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COMMUNITY, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND FESTIVALS. A PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Community, Social Capital and Festivals. A Pandemic Perspective

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the complex relationships among social capital, community development and festivals. The Covid-19 pandemic put a lot of pressure on festivals, forcing an entire industry to adapt and recreate itself. In the restricted sanitary context, the pandemic festivals redefine the sense of events, of community and of social interactions. The empirical data, comprising in-depth interviews with the organisers of the first festival in Romania after lockdown, have revealed the prioritisation of social benefits and the growing connection between festival and community. This study therefore suggests that festivals could be involved more deeply in the community by assuming social charitable causes. Festivals create their own communities of fans but also shape the local communities where they take place.

Keywords: social capital, communities, festivals, community development, heterotopia, pandemic, social network.

Introduction

In our interlinked world, the understanding of communities and networks became an indispensable endeavour; it is certainly a key of interpreting the complex systems of today's existence, from biology to information and technology (Barabási, 2016). The social network represents a fabric of humans that create and transmit the collective intelligence, determining the velocity of spreading knowledge, emotions, behaviours and resources. Networks could change people's lives even if they are not aware of this impact (Christakis & Fowler, 2009). Festivals are special celebrations that imply the local residents but accommodate incoming participants. The study of relationships between community and festivals represents a meaningful way to obtain significant information about their dynamic.

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Literature review

Social capital: the roots

The social capital theory is a fruitful framework in order to tackle the role of cultural events for the community development. The history of the concept goes down to Hanifan (1916) who stressed the importance of cooperation for individuals and community. Human beings are socially helpless if they are left alone; good will, sympathy, fellowship constitute some of the tangible advantages that the accumulation of social capital brings in the lives of people. Jacobs studied the neighbourhoods in urban setting, emphasising that the neighbourhood networks are a “city’s irreplaceable social capital” (1961: 138). For Bourdieu (1986), social capital is based on material but also symbolic exchanges, implying a constant effort of sociability. It is an ongoing complex correlation with the economic and cultural capital, without being reducible to them. Bourdieu also stressed the importance of the size of the network that can be mobilised by an individual or a community, and, consequently, the importance of the individual and collective strategies made in order to increase its proportion. These social connections could be usable in short or long term, generally by transforming contingent or latent ties in durable ties. Regarding the means of creating social capital, Bourdieu talked about “the alchemy of *consecration*” (1986: 248, author’s emphasis), the symbolic power of social institutions that provide mutual knowledge and recognition.

Coleman (1988) introduced the concept into social theory by analysing it in the context of education. Even if social capital seems less tangible than other forms of capital (financial, physical or human), it facilitates the productive activities especially when it is based on trust. Social capital is extremely important not only for the people who live now, but also for the next generations, because one of its effects is the construction of human capital (Coleman, 1988: S109). Also, the social capital could be converted into economic benefits. At the same time, he noticed a moderate implication in activities related to the growth of social capital, merely because the positive effects will be used by everybody and not only by the individuals that effectively contributed to the respective outcomes.

If Bourdieu has placed the individual in the very centre of social capital, Putnam has emphasised the social macro-perspective in which reciprocity and trustworthiness have an important role. For Putnam, “the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value” (Bourdieu, 2000: 18-19). Connections and social practices are close related to the concept of “civic virtue”, the difference being that social capital “calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital” (Putnam, 2000: 19). Different forms of association are important because individuals learn to collaborate and be reliable. Social capital is simultaneously a private and a public good, and, similarly to Coleman, Putnam took for granted the fact that

