

From Rockparty...

In the autumn of 1981, a group of music-loving young people met in Hultsfred, a small municipal community of about 5,000 inhabitants, situated in the north-eastern part of the county of Småland, Sweden. Fed up with the fact that nothing seemed to happen, they put up posters and on December 16 1981, a large group met at the local community youth centre and founded the rock association, *Rockparty*¹. The picture that these young people painted was that of an ordinary small industrial town with little activity, industries closing down and people, particularly young people, moving away from the area (cf. Hansen 1998). Needless to say, it was an area outside the mainstream of events, not least with regards to popular music.²

On January 31 1982, *Rockparty* arranged its first concert at the community youth centre with the local punk/new wave bands *Zwän Ruth*, *Destroid Future* and *Biffen Steks*. According to the local authorities, there were far too many people they were too loud. At least in the eyes of the local authorities, *Rockparty* wasn't welcome back. Surprising both representatives from the local council and the people of Hultsfred by its breakthrough in the lives of young people, enabled *Rockparty* from the start to create a niche for itself in public life and in people's minds. At this stage, *Rockparty* was regarded by most people as a youth association, organizing activities "*on the side*", i.e. outside the publicly accepted channels for leisure and entertainment offered to young people by the local authorities. What *Rockparty* needed therefore – both because of the rebellious rock'n'roll image it wished to convey and because

¹ From a leaflet about the *Föreningen Rockparty* (1992), published in conjunction with *Rockparty*'s tenth anniversary. Since the late 1970s and the early eighties, young people's interest in music has been formed and formalised within local rock associations all over Sweden, not least in the countryside. These rock associations, both in Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia, each have their own prerequisites and conditions (cf. Eyerman & Jamison 1998). They have been determined partially by national and international impulse and practice in the form of punk and new wave music (cf. Arnold 1997, Home 1995, Laing 1985), and partially by historical traditions from the so called "progressive music movement" – a political, cultural and musical movement with a socialistic viewpoint of the world within Swedish rock music in the early 1970's (cf. Eriksson 1976, Malmström 1996). Furthermore, it is a movement with connections to both national and local policies concerning local community youth centres. This social institution, governed through local municipal authorities, has functioned as a place and frame for a lot of the activities of different associations during the period from the 1960's to the early 1980's. Like a lot of other rock associations *Rockparty* included a lot of different cultural activities so it is better to use the broader term of music- and culture associations when speaking of this broad spectra of associations. The associations often deal with culture in all forms, e.g. concerts, festivals, rehearsal venues, theatre, poetry and magazines.

² This description is common in texts and stories about rock music. See for example Niemi 2000, Gradvall 2000 and the BBC documentary series "Dancing in the streets".

of the structural conditions of the local area – was a meeting place and a venue for its concerts. This was an ambition shared with many other similar music and culture associations around the country (cf. Dahlén 1989). Following historical precedent, place was an important part of the process as the preferred affiliations and modes of expression emerged and took shape (cf reference on page 1). During Rockparty’s first year, there was a lot of moving in and out of temporary concert halls, but in January 1983, about seventy young people marched through the streets of Hultsfred into the local authorities’ board meeting with more than 2000 signatures demanding the use of the youth community centers old place directly under the city hall. The local authorities were taken by surprise and found it difficult to deal with a group which chose not to follow the norm for municipal youth activities. The very same youth community centre which the local authorities had shut down, these young people now wanted to resurrect and the association was not the only group attempting to claim the old youth community centre; Home Defense had also joined the battle.³ The ensuing debate in Hultsfred and in the local press about the hall, which gave rise to numerous discussions about rock music in relation to youth politics and culture⁴, highlights several different attitudes to young people and their activities. The local press suggested that the sensational visit to the local authorities’ board meeting had been to Rockparty’s advantage. Rockparty won the battle and the hall was named *Klubben* (“The Club”).

