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Urban festivals and the city.  
The municipality, non-profit  
organizations and commercial  
entrepreneurs as festival organizers

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## Background: From industrial to post-industrial cities

- n the decline of traditional smokestack industries in cities from the 1970's onwards
  - n the growth of services and the information sector, or as Richard Florida calls it, the creative sector/creative industries
  - n the growing significance of the *symbolic economies of cities* (Zukin): cities use culture as a new economic base
  - n a "struggle for survival" between cities
  - n culture as an innovative resource and a tool for the development of cities
  - n the economization of culture: culture is defined and evaluated increasingly according to economic criteria (investments, economic input/output, productivity etc.)
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## Innovativeness and creativity

- n creativity and innovativeness as new slogans in the economic revitalization of cities
  - n the concepts of innovativeness and creativity (Charles Landry):
    - q creativity = a process of producing fresh ideas
    - q innovativeness = a process of executing these ideas in practice
  - n > cities need both creativity and innovative solutions in their development
  - n arts and culture as an arena of creativity that can be innovatively used in the development of cities, for example in branding cities (the construction of images)
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## Why do cities promote cultural institutions and events?: Culture as an instrument for development

- n Culture has positive *social and economic impacts*, thus promoting culture benefits the city
    - q culture adds to the well-being of inhabitants, and it has the potential to decrease social conflicts and level down social cleavages
    - q culture can be used in constructing positive collective identities or images, both for people and places
    - q culture can be used in marketing cities to tourists and business enterprises
    - q culture stimulates the economy of city by creating employment and increasing tax revenues
    - q culture increases the innovativeness and creativity of cities
  - n These ideas have been emphasized in cultural policy from the 1980's onwards
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## Why do cities promote cultural institutions and events?: Culture for culture's sake

- n The city has a responsibility to promote culture (culture as part of the *welfare state model*)
    - q access to culture is a basic right of all citizens, and all individuals should have equal opportunities to cultural consumption and production (the ideal of *cultural democracy*)
    - q these opportunities should be provided primarily by municipalities
    - q this has been realized by creating a municipal cultural service system
    - q the existence of high quality culture should be ensured by the public funding of culture
  - n These ideals have been articulated in the cultural policy of the welfare state
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## Festivals as a special category of cultural institutions

