

ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT CULTURAL EVENTS. A CASE STUDY OF EASTERN POLAND

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Citation: Ziółkowska, J. (2020). ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT CULTURAL EVENTS. A CASE STUDY OF EASTERN POLAND. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 29(2), 450–459. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.29206-481>

Abstract: The aim of the research is to analyse the relationships between cultural events and the creation of social capital. The research is dedicated to small-scale cultural events organized in Eastern Poland. Although literature on festivals and events is vast, little studies are dedicated to the group of festival vendors, their characteristics and the possible relationships that are created among them and with local communities. Through a survey carried out at 7 small-scale events, the study shows that characteristic features of social capital are present among festival vendors. The research revealed that social capital enhanced throughout the selected events has an individual (professional and personal) as well as regional effect. The majority of vendors participating in the study were established in the same region as the events, in consequence this situation may imply positive effects on local development of the voivodships of Eastern Poland.

Key words: social capital, small scale events, festivals, events stakeholders, festival vendors, local development, Eastern Poland

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INTRODUCTION

There is vast scientific evidence that lists and characterizes the possible impacts of events (i.e. Soteriades & Dimou, 2011, Chen et al., 2013, Chanaron, 2014, Scholtz, 2019). The effects of events organization are of social, cultural, economic, environmental and political nature. Literature concerning the impact of events is mostly dedicated to the economic impacts, with a majority of the studies based on quantitative research (Kim & Kaewnuch, 2018) and concentrated on bigger events i.e. sporting events of worldwide significance, cultural festivals of national or international importance as well as political celebrations or inaugurations. Certainly events of a larger scale, namely mega events or hallmark events, have a greater impact on local society, economy and environment (Getz, 2000) and this impact is of positive as well as negative nature. Events are used by national governments to enhance future social and economic development throughout

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investments in infrastructure (Chaberek & Ziółkowska, 2017) and place branding (Richards, 2017). Events are also seen as means to strengthen social capital (Arcodia & Whitford, 2007; Gibson & Stewart, 2009; Edwards, 2012; Mair & Duffy, 2018).

Numerous small-scale events are organized by local governments, sporting or cultural organizations. The impacts of this type of events are significantly smaller when compared to mega events but at the same time smaller events of a local character and created by local community have a great potential to attract tourists (Carlsen et al., 2000).

This attractiveness is based on the unique cultural character of this type of events as well as their specific location resulting from the natural and anthropogenic heritage (Ziółkowska, 2015). Small-scale events created by local communities are gaining interest of researchers. Several studies underline their importance as tourists attractions and triggers of social and economic development (i.e. Jamieson, 1995; Gibson & Stewart, 2009; McCartney, 2010; Mair & Duffy, 2018; Kwiatkowski et al., 2019). According to Getz (2003) the economic and image-related effects of events can be greater in locations with smaller populations than in large cities. In Poland several large-scale events have been organized in the past 10 years. These include for example the European Football Cup Euro 2012 (in Gdańsk, Poznań, Warszawa, Wrocław) or the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 24) in 2018 (in Katowice), not to mention concerts of world-renown artists. Small-scale events of a local character, including fairs and festivals are organized in rural areas of all regions of Poland (Bank Danych Lokalnych, 2018). The widespread presence of this type of events implies the need to study their character and implication on local development, especially in areas where other development factors are scarce. The study concentrates on the macro-region of Eastern Poland, which is a region that still requires structural adjustment to attain the average level of development of other regions in the European Union (Strategy for socio-economic development of Eastern Poland until 2020, 2013).

Small-scale, local events

As presented by Koh and Jackson (2006) local events are those whose audience is primarily local, they are small-scale events, often less sophisticated, of short duration and promoted only in the local media, which in the case of effective organization can turn into events of a regional scale. Regional events, organized on a larger scale than local events, are to attract local and non-local people, their duration is longer, they are promoted outside the local media. Regional events that achieve the greatest success can become hallmark events. An unquestionable advantage of small-scale events is the fact that their organization does not require important investments or infrastructure requirements and at the same time it is possible to indicate several benefits of their organization. There are numerous criteria for the distribution of effects of the organization of events. The discussion contained in literature regarding the organization of events (both large mega-events and small-scale events) presents the problem related to the assessment of the effects of their implementation in ex-ante (pre-event) and ex-post (post-event) terms. The effects of events can also be divided into two groups: positive effects and negative effects. Another division of the expected effects of organizing events, often found in literature, is the division into tangible and intangible effects. The effects of organizing events can also be considered in the short or long term. It is assumed that the impact of mass events on local economy varies depending on the scale and type of event. With the increase in the size of the event, the potential number of visitors, media interest and the potential costs and benefits of their organization, including economic benefits, also increase (Janeczko et al., 2002).

Expected results of events organization can vary depending on the interested party (Table 1). Van Niekerk and Getz (2016) identified 8 main groups of festivals stakeholders,

which can be further divided into more specific ones leading to 43 different stakeholders. Those groups include among others: festival attendees, festival vendors, local community, competitors, owners, suppliers and employees. According to McCartney (2010, p. 260), the scope of influence of individual stakeholders on the event will depend on such factors as: personal motives, strength and power, resources and the degree of involvement in the event. Stakeholders may be intentionally involved in the process of implementing the event or may be included in it indirectly or accidentally (*ibidem*). This statement can also be applied to beneficiaries who can participate in the implementation of the event or benefit from it even in the absence of involvement (e.g. local shopkeepers). Stakeholders will also include individuals, groups of people or institutions that do not directly benefit from the event, but often incur significant costs of its implementation. On the other hand, the beneficiaries can be those individuals, groups of people or institutions that, as a result of the event, achieve primarily benefits - they are recipients of its positive effects.