What became increasingly evident in this debate was that, in spite of an otherwise sympathetic attitude towards Rockparty, society wanted to have the upper hand and be in control where young people and rock music were concerned. Rockparty represents the innovative and youthful, i.e., the adventurous and unsure. Sven Gustavsson, local government commissioner, asserted that although he is; “*full of respect for the activities Rockparty organises for young people*”, it is important that the association; “*does not disturb other associations*” in

³ One of the local bands of Hultsfred changed name, symptomatically, to Yngves Hundar (“Yngve’s Dogs”), as an ironic comment against the local Home Defence commander Yngve Bergkvist.

⁴ Since it was about the Home Defence, metaphors and symbols connected with war and warfare became crucial. Also, the old and conservative was separated from the youthful and innovative, and Rockparty opposed the static and reactionary in favour of the transient and forward-looking. The Home Defence presented their activities as safe and responsible as opposed to the uncertain, irresponsible youth project.

the City Hall, going on to add that; “*the City Hall is for young people and they should always feel welcome there*”.⁵

Through the staging of different political confrontations and conflicts the association takes on the strategic role of representative for dissatisfied provincial young people in relation to the local authorities.⁶ Their practical line of action is interesting. The parsimonious treatment Rockparty and its members considered themselves subject to was interpreted by Rockparty as something concerning young people in general. The dichotomy, young people – grown ups, thus becomes clear. By taking subjects of contention and the association’s opinions to the general public and media, a situation for communication was created where Rockparty tries to stand out as the representative of all young people, not only a mouthpiece for rebellious and marginalized rock lovers. On the other hand, on a national level, they seek to come across as marginalized by presenting themselves in national media as members of an alternative movement threatened by the local authorities’ streamlined ideas about young people and culture. The focus in this case lies on cultural differences when it comes to identity, taste and lifestyle, rather than the generation gap. Whether Rockparty as youth culture relates to municipal cultural politics, the established “*grown-up*” society in general, the local community, mainstream culture or other youth cultures, depends on the position they themselves choose to take. Rockparty’s activities and actions indicate a multi-faceted organization, both as an association and in the way it relates to its surroundings. Rockparty made clear connections to various national contexts like, for example, the *Kontakt nätet* network⁷ of music and culture associations. It was through this network and at special courses for those promoting various events, that members of the association met people with similar interests. At the same time, relations on a personal level were developed, thereby

⁵ The newspaper *Vimmerbytidningen* 1983-02.

⁶ Compare for example with the taking over of Klubben (“the Club”) and Festivaltidningen (“the Festival magazine”) in 1989, 1990 and 1991.

⁷ The network consisted, and still consists, of non-commercial culture associations, primarily music associations, whose purpose is to form an alternative to the established and commercial culture on offer. The *Kontakt nätet* network is a national organization for non-profit culture associations. All in all, around 170 associations are connected to the organization. The associations deal with culture in all forms, e.g. concerts, festivals, rehearsal venues, theatre, poetry and magazines. The *Kontakt nätet* network organizes courses, seminars, arranges contacts and gives advice.

strengthening the feeling of being part of a larger grouping, these relations then playing an important part in the planning of the local activities in Hultsfred. Amongst other things, the network offered advice on how the associations were to deal with the municipality and other authorities, on how to draft contracts and on which official permissions were needed. The translocal and (inter-)national network was expanded through visits to other festivals, both for pleasure and study purposes. Rockparty also started a record company and a production company for tours with Swedish and foreign bands, built a recording studio 300 kilometers from Hultsfred and released records with local and national bands and artists. Trips to concerts were arranged and records were sold at the office. These activities both constituted and yet went beyond Hultsfred, Klubben ("The Club") and Rockparty. They were thus linked together in order to form more complex processes and, in several places, allow for the interaction of personal relations and the creation of an extended professional network.