- n Festivals differ from other cultural institutions in certain aspects:
    - q festivals are temporarily limited and repetitive events
    - q festivals need to rebuild their infrastructure every year
    - q festivals are usually located in public space
    - q > festivals often rely (heavily) on the support and active engagement of the local community and the municipality
  - n In branding the city, festivals are used to signify "good taste", an entertaining and cosmopolitan city atmosphere
  - n > the city needs festivals (cultural events) and festivals (cultural events) need the city
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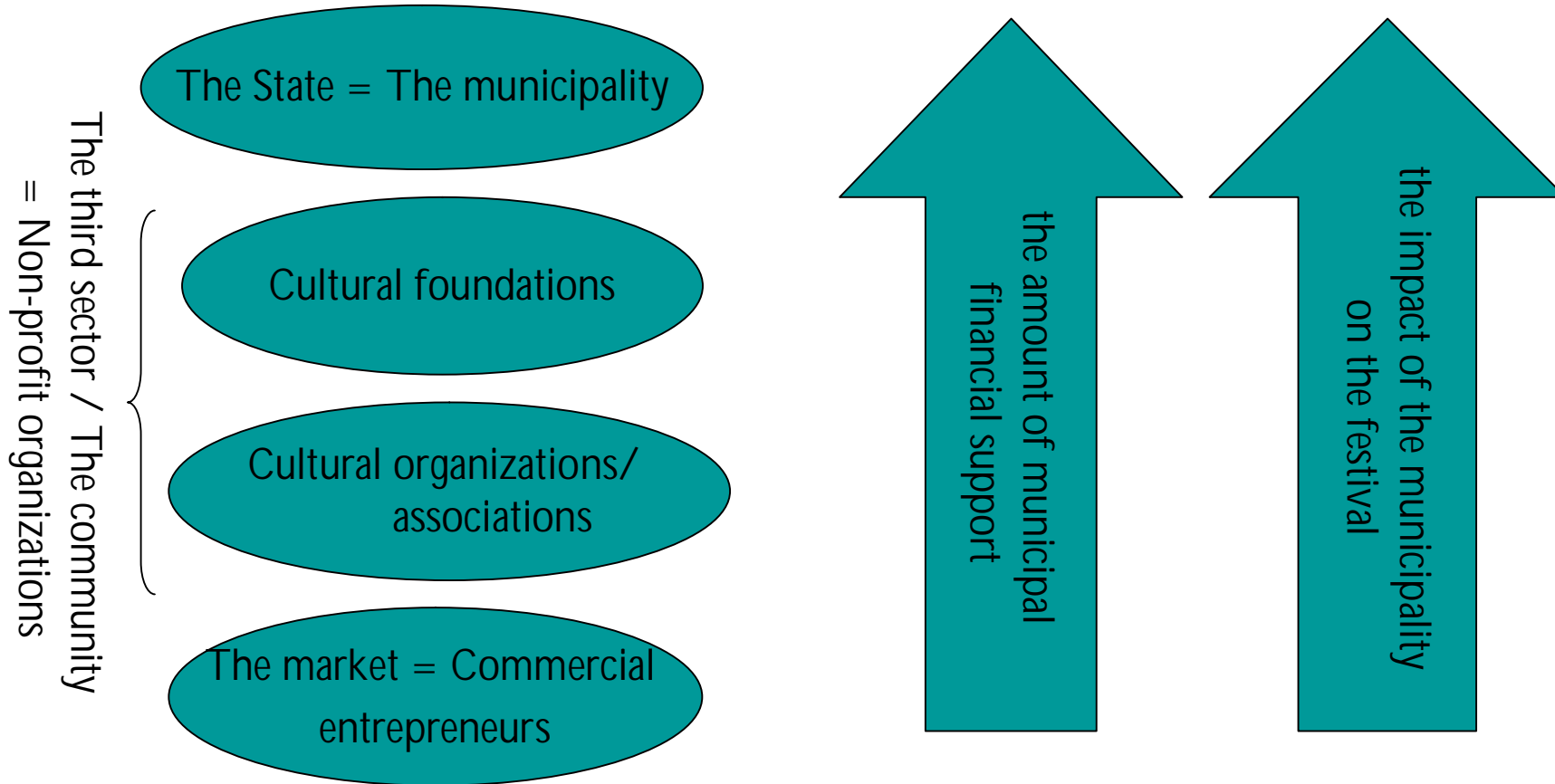
## Ruisrock as a case representing different models of organizing a (rock) festival

- n in 1970 the idea of a rock festival was generated by local youth and the city government
  - n 1970 & 1971 Ruisrock was arranged as part of an existing classical music festival, Turku Music Festival, organized by an association called the Musical Society of Turku, with the help of young rock experts and the support of the municipality
  - n in 1972 the Musical Society disclaimed responsibility for organizing the two festivals, and the municipality took up the responsibility of organizing them
  - n during 1972-1989 the festivals were organized by the music committee of the municipality
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- n during the 1980's plans were made to establish a foundation for organizing the festivals; this was realized finally in 1989
  - n during 1989-2001 the two festivals were organized by the Foundation of Turku Music Festival, which was established for this purpose by the municipality; the municipality also supported the Foundation financially
  - n in the late the 1990's the Foundation faced economic difficulties, and the municipality was forced to pay up the Foundation's debts of ca. 1 million euros; following from this, the municipality decided to put up a competitive bidding in order to find a new organizer for the festivals
  - n since 2001, Ruisrock has been organized by a commercial entrepreneur, Vantaan Festivaalit, while the Foundation of Turku Music Festival still organizes the classical music festival
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# Festivals are organized mainly by



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- n Festivals have been mainly organized by non-profit organizations, although lately commercial promoters have gained ground especially in organizing popular cultural festivals
  - n Different models of organizing festivals include different advantages and disadvantages, as well as different possibilities and risks, and these can be estimated differently by the municipality, the organizers of the festival and local inhabitants
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## Municipal festivals

