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Tourism as a mixed industry: Differences between private, public and not-for-profit festivals

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses important policy and management implications of tourism as a mixed industry in which public, not-for-profit, and private organisations such as festivals both compete and collaborate in creating the tourist product. To illustrate, four samples of festivals from the UK, Australia, Norway and Sweden are systematically compared in terms of their ownership, governance, structure, and content. Although the festivals offered a similar product and had similar mandates, they differed considerably in terms of revenue sources, cost structure, use of volunteers, corporate sponsorship, and decision-making. These differences are potentially important to destinations that view festivals as attractions and use them in place marketing. Implications are drawn for festival management and tourism policy, and recommendations are made for extending this line of inquiry to the tourism industry as a whole.

1. Introduction

Tourism is a ‘mixed industry’ in which private firms, public agencies and not-for-profit associations – all of which co-exist in most societies – both compete and collaborate in creating the tourist product. As explained by Kapur and Weisbrod (2000), the term mixed industry is derived from the notion of a ‘mixed economy’, wherein the not-for-profit sector is considered alongside public and private agents in generating economic activity. Tourism policy and the industry’s health can be impacted by the values, marketing orientation, effectiveness and efficiency of each of these three forms of organization, while place marketing and destination competitiveness depends to some degree on their interactions within a local or regional network. This is especially true in the attractions and planned events sectors wherein a three-way mix is the norm.

Tourist attractions typically owned and managed by public authorities include parks and historic sites, as well as cultural, sport and recreation facilities and the events held in them. Private and voluntary organisations often supply identical attractions/events, or compete in more general terms for tourist and resident customers. Attractions, regardless of ownership, are essential for tourism and generate considerable direct and indirect economic benefits. In fact, the demand for tourism services like accommodation is often created by that part of the industry that motivates travel, including festivals and other events.

A major issue within tourism as a mixed industry is whether or not the differences between private, public and not-for-profit tourism organisations are important to overall industry health, and the achievement of tourism policy goals. For example, many governments are searching for more effective and efficient ways to deliver public goods and services, including more frequent use of public–private partnerships (the so-called ‘Triple-P’ approach), outsourcing to the private sector, and encouragement of voluntary provision by not-for-profit organisations. In tourism, the kinds of question to be asked include: can not-for-profit organisations substitute for governmental agencies in a more efficient or effective production and delivery of attractions and events? Can private firms do a better job in meeting customer needs?

Research on differences between private, public and not-for-profit organisations in other mixed industries has dealt with issues such as economic efficiency (e.g., Ryan, 1999), marketization (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004), fairness and democratic values (Benz & Frey, 2007), managers’ compensation schemes (Ballou & Weisbrod, 2003), the objective function (Brooks, 2000), and service quality (Kapur & Weisbrod, 2000). Empirical studies have been conducted on hospitals (e.g., Schlesinger & Gray, 1998), nursing homes (e.g., Weisbrod, 1997), colleges and day-care centres (e.g., Mulhare, 1999).

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The characteristics and performance of the three types of ownership in the tourism industry (or tourism policy domain) have not been studied in any depth. Most literature on tourism development and governance has merely described the existence of the three sectors. Recently there has been published an examination of impacts on Scottish attractions to find out whether the type of ownership had any influence (Garrod, Fyall, & Leask, 2002). Also, cooperation among Swedish private, public, and not-for-profit tourist organisations has been studied (Grängsjö, 2006).

The festival sector is useful in exploring tourism as a mixed industry. They are popular and universal attractions, and in most places are produced by all three types of owners, in a free market that allows for almost limitless creation of new events. It has been observed that some governments take the lead, as in China, but in many countries including North America and Europe, the not-for-profit sector is dominant. Private festivals are typically in a minority, but there has been a noticeable trend toward more privately owned events as well as private event production companies. Within an event-tourism context, local governments and destination marketing organisations have to look at their entire portfolio of festivals and make decisions about developing and promoting this mixed sector.

Festivals are specifically studied to illustrate how ownership can impact on the delivery of services and affect destination competitiveness and tourism policy. This may improve our understanding of the performance and development of the tourism industry. Festivals normally create a demand for tourism services not only at a specific place but also at a specific time. They are also somewhat unique in that they are often produced without explicit tourism-related goals, yet can still be promoted as attractions and used as image-makers by destination marketing organisations.

Festival tourism has been explicitly studied by many researchers (for a review see Getz, 2008), from many perspectives: economic impact (e.g., Formica & Uysal, 1998; Gursoy, Spangenberg, & Rutherford, 2006; McKercher, Mei, & Tse, 2006); their role in image making and place marketing (Boo & Busser, 2006; Ritchie & Beliveau, 1974); travel patterns (Bohlin, 2000); displacement effects (Brannas & Nordstrom, 2006); motivation to attend and related segmentation (Chang, 2006; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Li & Petrick, 2006; Saleh & Ryan, 1993); festival quality and visitor satisfaction (Crompton & Love, 1995); contributions to regional development (Moscardo, 2007); relationship to urban renewal or development (Cameron, 1989), and links to culture and community (Robinson, Picard, & Long, 2004).

The environment in which festivals operate has recently become a research focus, particularly with regard to stakeholder relationships (e.g., Andersson & Getz, 2007; Getz, Andersson, & Larson, 2007; Larson, 2002; Mackellar, 2006; Quinn, 2006; Richards & Ryan, 2004), but the economics of festivals has been scarcely examined (examples include: Clarke & Hoaas, 2007; Wanhill, 2006). No previously published paper has examined festivals from the mixed industry perspective, and their ownership is often ignored as an explanatory variable when examining goals, visitor orientation or impacts.