Since the association demanded, amongst other things, a generally accepted position as a representative for young people, both in Hultsfred and on a more general level, they interfered with the local authorities' work among young people. Rockparty wanted to become an accepted part of the municipal structure on the same level as other organizations. During the subsequent years, the association gradually took over the management of the local amusement park. They also promoted public cultural evenings and events together with for example ABF⁸ and other culture- and leisure organizations. Through Rockparty young people as a cultural-political concept and tool, both on a local, regional and a national level, are thus brought to the fore and made palpable. "*Young people*" as a political, social and cultural entity is given different meanings depending on the perspective. Rockparty is, for example, used as a weapon in the local political debate. The chairman of the municipal board for culture, the free churches, politicians, journalists and others can express and profile various perspectives on cultural policy, democracy within the municipality, youth matters, the structure of society etc. through Rockparty's

⁸ Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund ("The Workers' Education Organization") is part of the Swedish workers' movement and retains strong ties to the Social Democratic Party of Sweden.

activities.⁹ The fact that *Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna* (the left-wing party) in 1983 awards the association the party's Cultural Prize of 2000 Swedish crowns therefore appears to be a political statement just as much as a cultural acknowledgement. At the same time, Rockparty is presented on a national level as an example of young people's creativity and energy, culturally, commercially and in regional politics. The Swedish Minister for Industry, Employment and Communications, the Minister for Culture, some party leaders, journalists, companies and organizations often praise the association, especially in connection with the Hultsfred festival.

When the association took on the role of organizer of cultural events for *everyone* in the community, expectations raised automatically, both within and outside the association. A consequence of this was that the association offered a range of cultural events and activities designed to attract many different groups of young people. In this context, *everyone* consisted mainly of generation delimitation and interpretation worked out between varying generations and groups of young people in the community. The main purpose was to appear as a youth association where everyone was sure to find something to their taste. This broad image also meant that the rock music and youth association of Rockparty was reshaped into the music and culture association of Rockparty, through jazz nights, a café, film evenings, concert trips, fashion shows etc. Within this wider range of activities, Rockparty was also able to bring different generations together. The framework for interpretation regarding the content of youth culture was thereby changed and expanded and the scene for youth culture in Hultsfred and its surroundings was broadened. The activities of Rockparty reshaped the view of how cultural expressions are categorized according to age. The Hultsfred festival has a particular role to play in this context:

“Following Acke’s involvement in the festival, the whole family was eventually drawn into it. This year, each family member is responsible for one of the groups. Gun and Malin share responsibility for the tent café, and Mats, the son, is in charge of putting up the tents. [...] We have got ourselves lots of friends. Although we’ll be 50 soon, we’ve made such great friends with all the young people, people we’d never have met otherwise, I think. [...] It doesn’t matter whether it’s about going to a concert or working actively within the association,

⁹ See also Rockparty's newspaper archives.

it fulfils a social purpose. As parents, Gun and I are extremely grateful, and getting to know all these young people has really enriched our lives', Acke says.”¹⁰

For many people in Hultsfred, it is the festival, in particular, which has had a crucial part to play in the acceptance of and co-operation with Rockparty. Ever since the first “*Hultsfred Rock Festival*” in 1986, a great deal of importance has been placed on volunteer workers and the local character of the event. Furthermore, the festival has brought different generations and interests’ closer together. For many residents of Hultsfred, their involvement in the festival as volunteers has been a very positive experience. This, however, is not connected with what the festival itself offers, nor with the bulk of Rockparty’s other musical activities. “*The festival would be an absolutely fabulous thing if it wasn’t for that bloody music.*” This is a statement that has been heard many times and which has become “a classic” line among many festival volunteers and in Rockparty circles.

¹⁰ RP no. 3, *Hultsfredsfestivalen*. The Festival magazine 1992, published by Rockparty.

... over the Hultsfred festival...