some of the benefits go to bystanders, too. Nevertheless, precisely through this mode of operation, social capital contributes to community development. The mobilisation of social networks has consequences for external stakeholders, not only for insiders. The consequences of social capital are not always positive: there is also a “dark side of social capital”. Putnam made a very useful distinction between “bridging or inclusive” and “bonding or exclusive” dimensions of social capital. The later refers to homogeneous groups, where reciprocity is a working norm, and solidarity is mobilised. It is prevalent amongst family members or friendship connections, in other words, it characterises naturally constructed social structures. In this respect, it represents “a kind of sociological superglue” (Putnam, 2000: 23). By contrast, bridging networks suppose heterogeneous groups and external relations, being suitable for information diffusion. This type of capital is generated among different social actors that many times never knew or met in advance. Precisely because it feels more difficult to build bridging capital than bonding capital, the former is essential in our society. Even if place theory proves to be essential for explaining the function of space in understanding the world (Massey, 2005), Putnam observed that online networks could very well bridge across geography and much more than that (age, religion, gender etc.). In the same vein, Bhattacharyya (2004) argued that “place” as a kernel for community has become inadequate, and a community needs “micro-macro coordination”. Putnam’s theorisation of social capital attracted criticism (Mouritsen, 2003; Wallis, Killerby & Dollery, 2004). The term itself has been criticised (Thompson, 2009), as well as the social capital theory in diverse forms (Fine, 2010). Nevertheless, it remains a useful tool for a suitable comprehension of the social dimensions of communities and events.

Social capital and community development

Social capacity represents a key catalyst for community development, alongside the human, physical, financial, political, cultural or environmental forms of capital (Green & Haines, 2007). Community development represents both a process that requires collective action and an outcome. Researchers have noticed the full circle created when we try to settle the connection between social capital and the community development, because “the *process* of community development *is* social capital/capacity building which leads to social capital which in turn leads to the *outcome* of community development” (Philips and Pittman, 2009: 7). Bhattacharyya (2004: 5) observed, as Putnam, the large erosion of solidarity. The essence of “community” is the solidarity, and that implies shared identity, shared norms and community commitment. The members are emotionally and rationally linked and they try to increase their quality of life as individuals and as a group. Solidarity represents the specific difference of communities from other types of social relations. When community developers stimulate the capacity building in their networks, they also confront multiple issues. Thus, the major concerns

involving solidarity and agency could be the following: “(1) relationships, (2) structure, (3) power, (4) shared meaning, (5) communication for change, (6) motivations for decision making, and (7) integration of these disparate concerns and paradoxes within the field” (Hustedde, 2009: 21). Every concern is linked with a correspondent theory: relationships are analysed by social capital theory; the issue of structure is made comprehensive by functionalism; power is at the centre of conflict theory; the shared meaning is well researched within the frame of symbolic interactionism; communication for change is examined by communication action perspective; motivations for decision making are investigated within the rational choice theory and the integration of disparate concerns fits well within Giddens’s structuration. These theories became frameworks where specific issues have been directly addressed and solved. Social capital represents not only a theoretical value, but also a practical one, because it has externalities or visible effects, including economic ones. If social capital was seen at the beginning of its research as an individual pursuit, today its collective value became prevalent.

Cultural events and social inclusion

The coalescence of individual and collective meanings is culturally configured: “solidarity must be built within a cultural context” (Hustedde, 2009: 21). In this vein, the community developers must pay attention to this sensitive correlation in order to reach community goals. The public cultural events enhance participation and strengthen social inclusion. They contribute to the creation of social identity, better inscribing a community or a place on a physical or mental map for a certain public. We observe currently how festivals are used for the construction of a city brand and how effective they are for awareness. They generate a lot of energy for a city, and they could be transformed in traditions that offer a specific narrative. Cultural events offer a significant occasion for participation, establishment of new ties and connection with individuals unlike us. They have a particular ethos and value, and they provide secondary benefits for community, because “art is especially useful in transcending conventional social barriers. Moreover, social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely artistic” (Putnam, 2000: 411). Bourdieu asserted that cultural capital is indivisible from social capital, because cultural goods are also used as symbolic goods in order to gain access to social capital. Dowling (2008) insisted on the linkage between social capital and arts and on the potential of aesthetic forms of capital. He reread Bourdieu and Eagleton with the objective of releasing social capital from “its current neoliberal trappings by imagining a reconnection of the concepts of ‘capital’ and ‘the aesthetic’” (Dowling 2008: 179). He noticed that “the marginalised cultural and aesthetic forms of capital” represent the “new priority” (Dowling, 2008: 190).