Research supporting this paper was conducted through a survey of festivals in Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia with the overall purpose of assessing various aspects of festival management, strategies employed, and issues affecting the performance and viability of festivals. This current paper has as its purpose the description and explanation of differences among the three ownership types, in the context of tourism as a mixed industry. The specific objectives of the paper are:

- determine similarities and differences among festivals according to their ownership: public, private, and not-for-profit;
- employ the concept of business models to specifically compare governance, content and structure among the festivals;
- describe how the ownership of festivals affects their performance within a tourism context;
- draw implications for tourism as a mixed industry.

2. Tourism as a mixed industry

2.1. Definition and concept

A mixed economy embodies elements of both central planning and/or government enterprise with some degree of private enterprise and a free market. In practice, this seems to define most of the world's political economies, to a greater or lesser extent. Tourism policy and development in particular is now commonly undertaken through collaboration and partnerships between governments and the private sector. However, tourism as a mixed industry also includes the voluntary or not-for-profit sector, and this is especially true in the attractions and events sectors.

How should the performance of firms and organisations in a mixed industry be assessed? This is potentially a complex challenge, given the need to achieve both public and private goals. For example, can all festivals, regardless of ownership, equally create a 'public good' by attracting and satisfying tourists, providing age-targeted entertainment for residents, fostering appreciation of, and participation in arts and cultural pursuits, or engendering community pride and inter-group cohesion? These are all typical aims of public and not-for-profit festivals, but are they at all compatible with a private-sector pursuit of profit?

Another issue is the supposed inefficiency of governmental agencies (i.e., too much waste, and structurally high labour costs) and the assumption that the private or not-for-profit sectors will provide services of equal value and quality, but more cheaply. Private firms in the tourism industry generally consider that they can do a more effective job of promoting destinations, but also typically require direct public funding or tax support to do it well. At the same time, there is a deep-seated belief that government should not compete directly, or at least unfairly, with the private sector.

In the festivals sector, revealed by case studies in Calgary (Getz et al., 2007) there is widespread belief among not-for-profit associations that they deliver services that governments should be providing, thereby justifying public subsidies. Private festivals often believe they are disadvantaged relative to both public and not-for-profit events in terms of not being able to get government grants; they have to have a superior product and/or be highly targeted.

As argued by Warde (1992) in the context of leisure services, research is needed into relationships between production, access, method of delivery and the experience of consumption. He suggested that the pleasure a service provides does not directly depend on its mode of production, whether by public, voluntary or private-sector organisations. This reasoning certainly applies to tourism-oriented festivals and attractions, but there are often additional social and cultural goals involved that complicate the issue.

2.2. Private firms

A private firm produces goods and services and has business-like relationships with customers and suppliers. Careful management of the supply chain and entrepreneurial attention to opportunities in the value chain are necessary. Profit is a goal that secures long-term survival, and it is usually necessary to generate high revenues as well as maintain low costs in order to attain the goal. A customer or marketing orientation is generally necessary, although family businesses and lifestyle entrepreneurs sometimes place their own interests ahead of customer demands and profit maximisation.

One frequently-heard argument against private-sector provision of arts and culture is that it results in 'commodification', turning something of intrinsic social and cultural value into a mere product for sale (discussed in Coalter, 1998: 23). This is somewhat equivalent to the use of the term 'festivalization' (Richards, 2007) when applied to the overuse or misuse of festivals in place marketing, although often it is local governments that promote and develop festivals this way. The core of this argument is a belief, or simply a fear, that the private sector exploits and spoils culture in pursuit of profit. A counterargument is that the private sector is often better at meeting the public's real and expressed needs by delivering high-quality products that people are willing to pay for (i.e., a 'consumer orientation'), as opposed to the perceived propensity of public or voluntary sectors to offer only what they want to, regardless of demand (i.e., a 'product orientation').

The idea that private-sector provision will exclude those who cannot afford the prices charged (i.e., the so-called 'marginalized' or 'disadvantaged' groups), also has to be questioned in light of the fact that the low prices or free entry associated with subsidised public services has not always led to increased participation by the intended beneficiaries, presumably because it is something they do not actually want to do (Gratton & Taylor, 1995). Furthermore, participation in free services or events is not a true measure of what people want or need.

Not-for-profit organisations can act much like the private or public sectors. A study of Canadian visitor and convention bureaux (Getz, Anderson, & Sheehan, 1998) found that these organisations were mostly not-for-profit, membership-based organisations that were dominated by the industry, but included some that were operated directly by local governments. They did not normally engage in product development, but events were the one 'product' that many of them did produce or invest in because the local industry needed intervention to create demand in the off-peak seasons.

2.3. Public sector (government)

Why is there public-sector involvement in tourism, community development, entertainment, the arts and culture – all of which are policy domains that encompass festivals? Cultural celebrations and the arts in general are often viewed as 'merit goods' which, for ideological reasons, are judged to be beneficial to the public (or some target group), regardless of expressed economic demand. More specifically, the 'social equity' argument (see Getz, 2007: 331), considers principles of fairness, justice and need when governments subsidize or provide arts and entertainment.

Insufficient demand might exist to enable private provision. Some cultural attractions and events that are expensive to produce and in relatively low demand will require subsidies and, therefore, are 'merit goods' – but the same might be said for events and activities provided for the public to simply have a party. Sometimes it is just assumed, or has become politically acceptable, that the government should provide culture and leisure services (Coalter, 1998, 2000), without questioning whether or not the private and voluntary sectors could do just as good a job.