In spite of, or maybe due to the turbulent and diverse start in the beginning of the 1980's, the organization Rockparty has since developed from being a small voluntary-based rock association to becoming Sweden's largest festival promoter. Since 1982 there has been some form of annual festival in Hultsfred and today between 30,000 and 40,000 people visit the Hultsfred Festival during the few days in mid-June when it is staged. The Hultsfred Festival is situated in an area of great natural beauty on the outskirts of the town, beside a small lake and surrounded by forest and arable fields. The festival area itself is divided into two main areas: the festival site where the music is performed, and the camping ground where most people live during the festival. Even if the Hultsfred festival is a very important part and the motor and condition for everything that has developed into the Rockcity project of today I will just make a short summary of its role and part in the developments in Hultsfred.

Rockparty¹¹ promote and market the Hultsfred festival as "different" in a lot of aspects. Through the image and profile, vaguely defined as alternative rock and pop, created by and with the audience, artists, promoters and everybody else that in some way has shaped the festival the following characteristics are important to emphasize:

- *Hultsfred is one of few real and authentic festivals done by and for hardcore fans and enthusiasts in a common fellowship!*
- *During Hultsfred the visitors build a different and specific "community" where they live together for 3-6 days*
- *Hultsfred enable meetings between young people that are "earlybirds" and trendsetters.*

(marketing material, Hultsfred festival)

First of all Rockparty as festival promoter wants everyone that is interested in festivals as music events should go to Hultsfred because it's a "real and authentic festival". Second, the stay at a real and authentic festival demand people with the right will and attitude. For the

¹¹ Rockföreningen Rockparty bildades 1981 och har sedan dess verkat för att arrangera livemusik samt utveckla det lokala musiklivet i Hultsfred. Under senare år har verksamheten utvecklats till att innefatta även andra verksamhetsområden än enbart konsertarrangemang. Föreningen bildades i efterdyningarna av punkmusikens genombrott i Sverige. Punkens motto "do it yourself" medförde att många ideella musikföreningar bildades vid denna tid (jfr Respekt för rötter – musik och kulturföreningars betydelse för svenskt musikliv 2004:164ff)

festival in Hultsfred its important to be *the* “real and authentic” festival in Sweden, which is about music, camping life and festival life. Its Rockpartys ambition and expectation to create a feeling of close community and identity, a collective feeling and involvement with the visitors, that it is *their* festival.

The festival wants to stand out as the original for that kind of festival in Sweden and thereby an alternative to other music and culture events/festivals like city festivals and more “common” festivals for example. But the only guideline to navigate with is an idea and knowledge that the young people that visit the Hultsfred festival mostly like things, in this case music, that is cool, has an attitude and gives them credibility. Many of them consider themselves part of alternative and/or subcultural formations connected to different music genres with a specific lifestyle and image. And Rockparty and others define many of them as early adopters that are curious about new trends and the latest and coolest in music. The assessments are based on an inaccessible gut feeling and intuitive knowledge. The direction and profile that Hultsfred festival mediate are about finding a balance between the well known and the obscure, between headliners and up-coming artists, to be both common/ordinary and exclusive¹². There is a clear goal to mirror contemporary and future popular cultures, youth cultures and subcultures and its variations, and for a lot of people, in one way or another, the festival in Hultsfred is considered an important part of music life in Sweden. The Hultsfred festival stands out as an institution and important space for youth and their interest in music and expressing themselves culturally.

BUT at the same time national and multinational style oriented companies like Nike, Pepsi, Siemens, Doc Martens want to inject “coolness” and “credibility” into their brands by different marketing strategies at these kinds of festivals. So when the Hultsfred festival is talking about early adopters and trendsetters they are not just promoting the festival towards the supposed visitor but selling its space to style conscious companies that want to cash in on all the cool and hot style elements and cultural expressions inside different music cultures that are present at the festival. They want its brand to be connected to and imagined together with a cool music genre like say hip-hop. Titti Hagenfelt, head of marketing at Siemens is

¹² This balance follows a combination of perspectives that has been with Rockparty since the beginning and later on has been transformed into the Rockcity project.

convinced that their mobile phones will be more interesting on the market if they are loaded with the cool attitude of hip-hop. She is convinced that she will sell more phones by using the cultural codes created in sub- and music cultures. The idea is to “tease” the mainstream consumer with the help of exclusive style elements from these kinds of underground environments (Eventertain 4-5/2001). In this aspect the festival area in Hultsfred becomes a testing ground for marketing and branding by these life style oriented companies. They want their brands to be embedded in the (sub)cultural attitudes, codes and symbolic systems of different groups and individuals at the festival and thereafter sell it to a considerably bigger target group: the mainstream consumer.