Festivals increase the sense of community and offer the opportunity for public celebration (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). Because they expand community

resources and social cohesion, festivals attendance leads also to an augmentation of social capital. Jaeger and Mykletun (2013) studied the ways in which festivals shape individual and social identities, place belongingness and the self-image of local communities. The festival organisers seek to obtain these benefits as a form of return of the investment and sustainability. An important nucleus of festivals is the storytelling. Every festival has a story or wants to promote a specific narrative. The festival narrative could become a significant point in a life narrative or in a community narrative. The cultural history links individuals in everyday lives because “through stories, people continue to make aesthetic and moral sense of places, at the same time endowing these places with a sense of their own cultural identities” (Bird, 2002: 544). Through events, people construct their identity and contribute to the place identity, using storytelling and media to make their voice heard (Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013: 224-225).

Heterotopia and the sense of community

We are living our everyday lives in a heterotopic space (Foucault, 1984: 3). Festivals represent an example of heterotopia linked “to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect” (Foucault, 1984: 7). Heterotopia means “other places”, comprising the dialectic between place and non-place, a vivid example of the complex modality in which people perceive and inhabit a certain territory. It has multiple, hybrid and even incongruous meanings, even if the term was largely used in urban and architectural approaches. Heterotopias exist in our mundane contemporary worlds, pointing out the ways in which people can privatise public spaces. As Dehaene and De Caeter observed, “in our contemporary world heterotopia is everywhere. Museums, theme parks, malls, holiday resorts, wellness hotels, festival markets – the entire city is becoming ‘heterotopian’” (2008: 5), alongside Foucault’s own examples: the theatre, the library, the graveyard. Heterotopias differ from utopias because the former are localisable, whereas the later are just unreal or simply projective. In this respect, Saldanha considered heterotopias as “countersites”, that are “in an ambivalent, though mostly oppositional, relation to society’s mainstream” (Saldanha, 2008: 2081). In the same vein, Hetherington interpreted heterotopias in contrast to “the taken-for-granted mundane idea of social order that exists within society”, as spaces where “an alternative social ordering is performed” (Hetherington, 1997: 40), a space of de-familiarisations.

“Festivalisation” implies collective understandings of space and time and shapes the meanings of belonging (Roche, 2011). Anthropologists and sociologists define as a “state of liminality” this special entrance into another state, apart from the everyday routine, usually facilitated by festival rituals and narratives (Duffy & Mair, 2018). As Bakhtin (1968) emphasised, carnivals and festivals offer a special release from the ordinary time, routine and strict regulations, being a “time out of time”. Opposing official festivities with folk festivities, Bakhtin

introduced the later in the category of subverting, liberating and suspending practices and activities. This special structure confers the potential of resistance because individuals and groups have the possibility to play with different social norms or even temporary be free from them: “festivals have a powerful and intoxicating effect that is significant to sustaining and transforming social life” (Duffy & Mair, 2018: 4). They are localisable, but transcend the respective space, being characterised by disturbance, intensity, and transformation.