Natural and cultural resources, tourist attractions, and many public events can also be interpreted as public goods which anyone can consume, and they are not diminished in any way by an individual's consumption. In this sense, a free-entry festival is literally for everyone, and governments justify them by reference to the desired externalities they generate such as social cohesion, civic pride, or heightened tourist attractiveness. The tourist, in such cases, receives a subsidy from a foreign government and is, therefore, a kind of 'free rider', but an invited one.

Intervention by government in tourism is generally based on a combination of the merit good argument and the theory of 'market failure'. Mules and Dwyer (2006), for example, suggested that fewer sporting venues would be built and fewer events held without public-sector support, because market forces will not normally justify private investment. Subsidies to private and voluntary organisations are similarly justified.

In the case of tourism it is often politically accepted that tourism generates a wide range of economic and social/cultural benefits for the people, but it is so fragmented and diffuse that only governments or public–private agencies can manage and market it. Pearce (1992: 8) recognized that general promotion of a destination can be viewed as a public good because of all the benefits it generates, while Hall (2005: 139–157) discussed the roles and methods by which governments intervene, namely: entrepreneurship and stimulation (including investments, incentives and subsidies); legislation and regulation, planning and coordinating.

Governments can justify their intervention by calculating return on investment (especially as event tourism generates substantial taxes), and demonstrating that public venues and infrastructure will be used more efficiently as more events are held. It is also increasingly recognized that tourism development consumes resources, generates wastes, and otherwise imposes negative impacts that have to be prevented or at least managed through various government interventions including regulations, planning, and incentives.

The creation of value for visitors (measured generally through their demand for visits and satisfaction with experiences) can also be justified as a tool in place marketing, because it can potentially contribute to goodwill and peace, and is an essential feature of open, democratic societies. Achieving and sustaining destination competitiveness is a necessary condition for realizing the public benefits. In this framework of public service, governments at all levels elect to participate to varying degrees in tourism industry development and marketing.

Customer relations in this context are often quite different, as the public organization might be the sole provider of a service and not at all dependent on direct revenue from customers. Allocations from taxes substitute for sales revenue. Customer influence can, however, be realized through the political system. For long-term survival, public organisations and the tasks they perform must retain legitimacy in the minds of those served.

Differences in what is expected and accepted in the way of government services and subsidies are widespread and subject to change. While it was once the norm for governments to both develop and promote tourism, in many countries it is now mostly an industry function or a public–private partnership. It is obvious that many governments believe it is necessary to justify their involvement with events, for example, by promising numerous (and often exaggerated) public benefits arising from image enhancement and tourism expenditures.

2.4. Voluntary, not-for-profit organisations

Not-for-profit associations (which are sometimes also charitable societies) are based on common goals and interests among members. They are usually focused on self-defined community service covering everything from health and education to culture and religion. They are also formed to act in the interest of business in general (e.g., chambers of commerce) or specific industries, such as destination marketing organisations. And they are also the realm of 'social entrepreneurship' whereby founders set out to fulfil a dream and/or create employment for themselves. Numerous facilities that act as tourist attractions and event venues are not-for-profit organisations, including convention and exhibition centres, zoos, museums, galleries, parks, historic sites, sport and cultural facilities.

The association or society works to achieve the goals and interests of its members, and depending on local legislation, is usually governed by an elected and unpaid board of directors. Membership at all levels is formally voluntary, but social pressure to join or run for office might sometimes be considerable. Professional staff can certainly be retained. Management should be based on democratic principles for decision-making. The long-term survival of an association depends on the degree to which it succeeds in sustaining its membership and producing benefits for its members and other key stakeholders – which in turn should ensure adequate resources.

Social entrepreneurship is often at the root of the establishment of institutions and other not-for-profit organisations such as festivals. In these cases, one or a few individuals create new organisations as a means to achieve their personal goals, which include generating an income. This has also been called "cultural entrepreneurship" by Acheson, Maule, and Filleul (1996: 321) regarding a film festival. In their case study the festival was started by…

> "…nonprofit team entrepreneurship that provides a cultural service with high value but, because of transaction costs, low revenue potential. The organizers of such services can appropriate some of the surplus created by charging fees, but this revenue is insufficient to cover costs. The remaining finance must come from private and public patronage."

2.5. Differences and convergence of organisational values and goals

Differences based on ownership are not always as clear-cut as those indicated in the descriptions above. The political movement around 'reinventing government', in which politicians set the policy and then enable a variety of organisations to deliver the services, has created a market where not-for-profit organisations, private businesses, and public organisations compete – with efficiency as a major criterion. It is also common to see public–private partnerships (the 'Triple P' approach) established to provide infrastructure, goods and services, particularly where the capital costs are high.

Several public administration scholars are concerned that the values of the private market will harm democracy and citizenship. Their concern is that the so-called 'marketization' of the public and not-for-profit sectors will be reflected in a more commercial focus on revenue generation, contract competition, and the influence of new and emerging donors or commercial sponsors (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). The merits of public governance are brought forward by Benz and Frey (2007) when they suggest that governance of large corporations has much to learn from public governance. In light of frequent corporate scandals, public governance seems to have better procedures for determining manager compensation, the division of power, rules of succession in top positions, as well as institutionalized competition in core areas.

