, Mads has been enrolled at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Austria, and at the Helsinki School of Economics, Finland.

Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management

The Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management is located at the University of Southern Denmark, campus Kolding, and employs approximately 70 people. This location is central to the growth centres within the Triangle Region and offers a unique opportunity to close cooperation with the companies and public authorities in the region in respect to research and educational projects.

For several years the research of the department has been based on learning networks with companies and trade promotion institutions. In addition to this, the department has a long tradition of problem-based cooperation across traditional business research areas and very often by means of external funding. The research of the department concentrates on two key areas: entrepreneurship and relationship management and originates from traditional research areas such as marketing, applied economics, accounting, operation management and organization.

References (selected)

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PHD DISSERTATION OF

MADS BRUUN INGSTRUP

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEPARTMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

**'THE ROLE OF CLUSTER FACILITATORS
IN FACILITATING CLUSTERS:
EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL
INVESTIGATIONS'**

8 MARCH 2013



The role of cluster facilitators in facilitating clusters

My PhD project starts from the notion that clusters and their local milieus are significant drivers of economic activity and from the discovery that clusters do not always develop by themselves and foster the expected externalities. This understanding, questions the microeconomic logic that prevails within the cluster literature and which claims that clusters are self-organizing units that develop on market terms. The questions therefore call for other ways to approach the developmental difficulties related to clustering. In the wake of this, the project takes a cluster facilitation approach, which focuses on how to facilitate and coordinate the activities, actors and resources of clusters so as to compensate for market failures in their development.

Indeed, the literature on cluster facilitation argues that cluster facilitators are crucial in continually improving the potential and competitiveness of clusters throughout their entire life cycle and influencing the scope and speed at which they develop. In order to explore the current state of the cluster facilitation literature, and to explain and expand the literature by exposing the concept of cluster facilitators to different theoretical and empirical contexts, the project is structured around this main research question: What is the role of cluster facilitators in cluster facilitation?

In seeking to answer this research question the project builds on a theoretical and methodological framework. The theoretical framework is eclectic in its nature, being composed of three streams of literature; clusters, facilitation and cluster facilitation. More specifically the study is based on a cluster understanding inspired by the cluster schools of Italian industrial districts, Porterian inspired clusters and regional innovation systems. Additionally, facilitation and cluster facilitation are understood here, as processes of change concerned with the opening up of action spaces for cooperation. Furthermore, the methodological

framework highlights that the research is undertaken within the post-positivist paradigm and is executed through a qualitative case study approach and through an abductive research process, allowing interaction between theoretical and empirical knowledge. The data for the case studies are generated through the use of interviews and document and literature studies and analysed through data categorisation and recombination techniques embedded in successive triangulation.

Overall, the project provides systematic research on how clusters are facilitated and by whom. In particular, it contributes with new evidence and adds to our knowledge about cluster facilitation in four particular ways. First, it outlines the broader context in which cluster facilitators act and highlights that they are influenced by many different ambitions, institutional settings and a variety of growth drivers and relationships related to triple helix. Second, the project stresses the prevalence and theoretical roots of the cluster facilitation concept and emphasises that the concept draws on several streams of theory and especially theories of network governance and intermediation, which links cluster facilitators to the concepts of brokers, intermediaries, and hubs. Third, it develops theoretical frameworks for describing and categorising different cluster facilitator roles, in addition to explaining the content of these roles and how they change, depending on the clusters being facilitated. In particular, the identification of these different roles problematizes the one size fits all thinking in the cluster facilitation literature. Fourth, it presents empirical studies of three different types of cluster facilitators; individuals seated in cluster secretariats, public authorities, and firms. The project concludes that these actors facilitate clusters in diverse manners, under different influences and with different motivations and rationales in mind; ultimately affecting their facilitation process and goals.

By Mads Bruun Ingstrup

