



STRESS-TESTING LOCAL FOOD NETWORKS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT THE CASE OF DENMARK

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Local Food Networks

- **Aim**
 - Present findings from a study of 10 Danish local food networks
 - Identify differences/similarities in key features and development paths
 - Policy-learning through comparative stress-testing
- **Local food**
 - Geographical (terroir, food miles)
 - Social relations (alternative production/distribution practices: farmers' markets, vegetable box schemes, farm shops)
 - Values (health, authenticity, quality)
- **Networks**
 - Mostly small producers with limited resources
 - Joint place-based marketing, distribution, certification, food/gastro events, innovation





The development of food networks

- **Drivers & supporting factors**
 - Existing informal networks
 - Consumer demand
 - Shared values and trust
 - Entrepreneurial individuals (possibly ‘outsiders’)
- **Barriers**
 - Lack of consumer awareness
 - Small number of producers
 - Lack of intermediaries – wholesalers, abattoirs,
 - Poor infrastructure, distance from market
 - Higher prices, niche products

(Sources: Ilbery *et al.*, 2004; Rikonen *et al.*, 2013; Eriksen, 2015)





Moving towards an evolutionary approach

An institutional perspective

Inter/national contexts

- Global agro-food system
- Transnational regulation
- National governance

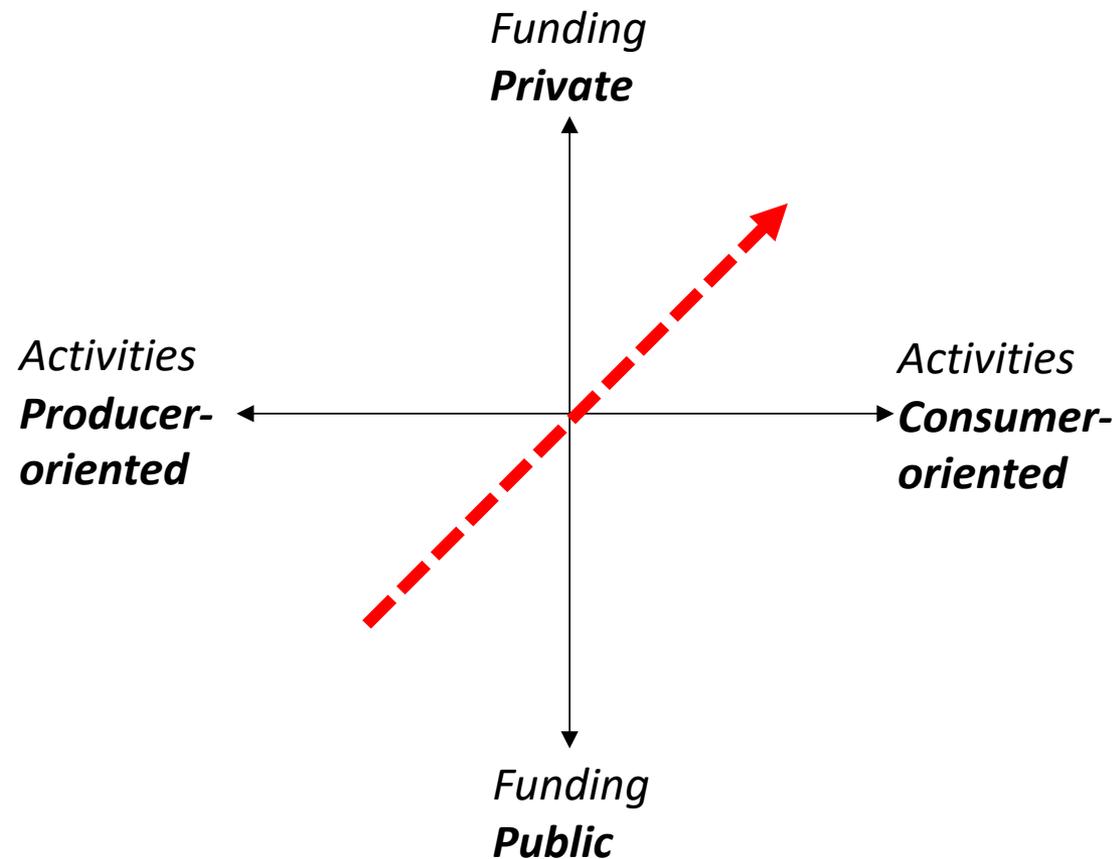
Local food networks

- Organisation/resources
- Discourse/Activities

Local/regional contexts

- Producers, consumers/users
- Local governance
- Socio-economic environment
- Food and gastronomy

An evolutionary perspective





Ten case-studies of local food networks

- Contexts
 - Increasing consumer focus on local food
 - Strong agro-industry
 - Government support for local food networks
- Five Danish regions
- 50 interviews (members, organisers, policy-makers)



- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Perikum | 6. | Sønderjyske Fristelser |
| 2. | Smagen Nordjylland | 7. | Kulinarisk Sydfyn |
| 3. | Gourmet Vest | 8. | Smagen af Fyn |
| 4. | Regional Madkultur Vestjylland | 9. | Regional Madkultur Sjælland |
| 5. | Sønderjyske Madglæder | 10. | Smag på Nordsjælland |