Benz and Frey (2007) and Eldenburg and Krishnan (2003) have provided empirical evidence with different emphases on manager compensation. The argument by Eldenburg and Krishnan (2003) is that organisations governed by publicly elected boards of directors, and where board decisions are subject to continual public scrutiny, will compensate CEOs less than comparable privately owned organisations. It is argued that this will result in a lower quality of management and consequently lower performance measures. From a sample of 1466 hospitals in California, it was concluded that CEO compensation in public district hospitals was significantly lower than in not-for-profit organisations, and that operating margins in district hospitals were lower and deteriorating. A number of other factors that could explain differences in the performance measures were ruled out and it was concluded that weak governance structure hampers district hospitals.

Brooks (2000) made an extensive survey of the objectives of American not-for-profit managers and concluded that service maximisation was dominating, but it was maintained that fundraising budgets were insufficient to meet this objective. Ryan (1999) identified a new landscape for not-for-profit organisations where they now have to face more competition from private firms but will also be able to act more commercially to benefit from their competitive advantages. Not-for-profit organisations may need to change business activities in ways that may compromise their mission in order to gain market shares but must not, in the process, forget to be responsive to their clients and communities.

2.6. Output quantity and quality

Not-for-profit organisations in two mixed industries, nursing homes and mentally handicapped facilities, were found to have a higher output quality compared to government public organisations in the same industries (Kapur & Weisbrod, 2000). The differences were not dramatic, but were consistent when measured in terms of consumer satisfaction.

Hansmann's (1980) theory postulated that not-for-profit organisations are best adapted to situations where consumers are incapable of accurately evaluating the goods or services promised or delivered, so they cannot find the best "bargain" or enforce it once made. Trust is a big part of the not-for-profit organisations' appeal, based on the assumption or claim that since no profits are being taken home the producers will look after the consumers' best interests.

A similar argument in favour of not-for-profit production is based on the economic theory of the firm. Throsby and Withers (1979) claimed that not-for-profit organisations produce at a lower price and higher output level. The theory assumes that a profit maximising firm will produce a quantity where marginal revenue is equal to marginal cost. In a monopolistic situation, a profit maximising firm will, therefore, not produce the quantity that will minimise the cost per unit but a lower quantity that will maximise profit. A not-for-profit firm will, therefore, produce more output at a lower unit cost than a profit maximising firm will. In order to sell a larger quantity, the not-for-profit firm will also set a lower price. Thus, the conclusion from an economic analysis is that, in a monopolistic situation, a not-for-profit firm will produce a larger quantity at a lower unit cost and sell at a lower unit price than a profit maximising firm will. This may be used as an argument for achieving higher effects if, for example, not-for-profit firms in the cultural sector are subsidised rather than profit maximising firms.

Applying this theory to culture, including many festivals, it can be suggested that where the social objective is to create more cultural experiences, or more output where economic demand is weak (as in opera), subsidies to not-for-profit organisations are justified. Some economists (e.g.,West, 1987, 1989) dispute this, and in particular argue that not-for-profit managers are likely to use subsidies to increase their costs.

Several studies conclude that the efficiency of operations run by government is lower than the efficiency of corresponding operations run by private or not-for-profit organisations. Oum, Adler, and Yu (2006) compared productive efficiency and profitability among airports with different ownership structures. They found strong evidence that airports with government majority ownership are significantly less efficient than airports with a private majority ownership. Airports with a private majority ownership have significantly higher operating profit margins than other airports.

Patients in not-for-profit institutions rated the output quality higher than patients in government institutions did (Kapur &

Weisbrod, 2000) but surprisingly, the same study found that labour input in government facilities was about three times higher than in not-for-profit institutions. Additional labour input would be expected to imply better quality care.

Applications of this line of theoretical investigation in tourism are rare. Tourists' quality perceptions of Scottish attractions have been compared in terms of ownership status (trusts, private, local government and national government) but no significant differences in visitor impact could be explained by ownership (Garrod et al., 2002). Qu, Ennew, and Sinclair (2005) studied market orientation in China and compared state to non-state ownership in the hotel industry. It was found that non-state hotels are significantly (10%) more market oriented than state-owned hotels.

2.7. Dynamics in mixed industries

The role played by not-for-profit organisations in American and European economies has become increasingly important. The number of not-for-profit firms in the USA tripled from 1967 to 1997, and the share of GDP had doubled since 1975 to be more than 10% in 1990 (Herman, 1995). Much of this growth has been in the health and childcare sectors and not-for-profit firms seem to be the second choice when government organisations no longer are able to provide satisfactory services (Weisbrod, 1997).

Not-for-profit organisations may be seen as responding to government failure in producing collective goods in a market with heterogeneous demands where they can provide additional quantity and quality (Weisbrod, 1998). Another view of the interdependence between government and not-for-profit firms is that government may prefer financing not-for-profit production because this is more efficient (James, 1986) than in public production.

Traditionally, not-for-profit organisations have been a natural alternative to government in providing services typically identified with government such as museums and schools (Weisbrod, 1997) but large private firms have challenged not-for-profit organisations in this market (Ryan, 1999). Therefore, organisational goals of public organisations and particularly not-for-profit organisations have changed to become more market oriented.

In a study of nursing homes and facilities for the handicapped in the USA, Kapur and Weisbrod (2000) compared consumer satisfaction and labour input among not-for-profit and governmental providers. They saw much larger differences in institutional behaviour in 1976 compared with 1986, and concluded that growing regulation and changing market conditions had forced government and not-for-profit firms to act more alike.

