

Food as Attraction: Connections between a Hotel and Suppliers of Specialty Food

MAGNAR FORBORD

Centre for Rural Research, University Centre Dragvoll, NO-7491 Trondheim, Norway

Correspondence Address: Magnar Forbord, Centre for Rural Research, University Centre Dragvoll, NO-7491 Trondheim, Norway. E-mail: magnar.forbord@rural.no

ABSTRACT Using a food award-winning hotel as starting point, this study investigates the supply of specialty food to the hotel and the connections between suppliers and hotel. The study contributes insights by applying an industrial network approach to analyze connections between the tourism sector and the food sector and effects of such connections. Around 15 rural suppliers, most located in the same region as the hotel, supply specialty food to the hotel. The connections between suppliers and hotel have various elements. First, the two are connected through dependencies of resources (resource ties), second, through supply chains (activity links), and third, through actor bonds, which is complementarities in capabilities and identities. The connections have various effects. First, the connections contribute to stable incomes for the rural suppliers and secure an essential input factor for the hotel (specialty food). Second, the connections trigger competence development in the companies, which is important for innovation. Third, the connections have positive consequences for the position and visibility of the enterprises in their respective markets and branches. Critically, there is a connection between product strategy and the type of connections, such that a product strategy building on food variety and quality takes advantage of several weak connections.

KEY WORDS: accommodation, product strategy, food as attraction, specialty food suppliers, industrial network approach

Introduction

Specialty food in tourism

Foods with special qualities have received increasing attention in recent decades, particularly from the tourism sector where destinations and businesses use food as an element in attracting guests (Boniface, 2003; du Rand and Heath, 2006; Einarsen and Mykletun, 2009; Forbord et al., 2012; Frisvoll et al., 2015; Hall and Sharples, 2003; Hjalager and Johansen, 2012; Long, 2004; Mykletun and Gyimóthy, 2010). More specifically, in an often crowded market, in order to differentiate themselves from other operators, tourism enterprises seek access to high quality local produce (Sims, 2010). By nature, such produce exists in limited amounts, and tourism enterprises therefore must rely on relatively few producers. This raises the issue of connections between tourism firms and suppliers (Telfer and Wall, 1996). The aim of this paper is to explore the “building blocks” and nature of such connections, and what they mean for successful integration of food in a touristic setting.

There is potential for mutual benefits through such connections, as local producers may find an important market in the tourism sector at the same time as tourism firms can obtain valuable inputs (Everett and Slocum, 2012; Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1999). As many local food producers are located in rural communities, production of specialty food can contribute to rural development (Bessière, 1998; Everett and Aitchison, 2008). The paper builds on a specific case from the tourism sector and applies an industrial network approach to analyze connections. At the core of the empirical case is a tourism firm, Rica Nidelven Hotel. The hotel was established in 2003 and was up to 2014 part of the Rica Hotel chain. Rica

Nidelven, which January 1st 2015 changed name to Scandic Nidelven,¹ is the largest full-service and conference hotel in Trondheim, Norway. The hotel has since the start had a primary goal to serve high quality food. Most guests at Rica Nidelven are business travelers and conference participants.

The paper is relevant for managers and chefs in the hospitality sector and producers and distributors of specialty food. The study is also relevant for agencies working to develop food-based production in rural communities and facilitate use of food in the tourism sector. Academics may find the paper useful due to among other things its application of network theory. The paper is arranged as follows: This first section reviews literature at the intersection between accommodation, food and specialty food supply. Section two presents a theoretical framework for the analysis and specifies the purpose and research questions. Section three describes the methodology used in the study. Section four presents the results in the form of a description of the hotel and its food strategy, the suppliers and analysis of the connections between hotel and suppliers. The results are discussed in section five focusing on outcomes of the connections, implications of the findings and conclusions.

Accommodation, specialty food and connections to suppliers

As a subcategory in the broader sector of hospitality, accommodation refers to the commercial provision of services associated with people's overnight stays away from home (Lashley, 2008). As a service product, accommodation depends on tangible deliveries, such

¹ On January 1st, 2015 the Scandic hotel chain took over the Rica chain. As a consequence, the name of Rica Nidelven Hotel changed, and the direction of the hotel changed. Source: <http://www.scandichotels.com/Hotels/Norway/Trondheim/Nidelven>. Because this study concerns the period before the take-over (data collected in 2012 and 2013), we use the old names for the hotel and for the hotel chain to remain consistency throughout the paper.

as a room and a bed, as well as intangible deliveries, such as information (Mossberg, 2008; Smith, 1994). The commercial accommodation sector is highly heterogeneous, and provides in various ways and degrees additional services (Cooper et al., 2008), for example facilities for conferences.² In such a context, there are in principal two approaches to food: either food can support guest experience or it can be a peak touristic experience (Quan and Wang, 2004). In the first instance, the principal concern is to economize on the use of food. In the latter, food is seen as a source of value – an attraction (Crompton, 1979; Mehmetoglu, 2007), and this situation is the focus of this paper.

Many studies have investigated situations in tourism where food is treated as a source of value. Novelli et al. (2006) point to increasing requests by tourists for tailored tourism experiences and that small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can play an important role in meeting such demands. Torres (2003) reports that locally-produced foods may have unique qualities and contribute to a hotel's attractiveness and benefit local producers. Telfer and Wall (2000) found in a study in Indonesia that hotels serving local food had higher occupancy rates than other similar hotels. Pillay and Rogerson (2013) observed local sourcing of food to be frequent among high-end accommodation establishments in South Africa. Some studies report on connections between accommodation and food delivery, but point to a gap in tourism research on inter-sectoral and "extra-local" linkages. For example, Hall (2005) found that for rural regions the greatest benefits from networks in tourism lay not in intra-sector linkages, but in inter-sectoral linkages, such as between food and tourism. Benefits obtained from such linkages may be product innovations and development of new

² This tourism market is often referred to as the MICE-market (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) or simply "The meetings industry", in which large groups, often planned well in advance, are brought together for a particular purpose. Source: <http://www.iccaworld.com/aeps/aeitem.cfm?aeid=29>

social, economic and intangible capital, such as knowledge, brands and reputation. Saxena (2005) also emphasized the role of inter-sectoral linkages for knowledge creation and development of tourism within a region. Concerning supply chains, which can be seen as one type of linkage, a broad spectrum of types of coordination have been observed in tourism, ranging from full integration to contractual arrangements between individual firms (Zhang et al., 2009). Ljunggren et al. (2010) report from a Nordic study on the role of local food providers in the experience of high-quality rural restaurants. This study found that the production of "uniqueness" based on location and the building of supplier infrastructure were critical to the creation of valuable tourism experiences.