- n for example Kalott Jazz & Blues Festival (Tornio & Haparanda), Tampere Biennale, Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Tampere Jazz Happening (Tampere), Kotka Seasong Festival, Kotka Maritime Festival, Children's Maritime Festival, Kymirock (Kotka), Ruisrock & Turku Music Festival (1972-1989)
  - n organized through municipal administration, for example by the cultural committee, in other words by municipal officials or local politicians
  - n the help of voluntary workers and/or experts is also often used
  - n certain decisions concerning the festival have to be handled and approved by the city council or city government
  - n financing mainly by the municipality: the municipality approves the budget and covers the net cost of the festival
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- n municipal financing makes the economy of a festival "ineffective" by hindering the acquisition of private funding (sponsoring) or providing no motivation for cutting costs
  - n fixed budgets do not enable financial risk-taking or long-term planning
  - n municipal decision making is bureaucratic and slow > festivals risk becoming (not so innovative) "bureaucratic events"
  - n municipal festivals are (in good and bad) relatively stable cultural organizations
  - n the municipality is able to impact the decision-making concerning the festival
  - n municipal festivals are threatened when they become "politicized" or the target of public criticism (for example concerning public funding and the role of the municipality in providing different kinds of services)
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## Festivals organised by non-profit organizations

- n for example Provinssirock (Selmu ry.), Helsinki Festival (Helsinki Week Foundation), Ämyrock (Ämy ry.), Faces Etnofestival (Cultural Association Etnocult), Ruisrock & Turku Music Festival (1989-2001)
  - n organized either by cultural foundation or cultural associations
  - n represents "the community" or "the third sector", is a result of grass root level cultural activity which is rooted in local culture and identity
  - n organizing the festival constitutes often only a part of the activities of non-profit organizations
  - n rely usually heavily on public funding (by the state and/or the municipality) and the help of voluntary workers
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- n the municipality is usually somehow involved in producing the festival: it may be responsible for establishing the cultural foundation, it may be officially represented in the board of the organization, or the organization may have the unofficial backing of local politicians and/or municipal officials
  - n especially cultural associations often start out as fairly flexible and innovative organizations, but run the risk of forming into "cultural bureaus" when they become institutionalized
  - n usually aim at developing the festival: realizing artistic ambitions and carrying out innovative ideas
  - n festivals often have a modest start, then tend to grow (amount of audience, program, budget) and become more differentiated
  - n taking economic risks is possible, but may lead to problems
  - n economically vulnerable, since non-profit organizations usually do not have reserve funds
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## Festivals organized by commercial entrepreneurs

- n for example Ruisrock (2001-) & Ankkarock (Vantaan Festivaalit Oy), Down by the Laituri (Turun Kesäjuhlat Ay), Sauna Open Air Festival (PartySan Production Oy), Tammerfest Urban Festival (Tammerfest Oy), Raumanmeren Juhannus (RMJ Oy)
  - n organized professionally and commercially
  - n organizers aim at making a profit, producing an economically successful festival
  - n usually no state or municipal economic support
  - n present no economic risks for the municipality
  - n the municipality effects the festival only minimally
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- n succeed in attracting sponsors, in other words attracting the interest of business enterprises
  - n succeed in attracting tourists > direct economic profit to the municipality
  - n may be less "local": commercial enterprises aim at reaching wide-ranging audiences
  - n tend to grow into mass events, causing negative side-effects
  - n negative side-effects may cause conflicts between the organizers and local residents or local politicians
  - n the future of a commercial festival depends on its economic success: when a festival encounters financial difficulties, commercial organizers have no interest to organize it any longer
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## Towards commercially organized festivals?

- n during the 1990's many festivals faced financial difficulties due to an increase in the costs of organizing festivals and a growing competition in the field of cultural events
  - n instead of public funding, festivals have been forced to acquire more income from sponsors, ticket sales and other sales (for example renting the rights to sell food or serve beer)
  - n the amount of festivals organized by commercial entrepreneurs has increased during the 1990's
  - n cities have been able to benefit from commercially organized festivals without having to invest in them or take economic risks
  - n > are commercially organized festivals ideal cases of how cities exploit culture?
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## Festivals in a creative city?

- n From the perspective of branding cities, using commercial festivals in creating a positive and creative image of the city may be difficult, if they cause considerable negative side-effects, or if the main idea and image of the festival is not based on local identity, community or culture
  - n Should festivals be judged merely according to their economic impacts? Or should festivals be supported by public funding?
  - n > Cities need different kinds of festivals in their economic strategies, and different kinds of festivals can and should be arranged by different kinds of organizers
  - n In order to be creative, festivals and festival organizations need to be flexible and open to change
  - n From the point of view of innovativeness of cities, what is needed in cultural events and organizations is balancing the ideas of economy and democracy, of control and risks
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