Anderton (2011) identified two main trajectories of the festival sector: a “contemporary carnivalesque” direction, especially visible from the late 1960 until the mid-1990s, and a commercial direction, oriented to financial benefits. For Anderton, the balance between these two directions could be obtained through experiential branding and marketing strategies. Anderton coined “countercultural carnivalesque” the concept that refers to “a critique of the violence, materialism and consumerism of mainstream capitalist society; and shows a strong interest in environmental, social and broadly alternative or New Age beliefs” (2011: 150). Until the mid-1990’s the carnivalesque component of festivals was visible in transgressive behaviours. The modifications that took place in the festival sector in the meantime support the idea according to which the countercultural carnivalesque does not represent anymore the main drive of festivals. Nevertheless, organisers and the people behind the scene at different events across the world think that festivals continue to be the speaking-tube, the resonance chamber for the contemporary social and environmental problems. They “can serve as a platform for awareness and advocacy - they can mobilise their fans to help them put pressure on governments and decision makers worldwide to move faster on reforms” (Guttridge-Hewitt, 2020), and they could deliver social and political messages (Mair & Laing, 2013; Sharpe, 2008). Festivals could amplify activism, responsibility concerning big issues, becoming a *locus* for collective thinking. As Eric Schonemeier, a festival organiser, stated, festivals “play a role in letting people break out of everyday life and into nature. [But] I think it’s important for festivals to move away from creating a fantasy, parallel world, and understand themselves as a deliberate part of this world”. (Guttridge-Hewitt, 2020). During festivals, catharsis could be doubled with proactive or reactive actions, emphasising one more time the complex functions of cultural events for individuals and communities.

Wilks and Quinn (2016) linked the concepts of heterotopia, social capital and cultural capital in order to better interpret the festivals and their social function. They observed that heterotopia is frequently used in the festival literature as “an explanatory concept alongside related concepts like carnival, ritual and liminality” (Wilks & Quinn, 2016: 26). Wilks and Quinn checked the applicability of Foucault’s principles of heterotopia in the case of festivals, emphasising that the juxtaposition of multiple spaces within a single space is observed mainly by residents (first principle); festivals require, obviously, performances and rituals (as in the second of Foucault’s principles). These two principles and the concepts of social and cultural capital compose, in their opinion, an analytical framework

for interpreting festivals. Heterotopia asserts the idea of festivals as sacred spaces that “feed” social capital, including other spaces and facilitating the construction of social capital within disassociated social networks (Wilks & Quinn, 2016: 36). Festivals are sources of sustainability for a certain community, with effective energy to make it more powerful and to produce valuable collective experiences (Finkel, 2010).

What kind of social capital could be strengthened by music? Festival attendance could contribute to the construction of a sense of community, even if many social interactions should be temporary, lasting as long as the event takes place. Anyhow, the large majority of festivals could provide potential for bridging capital, because the public is heterogeneous (but with some things in common - for instance, the same musical preferences, as in this specific case). At the same time, we have to take into account the potential *divisive* function of music as it was presented by Bourdieu in *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. For Bourdieu, music represents “the most ‘spiritual’ of the arts of the spirit” and “the ‘pure’ art par excellence” (1984: 19), but not the most democratic art because it requires a lot of knowledge and skills. In this respect, he stated that “nothing more clearly affirms one’s ‘class’, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music. This is of course because, by virtue of the rarity of the conditions for acquiring the corresponding dispositions, there is no more ‘classfactory’ practice than concert-going or playing a ‘noble’ instrument” (1984: 18). Gardner (2004) analysed the participants’ involvement in the bluegrass festivals and he coined as “portable communities” the “plug and play” social forms that contain a wide range of people with different backgrounds. The traditional dimensions of a community are suspended, the geographical place or other institutional demands being not applicable. Nevertheless, participants create “communal spaces” and “form the kinds of enduring networks and relationships in these settings that foster social capital and an active and inclusive public sphere” (Gardner, 2004: 157). The portable communities are quite stable, depicting social structures similar to neighbourhoods, and valuing the freedom of a lifestyle different from the mainstream. The recurring social interactions and the establishment of a consistent set of rituals are two pillars of this emergent social form. People are motivated to participate for three main reasons: inclusivity, intimacy and natural living (Gardner, 2004: 163), expressing a kind of nostalgia for a more authentic human connection. Festivals as mode of resistance, as “anti-structural” spaces celebrating solidarity is a well-studied area (Turner, 1982), with its correspondent critics that discuss the social change character of festivals (Waterman, 1998; Sharpe, 2008).