In sum, these studies suggest that specialty food can be a source of value in tourism and that connections can play a role. However, the studies do not use or develop an explicit theoretical framework for a comprehensive analysis of connections. Below is a suggestion for such a framework.

Theoretical framework

Some scholars have described the tourism sector as chaotic (McKercher, 1999). Tremblay (1998) states that the organization of the tourism sector is more complex than the traditional manufacturing industry and hence that supply chain is not a relevant concept in tourism. We would argue the concept of supply chain is relevant in tourism studies. Moreover, it can be integrated into a broader framework, based on the view that connections are fundamental in any business and play an important role in value creation (Håkansson and Snehota, 1990).

One framework taking this into explicit account is the industrial network approach (business networks) within the studies of industrial organization (Ford, 2002). Håkansson and Snehota

(1995) define a business network as a set of interlinked business relationships (connections).

The basis for developing connections are interaction, which concerns three core elements: resources, activities and actors (Håkansson et al., 2009). The type of connections concerning these elements are termed resource ties, activity links and actor bonds respectively.

Resources are any type of item (tangible or intangible) that has a use potential (Håkansson et al., 2009). Types of resources are raw materials, technical facilities, work force, knowledge and finance. In addition, organizations and connections can be seen as resources. In order to provide a product, an actor needs access to more or less specific resources, and different resources have to be combined. *Resource ties* arise when an actor exploits external resources to complement internal resources. Hence, Håkansson and Snehota (1995) identify two different perspectives on resources in the literature. One perspective is that resources are scarce and that control and economizing is the primary consideration. The other perspective highlights that resources are heterogeneous, implicating that their value lie in the combination with other resources, which means that resources always have a development potential. Principally, development of resources can occur in two ways: (a) introducing new features, and (b) creating new combinations. Resource ties may arise when controlling as well as developing resources.

Activity links include buying, selling and distribution of input factors and products between producers and customers in a supply chain (Simchi-Levi et al., 2008). Activity links has to do with interdependencies between activities of different firms and increased specialization over time (Håkansson et al., 2009). Activity links can regard exchange of tangible as well as intangible elements. Since there are several actors in a network, many activity links and

chains can exist, making it relevant to talk about an activity structure (supply network) rather than a simple chain (Gadde and Håkansson, 2001). By definition, activity is some kind of repeated action, which can be more or less standardized. Hence, there are two bases for value generation in activity structures: (1) focus on standardization, highlighting cost efficiency and economies of scale, and (2) emphasis on differentiation highlighting variety, customization and uniqueness (Håkansson et al., 2009).

Third, performance of activities and provision of resources require some form of intention, that is, actors. Actors can be firms, organizations, and persons. Connections in the form of *actor bonds* develop when actors interact (Håkansson et al., 2009). This interaction can concern 'hard' dimensions, such as activities and resources and results in the form of income and profits. However, the interaction can also regard 'soft' dimensions such as the feelings of a counterpart. Hence, two aspects pertain to actor bonds. One aspect derives from the fact that an actor must be capable of carrying out activities and providing resources for others.

Exploitation of complementarities in competence is a central issue here. The other aspect concerns identity and has to do with meaning, for example a company's reputation. Actor bonds in this dimension develop when actors attribute identities towards each other (Håkansson and Waluszewski, 2002). Lastly, we note that actor bonds are affected in two ways (Håkansson et al., 2009). One is through the direct interaction with specific and known others. The other is the impact of being in a wider network, which have indirect and often concealed consequences.

Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize and analyze connections between a hotel deploying food-as-attraction and external suppliers of specialty food, and assess outcomes of the connections. More specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Describe the food strategy of a hotel deploying food-as-attraction;
2. Obtain an overview of the specialty food suppliers to the hotel and analyze connections between the hotel and the suppliers; and
3. Assess outcomes and implications of the connections

Methodology

Case study was chosen as the preferred method in this research. Case studies are suitable for conceptualizing and analyzing complex and interrelated phenomena such as connections in business contexts (Bryman, 2004; Yin, 2003). One advantage is that the case study method allows for utilization of various types of data. Interviews with key informants from both the hotel and its suppliers, supplemented with publically available written information and observation were considered the most appropriate types of data in this study. Case studies also provide opportunities to exploit critical new information appearing during the research process. As such, case studies are suitable for illuminating a general problem through detailed examination of a specific instance (Beeton, 2005). There are different designs of case studies. Our study is a *single case study with multiple units* (hotel and suppliers) that are embedded (Yin, 2003). Lack of generalizability from case studies is commonly cited as a drawback of the method (Schofield, 2002), although Yin (2003) suggests we can enhance the generalizability of a case study in three ways: base the study on theoretical approaches derived from literature; provide a comprehensive description of the case; and analyze across cases. We have employed the first two of these techniques in the study. The third is less

applicable in single-case studies, although we have utilized the fact that the case has several sub-units (suppliers). Together with multiple sources of data, basing the analysis carefully on the empirical material at hand and engagement with the study over an extended period, this has contributed to validity and reliability of the study (Yin, 2003).

All in all we carried out twelve interviews with various key informants. The interviews were semi-structured based on an interview guide. We started the interviews at Rica Nidelven Hotel, among other things to obtain information about actual suppliers. A one hour personal interview with the director together with the chef at the hotel was carried out in March, 2012. Together with observation of meal service at a conference in the hotel in March 2013 and written information, we considered this to be sufficient for describing the food serving at the hotel and its connections to food suppliers. In February and September, 2013 we conducted interviews with each of the managers of the eleven suppliers presented in the Results section below. These interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. Data about the suppliers were supplemented and verified through studying information on their web pages.

The analysis of the data (see Results below) was done in a qualitative and step-wise way. Immediately after each interview a draft of a description of the actual informant (enterprise) was written up. A main consideration was to document information that was relevant for illuminating the research questions. For example, regarding the hotel it was crucial to give a description of the food strategy (research question 1) and provide information about its suppliers (research question 2). Later (in 2013) web information about the then 16 suppliers was used to provide an overview of the supplier base with relevant parameters (cf. Table 1). The 11 interviewed suppliers were then described. The last step of the analysis was to

undertake a systematic investigation of connections between the hotel and the 11 suppliers based on the three types of connections identified in the theoretical framework.