In tourism, there may be a similar role for not-for-profit organisations to provide services to the community – services that also generate opportunities for the tourism industry. Cultural activities are sometimes funded by public money, but not always fully financed. Not-for-profit organisations involved in organising cultural activities may, therefore, receive a part of their financing from public sources and part in the form of business revenue. Therefore, not-for-profit organisations occupy a borderline area where they encroach on both public services and private commerce. They are in a position where they can cooperate with both sectors.

Not-for-profit organisations, however, risk being accused of commercialising public services on one hand, and for unfair, publicly-subsidised competition with private firms on the other. If profit is not an objective, then revenue, as a measure of size and growth, tends to become the primary objective for not-for-profit organisations. This may entice aggressive expansion strategies.

3. Method and analysis

3.1. Study design

This study is based on an exploratory design wherein four samples of festivals were systematically compared in order to determine how ownership influenced management. Samples obtained in each country are quite different, and one of the advantages of cross-country comparison is to reveal diversity. The major festivals in Sweden, all involving live music performances, belong to the association FHP with the purpose of facilitating collaboration and the exchange of knowledge. The managers of this group of 16 festivals agreed to take part in the research, and 14 of them answered an extensive questionnaire covering questions about their present governance, management, changes and threats. These are relatively large festivals scattered across the country, both in large cities and small towns. Analysis of this sample in isolation has been reported elsewhere (Getz & Andersson, 2008).

In Norway, a complete census of all self-titled festivals in the northernmost region of Finnmark was undertaken, resulting in 58 responses. This is a more diverse group of festivals than in Sweden, and they are mostly small, community-based events.

The UK sample was gathered from a database of organisations that were members of BAFA (The British Arts Festivals Association). BAFA is a membership organization covering the widest span of arts festivals in the UK. These include some of the large international cultural events, such as the Edinburgh International Festival and Brighton Festival, through to small festivals such as the Winchester Hat Fair and the Corsham Festival in Wiltshire. The response was a total of 43 useable questionnaires that covered a diverse range of events in terms of form, size, funding and geographical location and could, therefore, be reflective of many festivals within the UK.

The Australian sample frame was a database of festivals compiled from public domain websites in Western Australia, such as local government and event organizers' websites. The response was a total of 78 useable questionnaires. Western Australia is a large state with a sparse population in the north, however, the majority of the respondents were from the city of Perth and rural areas in the east and south of the state, thus providing a diverse range of festivals, staging contexts and programs.

The survey instrument was in large part an extension of previous festival stakeholder research, and was first developed and applied to the Swedish sample (in Swedish). It was then translated into Norwegian and English for use in the other countries. The questionnaire began with questions designed to profile the festivals in terms of vision/mandate, ownership, age, size, assets, venues used, decision-making structure and programs. Costs and revenues were examined in some detail, including trends in each category. Festivals' use of volunteers and sponsors was specifically addressed as was the festival's level of dependence on various stakeholders.

Note that these surveys were not intended to profile the festival sector in specific cities or defined tourist destinations. While it enables a direct comparison between festivals by reference to ownership, it does not permit analysis of how the three types might co-exist and interact within a community. The previously published research on festivals in Calgary (Getz et al., 2007) did reveal the co-existence of all three types in that city, and concluded that they had very little to do with each other (individually and by type). It was revealed that there were some interdependencies, such as the occasional lobbying effort, and there was competition for sponsors and audiences. It was a very weakly networked sector in which local government did not play a leading role, and the tourism industry was largely an uninterested bystander.

A key methodological concern was to find a comparative system, so the concept of 'business model' has been employed for this purpose.

There is a diversity of definitions of business model in the academic literature, although all these definitions seem to cover much common ground, and it provides a framework for describing various types of firms and organisations that offer products on the market.

A recent survey identified 30 definitions (Morris, Schindehutte, & Allen, 2005). Boissy (2005) proposed: "*Business models are frameworks for the conditions under which goods and services will be made available to a specific market.*" In a study of value creation in E-business, Amit and Zott (2001) concluded by suggesting three dimensions to be used for describing value creation, and these three dimensions constitute a business model. '*Content*' comprises products that are exchanged and the resources needed for this exchange. '*Structure*' refers to the network of stakeholders involved and the relations that hold the network together. Structure influences the flexibility and scalability of the business. '*Governance*' describes how flows, information and resources are controlled, as well as the legal form of the organization.

> Their definition of a business model is the one being used herein:
> "*A business model depicts the content, structure, and governance of transactions designed so as to create value through the exploitation of business opportunities*" (Amit & Zott, 2001: 511).

This study is, therefore, directed toward measuring how the ownership component of governance affects structure and content. Content is controlled to a certain extent, since all festivals organisations produce similar services.

3.2. Profile of the festivals

The combined, four-country sample of 193 festivals has been grouped and compared by reference to ownership. The 'public' group encompasses those festivals where costs and revenues are largely internalized by local authorities or other government bodies. The 'not-for-profit' category is the largest group consisting of 113 (59%) festivals. In the 'private' group, private investors risk their capital to hopefully create a profit-making festival. This group consists of 22 (11%) festivals. Public festivals make up 41 (21%) of the total number of responding festivals.