In 2011, Wilks made an empirical study that examined three types of festivals: a pop festival, an opera festival and a folk one. Different forms of social relationships emerged during these events, but the author clearly stated that while bonding capital is an important part of the experience that people have at festivals, the formation of bridging capital does not represent a feature (Wilks, 2011: 281; Quinn & Wilks 2013). Festival’ attendees were found very similar in their demographic

data; moreover, many friends participate together as a form of group activity, so the public formation uses the already existing networks of colleagues, friends or peers. Thus, festivals create the opportunity to consolidate the bonding social capital with your own acquaintances; the bridging of barriers between different groups or unknown people is rarely reported. In opera festivals, the norm was the social detachment, with rare interactions (neither bridging nor bonding social capital being involved); folk and pop events have registered a more persistent connection. Anyhow, the “social exclusion” seems to be the norm, so Putnam’s theory should be rethought and redefined in relation with festivals (Wilks, 2011: 293). Related to their data collected at festivals, Wilks and Quinn (2016) considered that heterotopia, with its juxtapositions of different spaces, could stand as a catalyst for cultural and social capital. They observed the difficulty of discerning between bonding and bridging capital as they are in progress during a festival. The traits of the respective event, merely its recurrence, are very important at this point. In this vein, Wilks and Quinn talked about the necessity of introducing a new term in the social capital vocabulary: “recurrent bonding social capital” (2016: 34) in order to capture the empirical movement of social relationships during events.

Some tools were created with the purpose of studying the sense of community, such as the Sense of Community Index, designed by Perkins et al. in 1990, or McMillan and Chavis’s four-factor sense of community model (Skoultos, Georgoula & Temponera, 2020). Peterson, Speer and McMillan observed that sense of community research has reached a deadlock, mainly because the previous approaches had issues in being empirically tested, so they developed the Brief Sense of Community Scale (2008). The relationship between sense of community and festivals was also investigated using these scales, even if further work is needed for forming the big picture. The link between festivals and “shared emotional connections” was constantly confirmed (Schwarz and Tait, 2007, Van Winkle, Woosnam and Mohammed, 2013). Yozukmaz, Bertan and Alkaya (2020) presented the social benefits of festivals (communal, cultural and educational and social unity benefits), stressing on the “emotional solidarity” as a main feature of such events. Sharing became a key factor by offering connections, belonging, empowerment, and participation (Derrett, 2003, Jepson and Clarke, 2014). Hassanli, Walters and Williamson (2020) analysed the modalities in which multicultural festivals provide social sustainability to their communities and constructed the Festival Multiple Psychological Sense of Community model that connected three layers of a community: ethnic, migrant and mainstream. In the expanding field of virtual communities, Tang (2018: 213) found that “social capital not only directly influences network group behavior but also indirectly influences network group behavior through the mediation of sense of virtual community”. Mutual trust, interaction and commitment are the main factors that shape the sense and the scope of communities.

Methodology

The research context

The Covid-19 pandemic put festivals into a totally new light. Lockdown and state of alert come together with a set of restrictions that deeply affected the events management. At the same time, all the benefits that cultural events have at an individual or community level were “suspended”. As social interaction represents the key feature of events, what happened at the few festivals that were organised in pandemic, where physical distancing was one of the rules? Did they have a similar social impact as the non-pandemic events? Could we affirm that pandemic festivals still contribute to social capital? Also, the organisers had to face with many new problems: the management of postponements or even cancellations, the logistical issues for artists, vendors and public, restricted frame or hybrid form of events. In fact, an entire industry had to rethink its structure in a more creative way, outside the box. The big events that suppose international circulation of participants and artists are now totally dependent on state regulations, a situation that epitomises how the “global village” could be disrupted into mechanisms that belong to national components. The “craving for live music” (Szatan, 2020) constitutes a fact for everybody from this industry, the collective experiences of pre-COVID-19 period being really missed. Some festivals turned to interactive virtual worlds and streaming technologies to keep things alive. Thus, Tomorrowland will be a virtual festival and they explained in their suggestive video entitled “Never stop the music” the technological inserts of their digital event (Murray, 2020).