Results

Rica Nidelven Hotel and specialty food: The food strategy

Over many years Rica Nidelven Hotel has had an occupancy rate above the average for urban hotels in Norway – 75 percent compared to the average 62 percent. TripAdvisor users elected Rica Nidelven as the second best hotel in Norway in 2012.³ The hotel has been profitable since it opened. Total sales in 2011 were around 180 million NOK, of which about 80 million NOK was related to food and drink. In the interview, the hotel director emphasized food and staff as the most important resources for the hotel in meeting its obligations towards its guests. The hotel has been renowned for its food, and in particular the breakfast has received much publicity (Holt, 2015; Nettavisen, 2011). According to the hotel director: “Rica Nidelven sells many rooms because of [the food]”.

The hotel’s director has long been enthusiastic when it comes to food and the role of food in attracting guests to the hotel. According to the director, before the hotel’s opening in 2003, food had occupied a low status in Norwegian hotels. Seeing an opportunity to elevate the status of food in the hotel industry, Rica Nidelven’s director aimed to make food a prominent element of the hotel. In preparing for the new hotel, he worked closely with a renowned chef,

³ Source: <http://no.tripadvisor.com/TravelersChoice>

with whom he had previously been cooperating. This chef became the hotel's head chef in the first two years after the hotel's opening.⁴

Rica Nidelven has won the Twinings Best Breakfast competition for hotels in Norway over ten consecutive years from 2006 to 2015 (Holt, 2015). Summarizing the judging panel's motivation for awarding Rica Nidelven the prize in 2011:

[...] With six manned stations [Rica Nidelven] serves among other things locally produced cold meat cuts, cured salmon and trout, herring, fish cakes and cured mackerel, [local] cheeses, homemade jams, salads and homemade bread. Tea and coffee is prepared and served by a barista ... In general a very copious buffet, however not fussy. The breakfast is systematically and well labeled, with good information for those who wish to eat pure and healthy [food]... In addition the breakfast waiters at the hotel provide personal and very hospitable service. ... Guests travelling alone are offered newspapers and a table laid for one [...] (Our translation).

Specialty food suppliers have been a central element in the success of food-as-attraction for the hotel. The next section describes how the hotel's supplier base has developed and provides an overview of the suppliers.

Development of a supplier base for specialty foods

In the interview, the hotel director suggested that the proportion of "artisanal" or specialty food at the hotel was around 75 percent.⁵ Since opening in 2003, Rica Nidelven has had

⁴ The name of this chef is Mikael Forselius. Since 2005 he has been manager of Røros Hotel. Many of the informants in this study point to him as the person behind the 'revival' of local food in Trøndelag over the last 10-15 years.

⁵ Food specialties sourced from abroad are e.g. French cheeses and rye bread from Denmark.

contact with some 30 specialty food producers. All of them were rural firms, mostly located in the region surrounding the hotel (radius of around 300 kilometers). According to the director, cooperating with these suppliers was somewhat problematic to begin with. The challenges mainly had to do with the handling and delivery of food, and in some instances the quality of produce. As the hotel's reputation for quality food grew and it received increasing attention from guests, media and government agencies, the Rica hotel chain realized there was, in spite of the initial challenges, a possibility to add value to the hotels through food experiences. In 2006 in cooperation with KSL Matmerk, the Rica hotel chain established a food project involving seven hotels in the chain.⁶ The Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Innovation Norway co-financed the project. According to the director, this project led to improved competence in specialty food at Rica Nidelven and resulted in the development of criteria for the selection and training of specialty food suppliers.⁷ These criteria relate to material aspects of produce such as the quality and distinctive character of the product, and the supplier's ability to deliver, and immaterial elements, such as product narratives.⁸ Under

⁶ The food project called "Local Food on The Menu" was extended in 2010 and in 2012 involved 24 Rica hotels. The purpose of the project then was to strengthen the gastronomic distinction of Rica with a strong basis in the Norwegian food culture. As a result of the project ties between kitchen staff in Rica hotels and suppliers of specialty food was strengthened. From 2007 local and specialty foods were included in all types of meal in the participating hotels, not only breakfast. Source: <http://www.rica.no/sosialt-ansvar/barekraftige-lokalsamfunn-med-lokalmat-pa-menyen/>.

⁷ Each year 350 employees of Rica take part in courses to learn about "the good story" and the difference between "food with an identity" (small-scale food) and industrially manufactured food. In 2012, 101 local food producers with 598 products were approved by KSL Matmerk and registered in Rica's internet-based purchasing- and distribution system. Approval gives the producers the right to use the logos "Local Food" and "Regional Specialty". Source: Presentation by director Ulf Johansen, Rica Ishavshotell, Tromsø, at Matverksted, Forskningsparken, Tromsø, 19 April 2012. KSL Matmerk is The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation working to develop quality assurance, competence and visibility in Norwegian food production for producers, food traders and consumers. Matmerk is an independent foundation. Source: matmerk.no/

⁸ Source: "Lokalmat på menyen – regional specialties." Fact sheet. www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/lmd/aktuelt/nyheter/2007/sept-07/mat-kartlegger-lokalmatprodusenter-i-nor.html?id=481640

these standards, producers were required to pay a fee of 8.5 percent of sales to Rica hotels to become certified as specialty food suppliers under the agreement.

As a result of this system, Rica Nidelven experienced increased reliability of deliveries, both concerning product quality and delivery methods. In 2013 specialty food products came mostly from firms with a basis in agriculture. Seafood producers delivered the rest. On the other hand, the seafood suppliers were significantly larger than the agricultural suppliers. The supplier base has changed many times since the start-up in 2003. Table 1 provides an overview of the 16 suppliers of specialty food to the hotel in September 2013 when interviews with most of the suppliers were carried out. Except one (Salmon Brands), the firms were located in Mid-Norway. Only Gangstad Gårdsysteri and Røroskjøtt were supplying Rica Nidelven also before 2007. Information on products delivered, location and annual sales are also provided in the table. Altogether some twenty food and drink specialties were delivered. The hotel used these specialties in all of its meals, that is, the hotel did not distinguish between types of meals in selecting suppliers and products.