Part of the festival landscape is also a variety of political organizations. The unions want to attract young people just like the youth organizations of Swedish political parties. Furthermore, education organizations, Amnesty, animal liberation movements, “Young farmers of Sweden”, governmental organizations working against drugs, racism, etc. also want to be part of the festival.

The Hultsfred festival function as an “exhibition display case” for a lot of different companies and organizations *but at the same* time nourish the festival myths and lifestyle that is crucial for the visitors’ opinion of the festival as a cool place, a place to be. Rockparty as promoter uses different communication and marketing techniques and mediated images to (together with media) reinforce the Hultsfred festival as something exotic, different and one of a kind. In that sense the personal experiences of the visitors collaborate with the images of the chaos, freedom and different lifestyle that has been created and mediated in different ways true the history of the Hultsfred festival that connects to the history of its main predecessor as a role model; Woodstock.

... to Rockcity

As the festival and other music activities has accumulated an extensive network of professional relations with a lot of actors in Swedish music life, not at least the Swedish music industry, and a great deal of know-how, competence, experience and goodwill, an idea started to grow among some of the people that had been working with Rockparty and the Hultsfred festival for several years. The idea was to use all the knowledge that had been gathered to expand into new areas. The next step was therefore to create a centre for popular music and Swedish music- and experience industry. When the lobbying for this started, some aspects worked in favor for Hultsfred: First the Hultsfred festival as a well known event that gives credibility, and not to forget financial backup, for other activities. Second, the political support for the Swedish music industry on a national level is quite strong in Sweden. Hultsfred has from different perspectives been pointed out as a productive and fruitful place for popular music in different aspects, and is maybe the only central place for Swedish music industry outside the city areas. A study in economic geography from Uppsala University asserts that great variety of the Swedish music industry's cluster of firms and companies are located outside the Stockholm region. Hultsfred is one of these, and: "the origins and growth of these local agglomerations is the activity of real enthusiasts and to some extent local policy-makers" (Hallencreutz, Lundeqvist & Malmberg 2000:8). Furthermore governmental policies institutional arrangements in accordance with "The People's Home" and welfare state ideology are important conditions for expenditures that make it possible for local authorities to subsidize local popular music activities (cf. Rockparty and Klubben, "The Club" in Hultsfred) such as rehearsal premises and spaces for live performances like youth community centres (cf. Hallencreutz, Lundeqvist & Malmberg 2000:22). Furthermore has the regional authorities (*Regionförbundet i Kalmar län*) Rockcity as one of the main areas for support in their agreement for economical and social growth in the region with special focus on the experience industry.

During the last years politicians, government and other important authorities has identified Swedish popular music as an important industry, especially when compared per capita with other countries. It has also been recognized as an important part in a positive cultural image

of Sweden. Popular music gets support from a variety of governmental organizations and institutions. For example:

- The Swedish Ministry of Culture
- The Arts' Grants Committee
- Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs
- National Board for Youth Affairs
- Music Industry and Experience Economy Development Centre
- Swedish Trade Council
- Export Music Sweden
- Nutek: Swedish Business Development Agency
- The Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications
- Vinnova: The Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems
- The Venture Fund for Creative Industries
- The Foundation Culture of the Future

A lot of support for music and music performance on a local/grassroots level comes from the government but goes through several educational associations (*ABF, Bilda, Sensus, Studieförbundet, Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan* etc.) as well as networks for non-profit/idealistic music associations like *Kontakt nätet* and *Moks*.