Scope and method

Bearing in mind the pandemic situation, our qualitative investigation centred on the perspective of the organisers and on the ways in which they build an event that contributes to social capital goals. Focusing on the intentions of festival organisers with respect to these outcomes, data were collected through in-depth interviews with Patricia Roxana Butucel (PB), the founder and the director of Rocanotherworld Festival since 2016, and Anca Ioana Mitrica (AM), PR & Communication Rocanotherworld, together with the data provided by festival’s site, Facebook and newspapers.

Selection of the festival: arguments and data

In Romania, just a handful of events have been organised during the pandemic, in special conditions, with a focus on physical distance and implementing specific safety measures. In this respect, we chose Rocanotherworld as a key example for many reasons. *First* of all, Rocanotherworld was the first festival held after lockdown in Romania. *Second*, it has specific traits that individualise it on the

music festival market: it is an annual event in memoriam Ioan Dan Niculescu. This event revolves around three main beliefs: “be curious”, “be different”, “be for others” that weave a special texture of collaboration, inclusiveness and implication. The festival began in 2016 and in 5 years of activity it involved 80 persons in the organisational department, 400 volunteers and 253 artists. Its first edition was organised in just five days, but still had 2.000 participants. After that it became one of the most loved festivals in the north-eastern region, being listed in the Tourism Strategy of the municipality of Iasi and of the metropolitan area of Iasi (2018-2030), together with Afterhills, FILIT and FITPTI in the category of “repetitive impact events” (Primaria Iasi, 2018). In 2017, Rocanotherworld lasted 3 days and attracted 25.000 participants; in 2018 it received 30.000 participants and more than 70 artists, while last year 40.000 people attended. From sanitary reasons, the 2020 edition of the festival accommodated only 2.500 participants and 15 bands in 5 days.

Third, it promotes a charitable way of doing events and encourages community development. Thus, the first edition was funded exclusively through donations, the second had free entrance but encouraged donations for the dog shelters and the NGO “Casa Share”, the third edition’s donations were given to the biggest Romanian independent theatre, Hala Fix, and also had constituted a fund for independent artists and projects. The fourth edition focused on the Ski Slope (Iasi) in order to revitalise this area and transform it in a leisure space for the entire community. For the actual pandemic edition, it was for the first time when buying a “solidarity ticket” proved to be necessary, for artists (who performed pro bono at the previous editions) and also for supporting another social cause: donations for 500 families from Lungani, Iasi (in partnership with Kaufland). *Four*, Rocanotherworld presents itself as a complex event that combines many layers (music, art, gastronomy, design) and meanings (joy, community, charity).

Results

The main categories of themes are the following:

- 1) *The festival is more than music*: it is “about moving things in a community, taking care of it and supporting it”, because “from the beginning the festival wanted to help and grow the community”, “but this year there was a sort of empathy and union that I never experienced before” (AM).
- 2) *The festival is about community, social capital and solidarity*: Rocanotherworld is “with and about people that vibe under the same values of goodness. We want to bring people face to face with community problems. That’s why every year Rocanotherworld has different causes, from social to cultural and also environmental. We strive to be an instrument-festival, sustainable, that intervenes and solves a problem (may it be social inclusion, reuse of public space, discovering