Table 1: Suppliers of food specialties to Rica Nidelven Hotel in Trondheim as of September 2013, products delivered, location and annual sales

#	Supplier	Product(s) delivered	Location	Annual sales (Mill. NOK)**
	<i>Seafood producers:</i>			
1	Vega Delikatesser AS	Juniper smoked salmon	Vega	30
2	Seashell AS	Handpicked king scallops, creel caught langoustine	Frøya	45
3	Snadder og Snaskum AS	Blue mussels	Rissa	14
4	Norgeskjell AS	Blue mussels	Åfjord	13
5	Salmon Brands AS	SALMA salmon fillet	Bømlo	190

<i>Agricultural producers:</i>				
6	Gangstad Gårdsysteri	Various cheeses	Inderøy	6.5
7	Urfe AS	Meat from old local cattle races	Snåsa	3.5
8	Rørskjøtt AS	Organic meat from calves	Os in Østerdalen	17
9	DalPro Gårdsmat AS	Meat from deer and wild sheep	Hitra	Ca. 6
10	Lysklett Gård	Meat from organic pigs and "breakfast sausage"	Melhus	Ca. 3
11	Rekkebo Midtre Gård	Meat from duroc pigs	Frosta	Ca. 3
12	Auma Gård*	Almond potato	Alvdal	-
13	Aksel Hovde, gård*	Egg from organic hens	Ørlandet	-
14	Ytterøykylling AS*	Chicken legs	Levanger	-
15	Inderøykarve BA*	Caraway	Inderøy	-
16	Inderøy Gårdsbryggeri*	Farm brewed beer	Inderøy	-

* Started supplying after March 2012.

** The NOK/EURO rate has historically been around 8. Source: www.norges-bank.no/en/price-stability/exchange-rates/

Below we describe 11 of the 16 suppliers listed in Table 1, namely the suppliers delivering also in March 2012 when the interview at the hotel was carried out. The reason for this selection was that we had to limit the number of descriptions, and we wanted to prioritize producers that had been supplying over an extensive period. At the same time, this choice gives a balance in the description between suppliers of seafood and agricultural suppliers and secures simultaneity in the description of the hotel and descriptions of suppliers. Hence, in the text below all five seafood suppliers are presented and then six agricultural suppliers. The descriptions focus on the deliveries to Rica Nidelven, distribution and contact between the suppliers and the hotel.⁹

⁹ In the description of suppliers, present tense is used. Using past tense would result in an intricate language. In addition, it could give the impression that the suppliers no longer existed at the time of writing (2015), when in fact this is not the case. To readers finding this application of language problematic, try to imagine being present at the time of interviewing (year 2013).

Seafood suppliers

Vega Delikatesser

Vega Delikatesser AS is a full-range supplier of fish and shellfish. The main product is fresh fish in the form of fillets, mild-cured and smoked products. The firm sells products mostly to shops and grocery stores, and some hotels and restaurants. For many years, the company has delivered one of its products to Rica Nidelven: the "Juniper smoked salmon from Vega". This is a product produced in small quantities from salmon farmed off the coast of Trøndelag. The producer regards this as one of its best products. The product is distributed to Rica Nidelven via the company's wholesaler in Trondheim. While Vega Delikatesser's director maintains some sporadic contact with Rica Nidelven through the hotel's chef, for the most part Vega Delikatesser receives information from Rica Nidelven via the wholesaler. So far, the feedback has been positive. Deliveries to Rica Nidelven constitute around one percent of the company's sales. While this is only a small proportion of total sales, according to the company's director, supplying to Rica Nidelven enhances the company's reputation and provides increased positive publicity. That the product has a name that identifies it with the place of production (Vega) helps customers remember the product and recommend it to others. As the director says: "It is enjoyable to be a supplier to Rica Nidelven – it has a ripple effect and is good advertisement".

Seashell

Seashell AS delivers seashell and fresh fish to the hotel and restaurant sector. Handpicked, living king scallop ("kamskjell") is the company's main product. Another product is creel caught langoustine ("sjøkreps"). The company emphasizes the "naturalness" of its products. The company delivers scallops regularly to Rica Nidelven and langoustine seasonally. To

most customers, including Rica Nidelven, a wholesaler delivers the products. Seashell does not have much direct contact with Rica Nidelven, and the hotel has not given any comments on the products. The share sold to Rica Nidelven is less than one percent. The company has customers that are considerably higher profile than Rica Nidelven, for example the "Khalifa Tower" in Dubai. However, as the manager puts it: "It is satisfactory to see that a relatively big hotel in the region such as Rica Nidelven succeeds in bringing food to the forefront of their product".

Snadder & Snaskum

Snadder & Snaskum AS is the oldest blue mussel producer in Norway. The company delivers blue mussels to a considerable number of customers, including grocery stores and restaurants. Snadder & Snaskum has no direct contact with Rica Nidelven; product distribution is through two large distributors of seafood. A positive side of this is that Snadder & Snaskum reaches a vast number of customers. Orders and information from customers go to the distributors, and the distributors then place the orders with Snadder & Snaskum or another blue mussels firm. This means that Snadder & Snaskum does not know the end user of their products.

Norgeskjell

Norgeskjell AS is another producer of blue mussels. Eighty percent of the produce is sold domestically. The rest is exported via distributors. Norgeskjell produces one kilogram packets of washed blue mussels, which they sort prior to packaging for homogeneity to ensure efficiency in cooking. According to Norgeskjell the decision to sort mussels is based on the view that quality must be taken seriously for blue mussels to maintain their market position. According to the company, this leads to some extra work, but "pays off in the end".

Norgeskjell consider Rica Nidelven as an outstanding hotel. However, they have not had any direct contact. The hotel has not presented any specific quality criteria. Neither has it given any complaints about Norgeskjell's product. The most important priority for Norgeskjell is sales volume, and hence selling to many customers is important. According to Norgeskjell's manager, their product "sells by itself" in the distribution network.

Salmon Brands

Salmon Brands AS is a company producing high quality salmon fillets sold under the brand name SALMA. The salmon is produced on a fish farm located in the waters off the island of Bømlo south of Bergen. Salmon Brands introduced the product SALMA in 2007. SALMA is a fresh salmon loin without skin and bone. The product has, according to the company, a very good sashimi quality¹⁰ The high quality of the product has to do with processing; the time between the fish being caught and vacuum packing is a maximum four hours. In recent years other high quality salmon fillet products have been introduced to the market, but SALMA is still considered the best product in its class (Iversen and Ryeng, 2012). This is why Rica Nidelven chooses to purchase this product.