In 1997 a European Union project called *Puzzel* was launched. Approximately twenty entrepreneurial ideas and three educational ideas became visualized. The goal was to make *Hultsfred* a centre for Swedish music- and experience industry and to create 50 new jobs and 500 seats of national education. One out spring from the *Puzzel* project is for example the company *MusicLink* in *Hultsfred Ltd. Music Link*, founded in 1997 as a Rockparty subsidiary, works with digital media and IT to distribute experiences. Its business areas comprise web production, web hosting, video production, education, and technical development. *MusicLink* is also involved in different business development and research projects together with for example *Ericsson* (*Wireless festival*¹³), *STIM* (*Performing Rights Society*) and a lot of Swedish music companies like for example record labels. Part of the research is also to develop new and better methods for music distribution. One field of

¹³ *Wireless festival* is a major three year European research project that aim at finding new business models for mobile services for the event industry. Partners are: *Musiclink*, *Ericsson Research*, *TeliaSonera Sweden*, *TeliaSonera Finland*, *Business School, Stockholm*, *Blekinge Technological University Högskola* and *Helsinki Institute for Information Technology HIIT*. Also in this kind of research activities the festival space is used as an “empirical testing ground” (cf. the marketing and branding activities by life oriented companies like *Siemens* p. 9)

research is to find better methods for distribution/breakdown of intellectual property rights. Another is to develop systems for Digital Rights Management and functions between existing systems.

In 2000 Rockparty and the municipality of Hultsfred together with other companions launched the Rockcity project. The activities connected in the creative meeting place and building Rockcity consist of more than 20 years of music related activities in Hultsfred. From the founding of Rockparty 1981 over the Hultsfred festival founded in 1986, the renovation of an old car dealer building into the Metropol¹⁴ building in 1992 with concert hall, music pub, offices, small businesses related to the music industry, different organizations etc. to the Rockcity complex. Rockcity is a meeting point and place for the activities, persons, contacts and networks that has grown out of Rockparty and the Hultsfred festival. The main idea with the Rockcity project is to create a national meeting place for the experience industry in general and the music industry in particular in Hultsfred (jfr Nielsén, Rönnlund, & Svensson 2003, Rockcity Hultsfred 2005, Nielsén 2004). Rockcity is part of a nationally funded project called “Creative meeting places”. Behind it stands the “Foundation for Knowledge and Competence” (www.kks.se) that want to take a wide grasp on the experience industry by supporting eight creative meeting places in different sectors (for example music in Hultsfred, film in Trollhättan and food in Hällefors). This is how Rockcity present itself:

The Rock City cluster is based on creativity generated by culture, academia and industry. The cultural aspect is based around Rockparty and the annual Hultsfred festival and forms Rock City's unique heart, while academia and industry continue to create a wealth of new possibilities.

Rock City is based on five areas

• **Education** – including five education programs, regular courses and lectures. The Music & Event Management program is run by Baltic Business School, Kalmar University.

¹⁴ The Metropol building is the forerunner to the Rockcity building. Metropol is an event- and entertainment company that runs the restaurant and the music pub in the Rockcity building. The company is a direct result from an idea of using the knowledge and network of people working with the catering that was necessary during the Hultsfred festival. The company has created new contacts and expanded the network and business to other areas than just catering for the Hultsfred festival. The company works with everything from weddings to big conferences. They take in orders and give proposals for whole solutions for big events. They have been responsible for infrastructure, food and entertainment at an international political conference as well as national sport games.