new artists or developing new audiences)” (PB). Solidarity and community development are the most important goals for Rocanotherworld, being not just “labels” (AM), or simple words, but concrete things done by organisers: “The backbone of Rocanotherworld is made of community and solidarity, and they dictate, design and shape its evolution, its people and its overall spirit. The core values of the festival are reflecting exactly this sense of community and togetherness: *Be different, Be curious and Be for others*” (PB). In 2020, the help was directed to 500 families from Lungani, near Iasi, supporting them with 9 tons of food, cleaning and sanitary products: “We made a promise to return there and continue to help them. And we will. This winter” (AM). The festival is focused on people, not only attendees at concerts, but also people in need: “Rocanotherworld is a festival designed by people, with people and for people, and in the pandemic context of 2020, its spirit was much more needed than before. This is why the social cause of the 2020 edition of the festival was particularly focused on the disadvantaged categories of population” (PB). The organisers think that festivals contribute to the construction of the sense of community, because no matter what specific they have, “festivals are by definition about community and sense of belonging and aligning to the same needs” and in pandemic times, “the sense of community is more awoken than ever” (AM).

- 3) *Characteristics and challenges of festival management in pandemic*: harmonising safety measures with fun, the “working with the unknown” (AM), the sense of losing touch with the public’s expectations, the finding of “partners and sponsors in such a short period of time, changing the location of the festivals and limitation of the seats” (PB), the change in the policy of tickets. The 2020 edition has been described as “unique” (AM), under “the sign of solidarity and safety, a flexible festival that adapted to the current context” (PB). The feelings were mixed: “I felt so many emotions, coming both from the public and from the artists. We found a way to connect with everyone through their souls and hearts, and not through their dancing bodies.” (AM); “The festival vibe was completely different. There were contradictory moods that we could read on participants’ faces, fear of being again in a group of people, but also happiness of being in a group of people. It was strange and nice in the same time. The pandemic made us more fearful and cautious regarding human contact. We were lucky to have a responsible public that respected exactly the measures we took. Once we offered the feeling of security regarding our organisation, the relaxation came automatically for all the participants present at the event” (PB).
- 4) *Social dimensions of the festival*: the connections proved to be even deeper and more meaningful. The social benefits are felt also by organisers, not only by participants. In their opinion, the keywords of this edition have been “empathy”, “empowering”, “hope” and “solidarity”. The most treasured experience from this year was “the power of the community and the support from our

public that share the same values as the festival. You can only understand that if you are there. It is incomparable.” (PB).

- 5) *Formula for successful events in a time of crisis*: values such as safety, change, adaptation, craziness, passion, confidence, trust in team and audience and a real, worthy and strong motivation.
- 6) *Means of communication used by organisers*: social media were the most important especially in pandemic (mainly Facebook and Instagram), but together with out-of-home advertisement (OOH), digital out-of-home (DOOH) communication, traditional press, radio, TV and the festival website. In 2019 they used a mobile app through which information was sent to participants. Now, they are in a process of developing their YouTube channel. In terms of press coverage of the festival, Patricia Butucel told me that there were more than 68 articles about 2020's edition, on-site reports from national posts (Pro TV, Antena 1, Kanal D, Realitatea), 42 TV spots: Music Channel (10.06.2020 - 24.06.2020), 158 Radio Spots: Radio Guerrilla, Viva Fm (11.06.2020 - 28.06.2020), 68 articles with 1,9 M reach, 7 TV appearances at PRO TV, Antena 1, Realitatea, Kanal D, TVR Iasi, Iasi TV Life, 279,6 K - Broadcasts Digital OOH (15.06.2020 - 28.06.2020), 3 backlits, 8 street banners, 16 city lights. In social media, statistics show 350 K - Facebook posts reach, 49 K - Instagram posts reach, 6450 - website visitors (10.06.2020 - 24.06.2020).