Not-for-profit festivals have been able to survive for a significantly longer period (23 years) than public festivals (15 years), whereas there was not a significant difference between not-for-profit and private festivals (23 years and 22 years, respectively). Public festivals were by far the largest in terms of visitor numbers. However, in terms of average monetary turnover, the private festivals were bigger (2.2 million AUSD) compared to 1.4 million AUSD for public festivals and 1.1 million AUSD for not-for-profit festivals. Not-for-profit festivals had fewer year-round employees, (ave. 0.8) than the public festivals (ave. 1.4). On the other hand, not-for-profit festivals used many more volunteers (111 compared to 30) and considerably fewer paid employees (5.6 compared to 21.6) during the festival period than public festivals did.

3.3. Content

Content refers to the programme of the festivals, as well as revenues and costs. By comparing revenue sources, a picture of the importance of the audience compared to other income-generating stakeholders is obtained, while cost comparisons reveal how much emphasis is placed on expensive artists, compared to other types of entertainment. There were only minor differences in the experiences provided by the three types of festivals (Table 1), as most festivals provided live musical entertainment and food. Public festivals appeared to be more restrictive regarding sales of alcoholic beverages.

Table 1
Percentages of festivals with specific programme elements.

Business model		Live music	Dance performances	Visual Art (*)	Exhibitions	Food	Alcoholic beverage (*)
Public ($n=40$)	Mean	93%	73%	60%	50%	85%	35%
Not-for-profit ($n=111$)	Mean	86%	57%	53%	55%	75%	60%
Private ($n=22$)	Mean	91%	50%	36%	59%	82%	68%
Total (n = 173)	Mean	86%	59%	50%	52%	83%	55%

*Significant differences at the 1% level.

Although similar services were provided, there were differences in how they generated income (Table 2). Public festivals relied heavily on local government grants and only to a small extent on ticket revenue. Not-for-profit festivals obtained only 13% of their income from local government grants, with a large share (36%) accruing from ticket sales. Private festivals had developed better financing from ticket sales and corporate sponsorship. Rent or fees from concessions was another income source that was more developed by private festivals.

Festivals were also asked about the income trend during the last five years, revealing that public festivals had increased local government grants and decreased the importance of ticket sales. Not-for-profit festivals and private festivals had increased sponsorship, merchandise sales, ticket sales and income from concessions significantly more than the public festivals.

The cost structure also reveals differences, as not-for-profit festivals spent relatively more on artists' fees than the other types of festivals (Table 3). This was also reflected in the cost of music royalties. Public festivals spent significantly more on wages and on construction work.

Regarding the five-year trend for costs, it was found that public festivals had been increasing their spending on construction more than not-for-profit and private festivals. Not-for-profit festivals had been increasing their spending on artists, more than public and private festivals.

3.4. Structure

Structure describes major stakeholders with particular emphasis on sponsors and volunteers. Public festivals rated the local authority as their most important stakeholder, whereas not-for-profit and private festivals both rated spectators as being the most important. Government agencies that give grants were more important for public festivals.

The media were rated as being an important stakeholder by all types of festivals, but significantly more by private festivals. Although artists and light and sound suppliers represented a large share of the cost, those stakeholders were not rated as being very important, and furthermore, international artists were rated as being less important than other artists. Private festivals considered themselves to be the most dependent on artists. All types of festivals considered themselves highly dependent on venues and facilities.

Some festivals not only had a fee-paying part, but also provided (normally in the morning or early afternoon) free entertainment by a programme aimed primarily at the local population. These programmes were in effect subsidised by the fee-paying part of the programme. This free programming seems to serve an important purpose in creating goodwill and local support for the festival among local residents. Public festivals used public space and streets more than the other types.

The concept of 'title sponsor', whereby a sponsor adds its own brand name to that of the festival, is not yet very common. About 10% of the

Table 2
Revenue sources in terms of percentages of total revenues.

Business model		Local govt support (*)	Senior Govt. grants	Sponsors	Ticket sales (*)	Own merch. (*)	Rents	Other
Public ($n=33$)	Mean	52%	16%	14%	18%	1%	12%	36%
Not-for-profit ($n=78$)	Mean	13%	16%	18%	36%	12%	13%	21%
Private ($n=16$)	Mean	11%	7%	21%	50%	4%	21%	14%
Total ($n=127$)	Mean	23%	15%	18%	34%	11%	13%	22%

*Significant differences at the 1% level.

festivals had a title sponsor (Table 4) with no significant differences between ownership types. Most festivals used a combination of large and small sponsors, with a preference for small sponsors.

In the not-for-profit festivals, volunteers were an important part of their business model (Table 5). Many (44%) of the not-for-profit festivals had volunteers represented on the board, and their volunteers were also significantly more involved on a year-round basis. An alternative to having one's own volunteers is to pay an association, such as a sports club, to perform and be responsible for a specific task. The majority of all types of festivals used that system.

3.5. Governance

Governance begins with ownership, but is also described by the festivals' visions and strategies. Fig. 1 is a list of some vision statements, describing in essence the purpose and aims of the festival. A comparison is also made of how decisions are made and the decision-making structure of the festival (Table 6).

Not-for-profit festivals reported that more decisions are taken by the board and committees, whereas the owner and the manager played a more important role in private festivals that seem to have had tighter and more direct control. The life-spans of CEOs were significantly longer in private festivals than in not-for-profit and public festivals.

A few other differences were noticed in the strategies employed by festivals. Public and not-for-profit festivals were significantly more concerned about community service, whereas private festivals were significantly more concerned about change and re-invention. Significantly, more not-for-profit festivals had managed to put money aside for a rainy day. Most festivals had convinced media to become official sponsors and most festivals had also successfully converted suppliers into sponsors (to reduce costs).