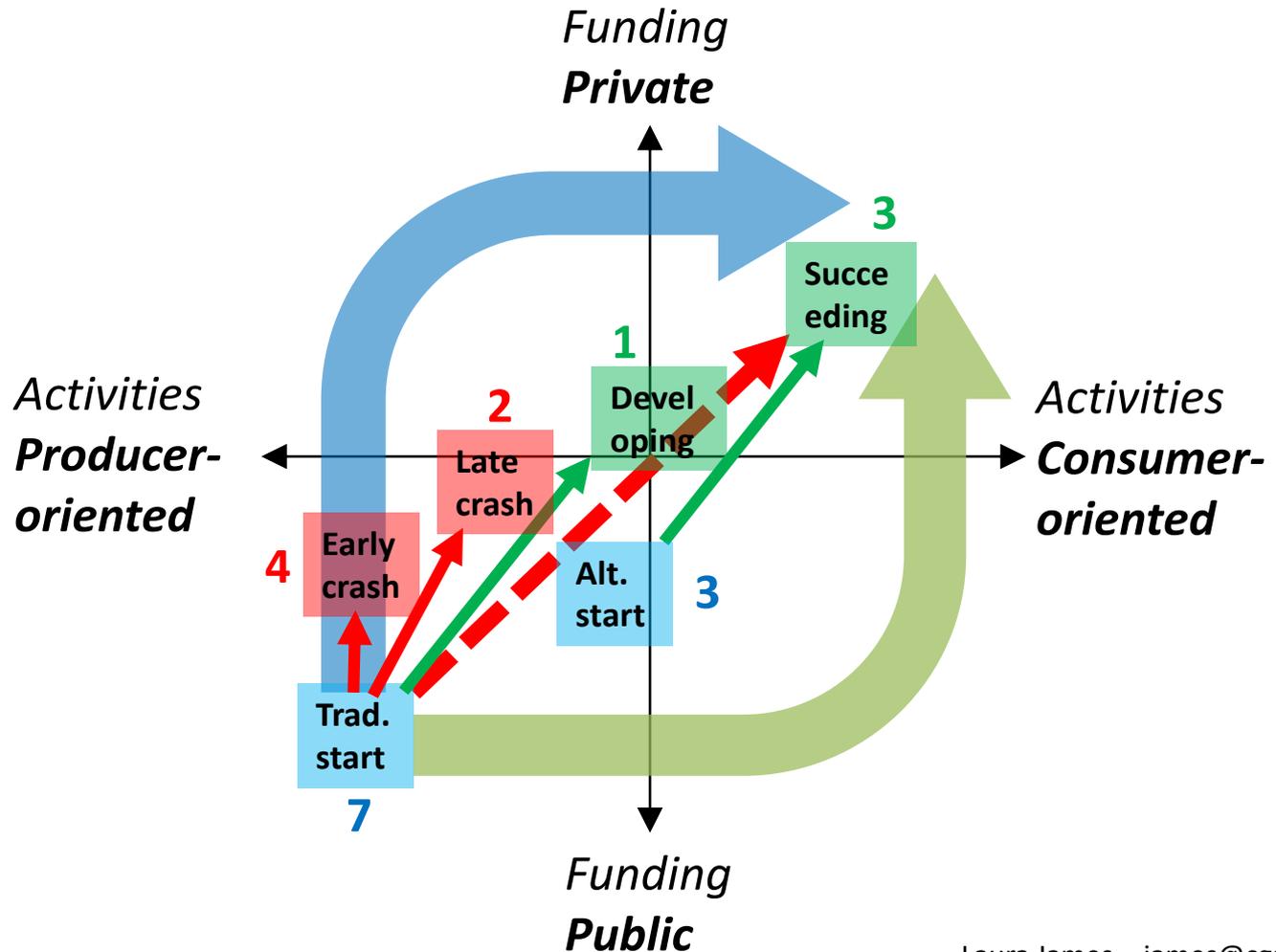
Results: Network diversity

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Initiative | 5 private | 5 public |
| Network structure | 4 nodal | 6 decentralised |
| Key funding sources | 3 activity income 3 membership fee | 6 public projects |
| Key activity targets | <i>Consumers/users:</i> 10 marketing/branding 7 interactive | <i>Producers:</i> 2 competence development |





Results: Network evolution





Conclusions and perspectives

- **Sustainable local food network characteristics**
 - Private initiatives drawing on initial public funding
 - Strong orientation towards income-generating activities
 - Private network node important
- **Stress-testing policies**
 - Short-term public project funding with shifting themes undermines continuity
 - Making small firms competent as producers and networks
 - Need for core funding for coordination of non-nodal networks
 - Early shift towards activity income more important than membership fees
- **Next steps**
 - Stronger embedding in wider literature on regional development networks
 - International comparison of local food networks important for policy learning

