Competition and festival failure
Societal costs and benefits related to the rise and fall of Swedish music festivals

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Abstract

The same day that the music festival Peace & Love, at time the biggest in Sweden, declared bankruptcy, a local politician in Norrköping, wrote the following post in a public blog (hosted by one of the local newspapers): “When I today read that the Peace & Love in Borlänge goes bankrupt (outrivalled by Bråvalla festival in Norrköping), I laughed and clapped my hands. Sorry Borlänge, but I couldn´t resist. You were beaten by a better city, a better festival.”

Previous research has explained the failure of Peace & Love as a combination of three components: (1) an organization in a vulnerable position with reference to the life cycle curve (2) A strong new competitor entering the Swedish festival market, The Bråvalla festival in Norrköping, (3) Uncertainty and group dynamics changing festival visitors´behaviour.

Departing from the case of Peace & Love music festival, this paper intends to deepens the discussion of how aspects of competition and place branding can be understood in the context of festivals and events. It also discusses some possible consequences for society when events run by civic associations are closed down and replaced by privately for profit driven events.

Keywords: festival failure, event competition, place competition, event

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