Agricultural suppliers

Gangstad Gårdsysteri

Gangstad Gårdsysteri is a dairy farm producing various cheeses, which they sell to retailers, restaurants and hotels. Gangstad delivers various salad cheeses, blue mold and white mold cheeses to Rica Nidelven. A local transporter brings the products daily to the hotel. From the

¹⁰ Source: <http://www.salma.no/>

perspective of Gangstad, this distributor's relatively small vehicle is well adapted to a farmyard and has a low price per delivery stop. One of the cooks at Rica Nidelven acts as the contact person for Gangstad and sends orders via e-mail. The manager of Gangstad finds this very practical. Around five percent of the company's turnover comes from sales to Rica Nidelven. Moreover, supplying to Rica Nidelven exposes Gangstad's products to people who they otherwise may not have reached. As the manager of Gangstad said: "The cooks at Rica Nidelven are very competent and present and serve our products in a very good manner". While this is advantageous to Gangstad, the manager is less satisfied with the fact that Gangstad, like all certified specialty food suppliers to Rica, must pay a fee of 8.5 percent of sales to the Rica chain. Other hotels that Gangstad sells to, do not have this practice.

Urfe

The company Urfe AS, which is owned by 110 farmers in Norway, has headquarter at the farm Hammer Nordre. Hammer Nordre produces a range of meat cuts from old, traditional cattle breeds (Urfe AS, 2013). The produce is sold to business customers, such as dedicated restaurants. For distribution, Urfe uses various cold and frozen distributors. Distribution logistics have a profound effect on the economy of the company. Hammer Nordre has been a supplier to Rica Nidelven since 2007, and the manager is very satisfied with Rica Nidelven as a customer. First, the hotel buys relatively large volumes. Second, the competence of the cooks is very high. Third, due to this high competence, the hotel uses cuts that other customers do not use. Two percent of the turnover comes from sales to Rica Nidelven. An important additional effect is the ripple effect: the highly qualified chefs at Rica Nidelven provide good commercial effect and recognition for Urfe in the culinary milieu.

Røroskjøtt

Røroskjøtt AS produces meat products from organically bred calves and lamb based on local raw materials and recipes. Customers are hotels, restaurants, catering, and retailers.

Røroskjøtt is member of the regional sales organization Rørosmat AS, which has around 20 members. Røroskjøtt has supplied Rica Nidelven since the hotel opened. The company supplies meat from calves to Rica Nidelven. Rørosmat has an agreement with a local transport company and coordinates the distribution. The goods from Røroskjøtt are transported to Trondheim, where a salesperson from Rørosmat brings the products to the customers. Hence, the salesperson has close and frequent contact with each customer.

According to the salesperson, this is important in order to detect defects in the products and delivery process, understand the needs of the customers, discover opportunities for new products and receive customers' views on price. According to the salesperson, Rica Nidelven is very good at exploiting products, for example seasonal variations. The deliveries to Rica Nidelven constitute a few percent of total sales for Røroskjøtt. Being a supplier to this hotel has given Røroskjøtt some publicity and reputation, but the salesperson thinks that this effect should not be overestimated. Røroskjøtt's strategy is now "slow and natural growth" through nationwide expansion and cost reductions. Coordinated distribution through Rørosmat is crucial to achieving this goal.

DalPro Gårdsmat

DalPro Gårdsmat has been a supplier to Rica Nidelven since 2008. The firm produces a range of meat products from wild sheep and deer bred on two islands off the coast of Trøndelag.

The firm sells its products directly to consumers through farmers' markets, to retailers in the

nearby region and to restaurants and hotels. The products are rack of ribs (a Norwegian specialty), sausages, fillets and various cuts. The firm transports products directly to customers in refrigerated vans. The manager experiences Rica Nidelven as a cooperative partner: "We have good discussions with the cooks and the barkeeper at Rica Nidelven. For example, we have developed a special breakfast sausage for Rica Nidelven based on their preferences." Up to five percent of the turnover comes from sales to Rica Nidelven.

However, similar to other agricultural producers, the manager is less satisfied with the fee he must pay to Rica for being certified as a specialty producer. Because of the fee, he prioritizes customers not claiming such a fee. Over time the farm's deliveries to Rica Nidelven has decreased.

Lysklett gård

Lysklett gård breeds cattle and pigs based on organic principles. This is a way of differentiating from other producers. The animals are transported to a butchery that slaughters the animals. The butchery transports slaughtered animals (whole animals and cuts) to Rica Nidelven, which makes their own products from them, for example, ham. Cuts of slaughtered animals are sent to two sausage producers. One of these sends sausages to Rica Nidelven.

The hotel presents and names the products as products from Lysklett Gård. Lysklett products are delivered to Rica Nidelven regularly every second week. Moreover, the farmer at Lysklett has a contact person at Rica Nidelven with whom he can clarify special deliveries. Lysklett has been a supplier to Rica Nidelven since 2010, and the company's manager found that working with the hotel has been a good experience. Sales to Rica Nidelven constitute around five percent of total sales. Lysklett has also found supplying to a professional and well-known customer such as Rica Nidelven has had a positive effect on the company's reputation

and publicity. However, Lysklett suggests they do not want to be too dependent on one customer and so are happy they receive inquiries from other customers, among them several hotels.

Rekkebo Midtre

Rekkebo Midtre is one of nine farms in Norway breeding duroc pigs on license from the cooperative meat company Nortura. Production corresponds to 100 sows (220 farrows) per year. A Nortura slaughterery slaughters the pigs. During the season from autumn to spring, the farmer at Rekkebo "takes back" some of the slaughtered animals, which he transports and sells directly to Rica Nidelven. The hotel cuts the slaughtered animals and makes various products and dishes from them. According to the farmer: "Duroc has a special quality with much more juicy and tasty meat than ordinary pig breeds". Rekkebo started supplying Rica Nidelven in 2012, on request from Rica's chef. The farmer experiences the relationship with Rica as very good. He has direct contact with the chef and can plan the deliveries in dialogue with him. One to two percent of the turnover comes from sales to Rica Nidelven. As a result of being supplier to Rica Nidelven, Rekkebo has received requests from other hotels and restaurants.

Analyses of connections

The results show that rural small- and medium-sized food firms can be crucial for realizing a product strategy of a hotel emphasizing food as attraction (Novelli et al., 2006; Torres, 2003). Moreover, we have identified important inter-sectoral and extra-local (rural-urban) connections for such a strategy (Hall, 2005; Saxena, 2005). Below we analyze connections that can be found in the empirical descriptions above.