Branding and brand control was rated as a very important strategy by most festivals. As well, most festivals had successfully developed a set of core values to be used as a basis for branding, and most had successfully used the program and marketing together to create a strong brand identity. Private festivals had licensed the use of their festival name and/or logo significantly more than others.

4. Discussion and conclusions

4.1. Theory regarding mixed industries

Many of the revealed differences between the three ownership types can be analysed in terms of the economic theory described earlier. The starting point can be goals and objectives, and pertinent to these are results of an extensive study of managerial rewards in private, governmental and not-for-profit organisations (Ballou & Weisbrod, 2003) which indicated that these three organisational forms vary in the objectives they pursue.

Whereas in theory a private festival tends to expand only as long as this will have a positive impact on its profit, a not-for-profit festival is not constrained by the profit motive and may stretch expansion further. A public festival typically has to keep within budget constraints, and has no inherent drive for expansion; rather, political and tax issues might be factors that influence their growth.

The common observation that the festival sector is dominated by not-for-profit organisations was found to be true in the UK, Australia, Norway and Sweden samples. There were on average 59% not-for-profit festivals compared to 21% public and 11% private festivals in our sample (9% missing answers). However, the market for festivals is growing and tensions are likely to increase. Not-for-profit festivals might have to accept declining public financial support as they reach out for new markets. Several not-for-profit festivals had developed private subsidiaries to provide management services during off-season on a purely commercial basis. The barriers between not-for-profit and private festivals seem to be crumbling as not-for-profit festivals enter the market for commercial services.

The focus on quality entertainment was strong in not-for-profit festivals. On the other hand, the vision statements reflected inward-looking preferences for not-for-profit festivals, rather than customer preferences regarding what artists to contract. "We produce a festival that we would like to visit ourselves" (Arvikafestivalen) was a typical vision statement. It is possible to compare this to the results of a study by Voss and Voss (2000) examining the impact of three strategic orientations: customer, competitor, and product orientation on the performance of not-for-profit theatre companies. The most unambiguous result was that customer orientation exhibits a negative association with subscriber ticket sales, total income, and net surplus or deficit. Voss and Voss suggested that seasons-ticket subscribers might prefer to be challenged, and not merely given what customers asked for. Under those circumstances, it could be better to focus on customer relationship building than on specific programming decisions.

Wages constitute a higher share of total costs for public festivals than for not-for-profit festivals. Private firms also spend relatively more on wages than not-for-profit festivals do. This supports findings by Francois (2001) that not-for-profit firms are able to motivate their employees at lower cost than private firms. One explanation given is that employees care about the effect of their labour.

Table 3
Cost items in terms of percentages of total costs.

Business model		Artists' fees	Artists' expenses	Light & sound	Wages (*)	Construction	Royalty
Public ($n=29$)	Mean	27%	11%	14%	17%	19%	2%
Not-for-profit ($n=83$)	Mean	27%	10%	9%	11%	12%	3%
Private ($n=18$)	Mean	23%	12%	9%	16%	12%	1%
Total ($n=130$)	Mean	26%	10%	10%	14%	14%	2%

*Significant differences at the 1% level.

Table 4
Type of sponsor relations maintained by the festivals.

Business model		No sponsor	Title	Major	Small	Other
Public ($n=37$)	Mean	3%	8%	16%	46%	27%
Not-for-profit ($n=106$)	Mean	0%	10%	10%	49%	25%
Private ($n=22$)	Mean	6%	9%	9%	50%	32%
Total ($n=165$)	Mean	6%	10%	12%	46%	26%

Table 5
Type of volunteer relations maintained by the festivals.

Business model		Adm. by festival	Adm. by other assoc's.	Assoc. are paid	On the Board (*)	Help all year (*)	Help only at festival
Public ($n = 40$)	Mean	38%	63%	73%	13%	18%	65%
Not-for-profit ($n = 110$)	Mean	29%	71%	60%	44%	56%	64%
Private ($n = 22$)	Mean	38%	62%	81%	18%	23%	59%
Total ($n = 172$)	Mean	30%	70%	66%	33%	42%	64%

*Significant differences at the 1% level.

The self-centred attitude of not-for-profit festivals also leaves its marks on the structure. Their most important stakeholder for not-for-profit festivals is the audience. Public festivals are fairly similar to private festivals in terms of stakeholder management. Public festivals are of course more dependent on public money from government stakeholders and less on ticket sales, which is why they regard the audience as a stakeholder of lesser importance. An interesting stakeholder strategy has been to convert media and suppliers to become sponsors and thus change stakeholder roles.

Public festivals do pursue corporate sponsorship to acquire financial support. Private festivals were still more successful than both public and not-for-profit festivals in generating revenue from sponsors, but the trend is equally positive for all types of festivals as the importance attached to sponsors was equal for the three types of festivals. This may be another area of future tension between different business models and an area where barriers between the types are being challenged.

Volunteer work is a characteristic of not-for-profit festivals, and data from this study reveal clearly that volunteers play a more important role in terms of power and influence in not-for-profit festivals. Weisbrod (1997) also underlined this characteristic of not-for-profit organisations and pointed to the opportunity that not-for-profit organisations provide for people who wish to volunteer.

The decision styles are different for the three business models. Private festivals are more direct, whereas not-for-profit festivals often take important decisions by committees or the board. Once the necessary political decisions are taken for public festivals, they are run with direct decisions taken by the public official or manager in charge. Not-for-profit festivals seem to be formal, with much emphasis on committees and board meetings. Mulhare (1999) studied the widespread use of strategic planning by not-for-profit organisations in U.S. and concluded that in some cases the use of strategic planning may be unnecessary and even counterproductive.