Discussion

The frequencies of words (number of occurrences in interviews) are significant for visualising the community involvement that the organisers cherish: “festival”: 44; “people”: 36; “public”: 26; “Rocanotherworld”: 21; “music”: 20; “community”: 17; “events”: 16; “experience”: 11; “help”: 10; “values”: 9; “artists”: 8; “others”: 8; “participants”: 7. These frequencies are clues for the values promoted by this festival; we can observe the communitarian approach, the clear orientation toward people, public, participants. The action-driven perspective is indicated by words such as: “want”: 17; “think”: 9; “go”: 8. The sentiments involved are marked by the use of the terms: “feel/feeling”: 12 occurrences; “love”: 10, “vibe”: 7, “emotion”: 3, “fear”: 2. The relation with the place is emphasised by the use of “Iasi” (6 occurrences). The overall pandemic context is mentioned 7 times. Using Gambette and Véronis (2010) tree cloud visualisation, we can see below not only the most frequent words of the interviews, but also their semantic proximity.

efficient strategies for city branding or experiential branding, but they also prove useful in constructing solidarity in a cultural and artistic frame.

Conclusion

Rocanotherworld has succeeded in creating its own community, focusing on attendees but also on reaching out to the local community. It provides opportunities for social involvement, volunteering and networking. The social support is made according to the festival narratives that are congruently transmitted through every channel used. We can assert that Rocanotherworld enlarges every year its storytelling. This festival remains very coherent also in terms of branding (logo, communication style and approach, values) and it continues to keep the brand promises.

If organisers had prioritised for a long time the economic benefits over the social benefits, nowadays the focus is more on the connection between festivals and community, environment and social causes. Wood (2008: 173) strongly underlined that this movement “is now necessary to place less emphasis on, the well-established, economic impact of events. This is in line with the growing recognition by the arts and events sectors that more substantial benefits can be demonstrated through the inclusion of social impacts within service evaluation frameworks”. Our research highlighted that the Rocanotherworld’ organisers focus is pre-eminently on the social benefits of the festivals. As Laing and Mair (2015) pointed out, the organisers have an important role in increasing social inclusion. As analysed in literature, festivals began to assume social goals and our findings showed that the interviewed organisers have implemented strategies for achieving them. Such social perspectives construct a more holistic festival experience valued by many social actors: organisers, attendees (that buy a ticket that goes for a social cause), community as a whole.

As Putnam (2000: 116) said, philanthropy, volunteering and altruism are important measures of social capital. In Dewey’s tradition, Putnam maintains the distinctions between “doing with” (social capital) and “doing for” (not defining *stricto sensu* the social capital). Anyhow, the analysed festival constitutes an example for a bidirectional influence: the network could be used for involvement in community life while doing something good for your peers leads to a stronger network. Moreover, the festival *qua* brand could gain more visibility and awareness when both forms of “doing” are put to work.

Social capital remains one essential social value (Lundberg, Armbrecht, Andersson & Getz, 2017) and even more so during the pandemic. The quest for events in pandemic is just one of many arguments for the value of social connections and bonding. As Davies (2020) observed, the potential outcome for society following pandemic is a society that builds more than ever on support,

mutual aid, networks and communities that protect the vulnerable people and groups. The focus on small communities has grown, as well as on local festivals.

Recommendations

Even if our study was focused on a single festival, our findings are both consistent with the subsequent literature and relevant for the event market. Further research could bring more in-depth knowledge. Based on the present results, we can formulate several recommendations. First, event managers should look up to Rocanotherworld in order to make use of the good practices encountered there. The way this event functioned even in pandemic times illustrated the fact that social empathy and inclusion can meet the necessary economic outcomes. Second, event organisers should mind the diversification of attendees' motivation. A social cause can attract more people and can also lead to a more authentic human connection among participants. In this vein, festivals become powerful narratives that can help in reaching the goal of solidarity. Third, festival organisers must consider social capital along cultural and artistic capital (which are normally envisaged in this case). Fourth, the measurement of success for a musical festival does not reside solely in the number of participants or the number of tickets sold. Moreover, a festival is also assessed as a successful one along the lines of the contribution made in improving the community life. Fifth, the pandemic situation revealed one more time that festivals represent constantly evolving entities. Event managers must take into account this key fact. On the one hand, festivals mirror the social realities of today. On the other hand, festivals can constitute vectors of change and valuable trendsetters.

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