Resource ties

We can identify resource ties in the case. The two aspects, *control* and *development*, are rather intertwined. An essential tie is the match between the products provided by the specialty suppliers and the tourism product of the hotel. This is a comprehensive tie as it includes tangible as well as intangible features, e.g. food and information about the food on the side of the producers, and food combinations and service on the side of the hotel. However, there are no absolute resource dependencies between the parties. For the hotel, there are specialty suppliers available beyond those actually supplying, and the suppliers also have other customers than the hotel. Nevertheless, both the hotel and the suppliers seem to benefit from each other's resources. One reason is mutual adaptation of resources over time. The hotel has through "trial and error", systematic training and creation of quality criteria established a satisfactory base of suppliers. Some of the suppliers may be replaced at little cost, but replacing the whole supply base would jeopardize the whole product concept at the hotel. Likewise, for the suppliers; the hotel's emphasis on product quality rather than cost of the products suits the suppliers well. This means that control of resources external to each firm in the case is secured in a set of ways. On the part of the hotel, the critical external resource (specialty food) is secured through money (price for the products), contractual arrangements (quality criteria, supplier approval), competence and reputation. On the part of the suppliers, the critical external resource (money from the hotel) is secured through product quality, competence and capacity in distribution. The agricultural suppliers interact directly with the hotel, and some of them, such as DalPro Gårdsmat, has developed products for the hotel, which strengthens resource ties even more.

Activity links

An important type of connection between the rural suppliers and the urbanely located hotel concerns activities. The food products have to be physically moved from where they are produced to where they are to be used (in the hotel) in order to be of any value. Information about needs of products is in various ways sent in the opposite direction, from the hotel to the suppliers. All this is solved through coordinated activities in the form of distribution. What is interesting in the case is that we find both of the main aspects of activity links described in the theoretical model. Seafood is distributed in a *standardized* fashion, while the agricultural products are subject to more *differentiated* distribution. The distribution of seafood products takes place in a rather complex and uniform system based on predefined schemes. There is almost no personal contact between producers and hotel. The purpose seems to be efficiency: to distribute required volumes of produce with least distribution costs. The distribution of agricultural products is more differentiated. These products are not distributed in the same uniform way, and rely to a lesser extent on predefined schemes. The coordination is largely secured through personal interaction between producers and hotel. Hence, in the case of seafood we can talk of formalistic distribution based on standards, while in the case of agricultural products we can observe behaviouristic distribution based on personal interaction between the parties. Importantly both types of distribution contribute to establish connections in the form of *activity links* between the parties. In the case of seafood producers, links develop because of long term and repetitive selling and buying between the parties. This is also to some extent the case for the agricultural products, but here activity links are also developed because of personal involvement in the coordination of distribution and mutual adaptation of activities between hotel and suppliers. The hotel seems to manage both types of

distribution well. The result is quite a complex activity structure, but secures diverse delivery of specialty food to the hotel.

Actor bonds

In the case described we find connections regarding *capabilities* and *identity*, that is, actor bonds. We observe "capability bonds" in terms of food suppliers disposing resources and holding competence that fits the needs of the hotel. The competence about specialty food and its utilization has been developed over time both in the hotel and by the suppliers. Some of this competence development is a result of mutual adaptations, for example, when the hotel introduced quality criteria and suppliers responded to the criteria. Concerning the hotel, it seems that its foundation (in 2003) to some extent built on the fact that specialty food producers already had started to establish in the region. Furthermore, the food processing competencies of the kitchen staff in the hotel build to some extent on knowledge about the products produced by the suppliers. Hence, we can say that hotel and suppliers have developed simultaneously in response to the presence of each other. What about identity bonds? It seems that the hotel and the suppliers have a common view on what constitutes "good food". This includes not only the content of the food (nutrient content and sensory qualities) but also the way actors produce and present it. The suppliers "deliver" identity because the products can be traced to specific geographic locations and are produced in a "pure" and "non-industrial" way, such as the hotel requests. Hence, the hotel is able to present each food product with a name (an identity) and market itself as a unique hotel. Another example of identity bonds in this case is the enhanced reputation many of the suppliers express due to being suppliers to a renowned hotel. This enhanced reputation creates connections even to other customers. Beyond the actor bonds between hotel and

suppliers, the relationship between the director and the first chef at Rica Nidelven also was important. This bond contributed to good planning and establishing a high quality food service at the hotel.

Discussion and conclusion

Outcomes of the connections

As mentioned in the literature review, research has observed outcomes from inter-sectoral and extra-local connections in tourism, in the form of product innovations and development of new social, economic and intangible capital. This study confirms these findings in a specific sector of tourism. We can group outcomes (effects) of the connections in three categories: (a) sales and purchase of products, (b) competence, and (c) strategic position and visibility of the firms (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995). A rather obvious effect of the connections for the suppliers is *sales*. The connections contribute to income for the firms, and this is of course important for any firm. Moreover, connections mean sales on a stable basis. As a mirror effect, the hotel achieves stable *supply* of critical inputs through the connections. In this way the connections have contributed to establishing a new hotel product (food as attraction), which can be seen as a product innovation. A less tangible, but no less important outcome is the building of *competence* associated with the connections. This is related to the individual as well as the organizational level. Hence, we have seen in this case enhanced competence as a result of interaction between the parties, for example improvement in distribution and handling of products. Some of the interaction has even led to firms being rejected as suppliers because of lack of competence. Moreover, interaction with thirds parties (Rica hotel chain) has increased supplier competence and product quality. Last but not least,

connections between the hotel and suppliers affect the *position and visibility* of the firms in their markets and towards other firms. Suppliers perceived their reputation was enhanced through their relationship to a renowned hotel. For the hotel, having specialty producers as suppliers helps it stand out as unique in the eyes of customers and the public.

A comment has to be made about *characteristics of the connections* we have analyzed and *product strategy*. The study should not be interpreted as suggesting that connections between actors should be strong in order to be valuable. In fact, the connections analyzed are rather weak and somewhere between total integration ("hierarchy") and no integration ("market") (Piore, 1992; Zhang et al., 2009). There may be good reasons for such an adaptation, not at least in a case where variety is crucial in the product strategy. Developing and sustaining connections are costly, demanding labour and sometimes financial investment (Håkansson and Snehota, 2000). On the up-side, connections provide predictability and reduced transaction costs (Williamson, 1979). Weak connections are less costly to handle than strong connections and make it possible to deal with many and different connections, balancing between specialization and integration (Piore, 1992). Such an adaptation has been crucial for Rica Nidelven in implementing its food strategy. In addition it reduces the risk for being locked-in (Stack and Gartland, 2003). It may be noted that many and varied network contacts have been shown to be critical in business creation (Johannisson et al., 2002) and advantageous in the context of job seeking (Granovetter, 1973).