- **Research** – *Rock City has an extensive library of popular music and the Swedish Rock Archive and researches popular music, youth culture, cultural economy and the experience industry.*
- **Business** – *several associated companies, together with incubator functions through IUC and the Start Studio.*
- **Culture** – *Festivals (including Hultsfred, Rookie and Hultsfred Hayride), live pubs, culture cafés and concerts.*
- **Cluster Development** – *networking, entrepreneurship and product development (for example, RockZeum and Video Lab) through the combination of education, research, business and culture.*

Today, Rock City employs 70 full time staff. The annual Hultsfred festival attracts over 30,000 visitors, to see more than 140 artists perform on the festival's eight stages. Rock City are part of developing Sweden's experience industry, primarily in the fields of music, media and tourism. The vision is more employment, new companies, industrial growth and education opportunities within the music and experience industry."

As presented above, Rockcity's basic business idea and strategy is to coordinate education, research, business and culture to create new ideas and economical and cultural growth (as in "Cluster Development", see above). The most important key word is networking, but also entrepreneurship, creativity, product development, border crossing, untraditional meetings and co operations, new thinking etc. The perspectives and areas of culture and economy are knit together in definitions like "cultural economy", "the new economy", "the experience society" etc. (cf. Connell & Gibson 2003, Kulturella Perspektiv 2001:3, Hesmondhalgh 2002, du Gay & Pryke (red.) 2002).

From the non-profit idealistic rock associations focus on local concerts to the struggle to become a national meeting place with its mix of research, education, business and culture is based on certain ideological principles. It's been about bringing together and show respect for music as a cultural expression *and* commercial activity. Rockparty and Rockcity want and wanted to combine and define themselves as both cultural innovators and commercial entrepreneurs.

Through the years the association and the people, businesses and organizations around it built a studio, founded a record label and started a tour and booking agency. The tour and booking agency Motor was founded in Hultsfred, later moved to Gothenburg and was finally bought by Ema Telstar, Sweden's by far biggest concert promoter and owned by Live Nation that dominates the live music production and business in the world. Rockparty has furthermore supplied rehearsal spaces and "rock school" as alternative to the community

music school. Rockparty has promoted concerts weekdays and weekends every month for almost 25 years. Today Rockparty runs the Rookie festival and the Rockparty founded association Sheena work for equality between the sexes with focus on music and their main activity is *Popkollo* (music summer camp) for girls between twelve and sixteen every summer. Today Rockcity plan for a museum for rock and pop. The Swedish Rock Archives moved its collections and activities to Rockcity in 2003. A music studio was built 2004 for the students with support from Kalmar University. Students at the five different educational programs have the opportunity under supervising mentorship to develop their business ideas into business in a so called *Start studio* (business incubator). *IUC Hultsfred* (Industrial Development Center Hultsfred) is a national development center for the Swedish music industry. All these examples show how the activities have combined culture, entrepreneurship and business. A look back in history shows the same thing: Rockparty has for example combined dance evenings in *Hultsfred Folkets park* (the local amusement park) with concerts with unknown Swedish and foreign bands at their own rock club “The Club”. In August 1983 Rockparty promoted a festival (one of the forerunners for the first official Hultsfred festival in 1986) in the local amusement park with everything from old local accordion players to local punk bands. In the beginning Rockparty rented the local amusement park, but after a while, in the end of the 1980’s, the association took over the operation by permission from the local authorities because they wanted to have better control and influence over the activities there. As the Hultsfred festival has developed into a major national event the amusement park has undergone a lot of changes to adapt to the festivals special needs. Even the neighboring camping site has been renovated, the infrastructure, level of service and equipment has been improved. This work and expenses has been shared by Rockparty and the municipality of Hultsfred.

This is the way things have proceeded until today when it comes to creative work through different networks. Concerts and events is still the activity that has been most successful and sustainable for Rockparty in the long run. It is in this sphere that most of the knowledge and competence can be found and are appreciated. An important reflection though is that during time there has been alternative choices, for example the investments in a record label and/or recording studio that for different reasons didn’t become as prosperous as the concert and event activities. Beside these different music related businesses Rockparty also has been

involved in more unexpected events like arranging conferences for Sweden's largest bank corporation and cabaret with traditional Swedish Christmas smorgasbord for local companies and private persons.