A study by Voss, Cable, and Voss (2000) of 97 not-for-profit theatres concluded that results hint at underlying tensions between competing values in cultural firms, such as pressures to be both artistic- and market oriented. Festivals are in many ways a cultural firm wherein the balance between a high-quality artistic festival, on one hand, and a festival drawing large numbers of spectators on the other hand, is an ongoing issue for discussion.

4.2. Does ownership matter?

The comparison of public, not-for-profit and private festivals in the UK, Australia, Norway and Sweden revealed that they offered similar festival experiences. In other words, the festival sector itself could be defined as a mixed industry with substitutable products being delivered by three ownership types. However, the analysis was not of the festival sector within one specific destination, but of festivals across the four countries.

Important differences did exist between the three types of festival ownership, with the main one being the cost to consumers. These differences are similar to what has been found in studies of other mixed industries. Issues related to governance and democratic values are more prominent in public and not-for-profit festivals (cf. Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004), and particularly the power of the board in not-for-profit festivals which may also lead to a counterproductive emphasis on strategic planning (Mulhare, 1999).

The focus on high output quality in not-for-profit festivals is similar to results from the health sector (Kapur & Weisbrod, 2000). Efficiency is partly revealed by a high labour productivity in not-for-profit festivals, similar to a study of the health sector (Kapur & Weisbrod, 2000). Another indicator of efficiency may be the ability

Public Festivals

- To produce and deliver a festival for all people living in Malmoe (Malmoefestivalen)
- To create a partyfor all citizens of Gothenburg (Goteborgskalaset)
- The festival should be an annual event with the objective to present a broad supply of activities to young people in culture, music and sports as well as to be a platform to expose other youth activity taking place the year around. (UNG08)
- To market Karlshamn (the town) and to increase the cultural exchange with other countries around the Baltic Sea (Ostersjofestivalen).

Not-for-profit Festivals

- We produce a festival that we would like to visit ourselves (Arvikafestivalen)
- A festival for all (Kirunafestivalen)
- To produce a successful rock festival indoors during the winter in Norrland (Umea Open)

Private Festivals

- To create one of Sweden's most pleasant places to perform at. (Gavle Cityfest)
- To create a yearly free experiential event in collaboration with industry partners as well as other partners. To reinforce the identity of Gavle (the town) as a town full of life and enriching for people living and working there. (Gavle Cityfest)
- To become the leading Metal festival in Sweden (Gates of Metal)

Fig. 1. Mission statements provided by Swedish respondents.

Table 6
Decision style in festivals; where are major decisions taken?

Business model		Board	Owner (*)	Manager	Committies (*)	Other (*)	CEO Years (*)
Public ($n = 41$)	Mean	20%	2%	51%	44%	39%	4.3
Not-for-profit ($n = 110$)	Mean	36%	4%	25%	58%	10%	5.6
Private ($n = 22$)	Mean	36%	32%	32%	23%	18%	10.4
Total ($n = 173$)	Mean	31%	10%	31%	48%	19%	5.8

*Differences are significant at the 1% level.

to generate a diversified range of revenue, where private festivals are more successful (cf. Ryan, 1999).

The situation in the UK, Australia, Norway and Sweden, where all three festival types exist, is similar to Canada and Calgary where the festival sector has previously been profiled by Getz et al. (2007). Continued growth of the market for festivals may generate changes in terms of governance structures of festivals. The private sector is certainly interested in expanding its presence on the market and public festivals may both increase and decrease in numbers depending on political trends. Not-for-profit festivals seem to be rather special, self-centred and successful and it is difficult to predict whether they will continue to occupy a dominating niche by catering to special social needs or whether they will be left behind when powerful economic actors move in.

Where two or three of the ownership types exist together in a community or destination, it must be asked:

- taken together, do they meet all desired community and tourism goals?
- Could effectiveness be enhanced by more or less government intervention?
- Could efficiency be enhanced by greater reliance on voluntary and private sectors? Will they need assistance?

It might very well be that all three sectors are needed to collectively achieve key community-defined and tourist-oriented goals. It seems likely that ideology and political processes will highly influence the existence and inter-relationships of the three festival types in most places, rather than the balance being achieved through rational planning; some government are more intent on intervention than others.

4.3. Implications for future research

This study did not reveal that the festival sector is fundamentally different from other mixed industries that have been studied. Indeed, it suggests that further study of tourism and other sectors within the tourism industry might produce more knowledge and present opportunities to apply findings from other industries. Systematically examining ownership in all the different types of events and attractions is a logical extension of this current paper.

There is a clear need to examine specific destinations and make comparisons, including a profile of the entire mixed industry in each. It is possible that within a given place the interactions and interdependencies among festivals/attractions of all ownership types affect their management and performance. Hypothetically, it can be suggested that a dense local network of events or attractions will encourage collaboration and result in efficiency gains, although the Calgary case studies did not reveal any such process in that city's festival sector.

Deliberate intervention by tourism organisations or local government might very well be needed in many places to overcome isolationist and competitive tendencies. Certainly, the very nature of a collaborative destination marketing organization (DMO) favours this intervention to make the portfolio of local events more effective in attracting and satisfying visitors, but as observed in Calgary the DMO had little or no interest in local festivals, instead placing its emphasis on bidding on business and sporting events. In these situations, the local festival network, regardless of ownership and business models, is not likely to ever reach its potential to foster destination attractiveness or sustained competitiveness.

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