Implications

We have studied an example where connections between suppliers and a tourism firm have been important in implementing a product strategy with food as attraction. However, such a

strategy requires demand. In a recent study Baldacchino (2015) traces the origin of the interest in local food and rural cuisine to factors such as response to globalization and standardization of food, identity and interest in smaller scale representations of place, a greater focus on experiences in tourism and a wish to reconnect with nature. The author reflects critically on the role of local food in rural tourism and is concerned about the tendency of excessive romanticism of local food. This study has not focused on rural tourism as such. Rather it has investigated the significance of local food for rural food producers and urban tourism. However, the view that local food in tourism balances narrowly between great promises and real offers is relevant. In our case this is illustrated in the Best Breakfast competition jury's description of the Rica Nidelven breakfast as "copious [...], however not fussy". This shows that a tourism firm can be conscious and act appropriately in the delicate balance between promises and deliveries. Overall, our study has confirmed the observation of Baldacchino (2015) that development in tourism and rural contexts can be inspired by global trends and implemented successfully at a smaller geographical scale (e.g. regional), where inputs from multiple locations are employed to good purpose. Through local food, "urban" guests are connected to nature and the rural. For tourism firms, local food is a source of differentiation (Engeset and Heggem, 2015). For rural producers local food provides income. For both, local food represents a possibility for value creation.

Conclusion

The point of departure of this study has been a proficient business in the hospitality sector – a hotel with food as a core element in its product strategy. The focus has been on the role of external suppliers of specialty food in contributing to this product strategy, and especially the connections between hotel and suppliers. The connections have many elements. In this case it

made sense to distinguish between connections having to do with resources (resource ties), connections resulting from activities (activity links), and connections related to actors (actor bonds). Connections have consequences (effects) that may be beneficial. First, connections generate buying and selling and therefore secure income for suppliers and provide essential input factors for the buyer. Second, connections may lead to more competent actors due to interaction and learning. Third, connections affect the position and visibility of actors in their markets and branches. Important to note though is that the value of connections may not lie in their being strong, since strong connections can be costly to develop and sustain. Rather, for a firm it may be most beneficial to have many and varied weak connections. In case of the hotel this is beneficial because it helps secure a varied and at the same time stable supply of high-quality specialty food products, which is crucial for realizing its product strategy. For the food suppliers, in addition to contribute to stable incomes, an effect of the connections to the hotel is increased reputation and stronger identity. At the same time suppliers have many other connections, which reduce their dependence on the hotel and hence decrease risk. The study has documented valuable connections across sectors (tourism – food) and over space (urban – rural) in a specific sector of tourism. The study has identified mutual benefits from such cross-overs in case of local food. Implications of the study is the insight that development in tourism and rural contexts can be inspired by global trends and implemented at a smaller geographical scale (e.g. regional) connecting to multiple locations, thereby offering rurally linked and sought-after experiences to travelers.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank The Research Council of Norway (Grant no. 208023/E40) for funding the project "Cooperation to enhance development of coastal tourism (CoastTour)"

Forbord, M. (2016). "Food as attraction: connections between a hotel and suppliers of specialty food". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 16(3): 297-314. doi:10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860

This is Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860>

from which this paper originated. The author also acknowledges the persons who spent time on interviews as part of the study, as well as partner on CoastTour Trude Borch and colleague Gunn-Turid Kvam for valuable suggestions for improving the paper. I am also thankful to two anonymous reviewers and the editor for valuable comments and suggestions for improving the paper.

References

Baldacchino, G. (2015). "Feeding the Rural Tourism Strategy? Food and Notions of Place and Identity". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 15(1-2): 223-238.

Beeton, S. (2005). The Case Study in Tourism Research: a Multi-method Case Study Approach. in B. W. Ritchie, P. Burns and C. A. Palmer *Tourism research methods: integrating theory with practice*. Wallingford: CABI Publ.: 37-48.

Bessière, J. (1998). "Local Development and Heritage: Traditional Food and Cuisine as Tourist Attractions in Rural Areas". *Sociologia Ruralis* 38(1): 21-34.

Boniface, P. (2003). *Tasting tourism : travelling for food and drink*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, C. P., J. Fletcher, A. Fyall, D. Gilbert and S. Wanhill (2008). *Tourism: principles and practice*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Crompton, J. L. (1979). "Motivations for pleasure vacation". *Annals of Tourism Research* 6(4): 408-424.

du Rand, G. E. and E. Heath (2006). "Towards a Framework for Food Tourism as an Element of Destination Marketing". *Current Issues in Tourism* 9(3): 206-234.

Einarsen, K. and R. J. Mykletun (2009). "Exploring the Success of the Gladmatfestival (The Stavanger Food Festival)". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 9(2-3): 225-248.

Engeset, A. B. and R. Heggem (2015). "Strategies in Norwegian Farm Tourism: Product Development, Challenges, and Solutions". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 15(1-2): 122-137.

Everett, S. and C. Aitchison (2008). "The role of food tourism in sustaining regional identity: A case study of Cornwall, South West England". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16(2): 150-167.

Everett, S. and S. L. Slocum (2012). "Food and tourism: an effective partnership? A UK-based review". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 21(6): 789-809.

Forbord, M. (2016). "Food as attraction: connections between a hotel and suppliers of specialty food". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 16(3): 297-314. doi:10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860

This is Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860>

Forbord, M., S. Frisvoll and A. Blekesaune (2012). Turisters forbruk av lokal mat – noen sammenhenger og implikasjoner. in M. Forbord, G.-T. Kvam and M. Rønningen *Turisme i distriktene*. Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag: 137-163.

Ford, D., Ed. (2002). *Understanding Business Marketing and Purchasing. An interaction approach. Third edition*. London: Thompson Learning.

Frisvoll, S., M. Forbord and A. Blekesaune (2015). "An Empirical Investigation of Tourists' Consumption of Local Food in Rural Tourism". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*: DOI: 10.1080/15022250.15022015.11066918.

Gadde, L.-E. and H. Håkansson (2001). *Supply Network Strategies*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Granovetter, M. S. (1973). "The Strength of Weak Ties". *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.