When Rockparty in the beginning of the 1990's applied for European Union funding to develop business, entrepreneurship and educations in the field of popular music this entry was based on the "do it yourself" attitude and idealism that had characterized the association from the start. An image of hard working enthusiasts, often presented in terms of stubbornness and creativity. A kind of hillbilly/country side identity has always been an important starting point and identification. The ambition to get things to happen in a tiny community as Hultsfred has united different perspectives inside Rockparty and Rockcity. To put the goal to build a national center for popular music in Hultsfred up against the conditions and resources found in especially Stockholm has created an unanimity and unification in relation to the outside world. The feeling of marginalization due to totally different infrastructural, social and cultural conditions has simply united different perspectives and interests inside Rockparty in relation to the surrounding society. Therefore it seems that the attempts to approach music from new perspectives is consistent with the prevailing ways of thinking, especially the goal to get things to happen in Hultsfred.

Conclusions

In the beginning Rockparty wanted to be recognized as both representatives for youth in general at a local level and be part of an alternative music movement nationally, and in that way balance their activities without losing neither credibility nor their identity in the eyes of communities and (sub)cultures they were part of or related to. A consistent strategy has been to emphasize their unique position, identity and goal and in that way appear as youthful and creative innovators and entrepreneurs both locally and nationally. A force that can create new jobs in the new sectors as the creative industry/experience industry. Several of the more music oriented and interested enthusiasts *and* the business oriented entrepreneurs that are or have been working in Hultsfred reveal that there has been a tension between being cultural credible/cultural minded and being business minded. But this tension has been a very important condition that has broadened and driven the activities forward. In Rockpartys own image and identity the rebellious rock'n'roll attitude has been translated and embedded into business and entrepreneurship. The media professor Angela McRobbie calls this kind of activities "subcultural entrepreneurship" (McRobbie, 1994; Middleton, 2002).

As mentioned earlier, Rockparty constituted a frame of reference for a multitude of possible interpretations and meanings. The opportunity to be a little different without having to invest one's life in Rockparty seems to be a fruitful combination that render the possibility of balance between commercial considerations and cultural status and credibility in something like alternative (subcultural) spheres. In this aspect the significance of the local in the connection between youth culture, music and the local community seems to be of crucial importance for the development in Hultsfred. The variation and idealistic approach in Rockparty has to some extent been transferred and transformed into the Rockcity project. Rockpartys has developed from the rock- and youth association to the music- and culture organizer (with the Hultsfred festival as the main event) and further to a culture and business oriented conglomerate of activities.

I have tried to show that music in a local context can fulfill a number of purposes, connected with different meaning in everyday life rather than just being music in itself. The Canadian popular culture researcher John Shepherd, states that music; "does not carry its meaning and

‘give it’ to participants and listeners. Effect and meaning have to be created anew in the specific social and historical circumstances of music’s creation and use” (Shepherd 1993:138). In Hultsfred and through Rockparty, it becomes obvious how activities built around rock music give different meanings to concepts like music, young people, local development, business, place and identity – meanings that go beyond what is commonly focused on in discussions about young people and rock music. In the case of Rockparty, it has been a case of being a representative for the young people of the town and the region, and nationally being part of an alternative music movement with relations and close ties to other similar music associations and young people. In the case of Rockcity, it is a case of being a creative producer and promoter of education, research/knowledge, business and culture in different combinations and networks, and in the form of music, events, festivals, entrepreneurship, products etc. nationally. Also being an important part of the Swedish experience industry when it comes to skills and knowledge. Rock City strives to demonstrate that culture can lead to business development, by providing a creative meeting place and environment for creative entrepreneurship and networking. Or as the Canadian geographer Ross Nelson states in his research around Rockcity:

“To be creative, is to foster productive networks between artists, businesses, researches, educators, government officials, and the public.” (Nelson 2005)

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