Hall, C. M. (2005). Rural Wine and Food Tourism Cluster and Network Development. in M. Mitchell, D. R. Hall and I. Kirkpatrick *Rural Tourism and Sustainable Business. In series: Aspects of tourism: Vol 26*. Clevedon - Buffalo - Toronto: Channel View Publications: 149-164.

Hall, C. M. and E. Sharples (2003). The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste. in C. M. Hall, E. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis and B. Cambourne *Food Tourism Around the World: Development, Management and Market*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann: 1-24.

Hjalager, A.-M. and P. H. Johansen (2012). "Food tourism in protected areas – sustainability for producers, the environment and tourism?". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 21(3): 417-433.

Holt, M. (2015). "Fortsatt best hotellfrokost – som Scandic-hotell." Retrieved 1.10, 2015, from <http://horecanytt.no/Nyheter/Den-beste-hotellfrokosten/Fortsatt-best-hotellfrokost-som-Scandic-hotell>.

Håkansson, H., D. I. Ford, L.-E. Gadde, I. Snehota and A. Waluszewski (2009). *Business in Networks*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.

Håkansson, H. and I. Snehota (1990). "No Business is an Island: the Network Concept of Business Strategy". *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 4(3): 187-200.

Håkansson, H. and I. Snehota, Eds. (1995). *Developing Relationships in Business Networks*. London: International Thomson Business Press.

Håkansson, H. and I. Snehota (2000). The IMP Perspective. Assets and Liabilities of Business Relationships. in J. N. Sheth and A. Parvatiar *Handbook of Relationship Marketing*. San Diego, CA: Sage: 69-94.

Håkansson, H. and A. Waluszewski (2002). *Managing Technological Development. IKEA, the environment and technology*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Forbord, M. (2016). "Food as attraction: connections between a hotel and suppliers of specialty food". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 16(3): 297-314. doi:10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860

This is Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860>

Ilbery, B. and M. Kneafsey (1999). "Niche markets and regional speciality food products in Europe: towards a research agenda". *Environment and Planning A* 31(12): 2207-2222.

Iversen, A. and A. Ryeng (2012). *Sushi i Norge: Produkter og konsepter. Rapport 25/2012*. Tromsø: Nofima.

Johannisson, B., M. Ramírez-Pasillas and G. Karlsson (2002). "The institutional embeddedness of local inter-firm networks: a leverage for business creation". *Entrepreneurship and regional development* 14(4): 297-315.

Lashley, C. (2008). "Studying Hospitality: Insights from Social Sciences". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 8(1): 69-84.

Ljunggren, E., M. Markowska, S. Mynttinen, R. Samuelsen, R. Sæmundsson, M. Virtanen and J. Wiklund (2010). *EXPLORE- EXPeriencing LOcal food RESources in the Nordic countries*. Oslo: Nordic Innovation Centre.

Long, L. M., Ed. (2004). *Culinary Tourism*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

McKercher, B. (1999). "A chaos approach to tourism". *Tourism Management* 20(4): 425-434.

Mehmetoglu, M. (2007). *Naturbasert Turisme*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Mossberg, L. (2008). "Extraordinary Experiences through Storytelling". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 8(3): 195-210.

Mykletun, R. J. and S. Gyimóthy (2010). "Beyond the renaissance of the traditional Voss sheep's-head meal: Tradition, culinary art, scariness and entrepreneurship". *Tourism Management* 31(3): 434-446.

Nettavisen (2011). "Her serveres Norges beste hotellfrokost." Retrieved 25.10., 2013, from <http://www.nettavisen.no/reise/article2827440.ece>.

Novelli, M., B. Schmitz and T. Spencer (2006). "Networks, clusters and innovation in tourism: A UK experience". *Tourism Management* 27(6): 1141-1152.

Pillay, M. and C. M. Rogerson (2013). "Agriculture-tourism linkages and pro-poor impacts: The accommodation sector of urban coastal KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa". *Applied Geography* 36(0): 49-58.

Piore, M. J. (1992). Fragments of a Cognitive Theory of Technological Change and Organizational Structure. in N. Nohria and R. G. Eccles *Networks and Organizations. Structure, Form, and Action*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press: 430-444.

Quan, S. and N. Wang (2004). "Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: An illustration from food experiences in tourism". *Tourism Management* 25(3): 297-305.

Saxena, G. (2005). "Relationships, networks and the learning regions: case evidence from the Peak District National Park". *Tourism Management* 26(2): 277-289.

Forbord, M. (2016). "Food as attraction: connections between a hotel and suppliers of specialty food". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* 16(3): 297-314. doi:10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860

This is Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/15022250.2015.1108860>

Schofield, J. W. (2002). Increasing the Generalizability of Qualitative Research. in M. B. Miles and A. M. Huberman *The Qualitative researcher's companion*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage: 171-203.

Simchi-Levi, D., E. Simchi-Levi and P. Kaminsky (2008). *Designing and managing the supply chain: concepts, strategies, and case studies*. Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Sims, R. (2010). "Putting place on the menu: The negotiation of locality in UK food tourism, from production to consumption". *Journal of Rural Studies* 26(2): 105-115.

Smith, S. L. J. (1994). "The tourism product". *Annals of Tourism Research* 21(3): 582-595.

Stack, M. and M. P. Gartland (2003). "Path creation, path dependency, and alternative theories of the firm". *Journal of Economic Issues* 37(2): 487-494.

Telfer, D. J. and G. Wall (1996). "Linkages between Tourism and Food Production". *Annals of Tourism Research* 23(3): 635-653.

Telfer, D. J. and G. Wall (2000). "Strengthening backward economic linkages: Local food purchasing by three Indonesian hotels". *Tourism Geographies* 2(4): 421-447.

Torres, R. (2003). "Linkages between tourism and agriculture in Mexico". *Annals of Tourism Research* 30(3): 546-566.

Tremblay, P. (1998). "The economic organization of tourism". *Annals of Tourism Research* 25(4): 837-859.

Urfe AS (2013). "Om Urfe AS." Retrieved 25.10., 2013, from <http://www.urfe.no/>.

Williamson, O. E. (1979). "Transaction Cost Economics: The Governance of Contractual Relations". *Journal of Law and Economics* 22: 233-261.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research : design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Zhang, X., H. Song and G. Q. Huang (2009). "Tourism supply chain management: A new research agenda". *Tourism Management* 30: 345-358.