Table 1. Beneficiaries of events and expected effects

Direct beneficiaries	Expected effects of events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - industry associations (related to the field of the event) - local trade - service providers (including catering, accommodation, transport) - other enterprises - construction companies - owner of the venue - employees - media - performers (artists) - vendors 	economic (including related to tourism and trade)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pro-environmental groups (associations) 	related to infrastructure and environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local and national authorities - industry associations 	political
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - volunteers - local community - participants (performers, exhibitors, vendors, etc.) - tourists and other visitors participating in the event 	social and cultural

A key to the successful event, in terms of attractiveness for the audience and in terms of reaching positive effects is the quality of cooperation between stakeholders. From the perspective of local development it is possible to identify 3 main groups of stakeholders and at the same time beneficiaries of the event: local governments and their institutions, local community and local businesses. Among the group of local community and local businesses an important group consists of the vendors, who in the case of small-scale events play a very important role – they create the atmosphere of the event (Michel, 2012). Robertson et al. (2009, p. 162) cite an analysis carried out by MacKellar, which showed that the connections arising as a result of mass events (also one-off) helped to build further connections within regional communities and became an opportunity for people to work together and to discuss and solve problems important for the community. Interactions that occur as a result of events are of a lasting nature, they are repetitive both for the organizers and for the participants.

These are unique bonds that cannot be moved to another place, and therefore constitute the unique potential of a given location. As suggested by Kim & Kaewnuch (2018) the supply side of event management is not as well covered by research as the demand side and additionally the group of stakeholders studies is not evenly covered as

well. In the analysis of literature on events and festivals carried out by Kim and Kaewnuch (2018, 462), it was indicated that out of 153 analysed articles 94 concerned participants and visitors and only 5 dealt with the issues of vendors.

Eastern Poland

Eastern Poland is a macro-region consisting of 5 voivodships: Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podlaskie, Lubelskie, Świętokrzyskie and Podkarpackie. It is an area with special features that distinguish it from other macro regions of Poland. The current socio-economic situation of Eastern Poland is the effects of various phenomena of both internal nature, including a lack of localization of industrial investments, lack of sufficient investment in communication infrastructure; and external nature including the change of Poland's borders after World War II. Despite the political transformation of 1989 and Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, the situation of Eastern Poland did not improve significantly. In 2016, GDP per capita of voivodships included in this macro-region was still below the EU average, while in all other voivodships of Poland it was above 50% of EU average (Regions of Poland 2018, p. 31).

The largest city in Eastern Poland is Lublin with 339 850 thousand residents, other voivodship cities are: Białystok (297 288 thousand), Kielce (196 804 thousand), Rzeszów (189 662 thousand) and Olsztyn (173 070 thousand), these cities are respectively 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14 positions in terms of population among all 16 voivodship cities in Poland (Rocznik demograficzny, 2019). The urbanization rate in the voivodships of Eastern Poland is one of the lowest in Poland and in the ranking of voivodships it places them in 16th (Podkarpackie), 15th (Świętokrzyskie), 14th (Lubelskie), 10th (Warmińsko-Mazurskie) and 8th (Podlaskie) positions of Polish voivodships (eRegion, 2018). Eastern Poland is also characterized by a low level of investment outlays per capita (Regions of Poland 2018, data refer to 2016). Similarly, with respect to the activity of enterprises, Eastern Poland has the lowest number of commercial companies – the mentioned voivodships occupy the last places in the ranking (Regions of Poland 2018, data refer to 2016).

The complicated economic situation of Eastern Poland is undoubtedly one of the many factors contributing to serious social problems in the region. One of the most important phenomena concerning all voivodships of Eastern Poland is the decrease in population. According to the data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, the majority of all Polish communes for which a decrease in population of more than 10% is forecasted by 2030 is located in this region (Population forecast in communes for 2017-2030, 2017, p. 8). In the case of the Podlaskie voivodship, it is as much as 44% of communes (ibidem). In terms of the material situation of households in the voivodships of Eastern Poland the level of income poverty is above the average for Poland in all five voivodships, while the level of poverty of living conditions is above the average in the voivodships: Lubelskie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmian-Masurian (Regional differentiation of the quality of life in Poland based on the Social Cohesion Survey, 2017). An important problem of the macro region in question is insufficient transport accessibility, not only with large growth centers within Poland (and hence also limited access to European centers), but also centers within Eastern Poland itself. The location of the region on the outskirts of the EU and difficult transport access result in low interest from foreign investors.

Another problem resulting from this factor is low tourist traffic despite the region being rich in cultural and natural attractions as well as renowned for high quality environmental conservation. The National Strategy for Regional Development 2030 (Krajowa Strategia Rozwoju Regionalnego 2030, p. 50) adopted in 2019 puts special emphasis on the development of Eastern Poland and assumes increasing investment attractiveness, strengthening competitiveness and stimulating economic activity in this area as well as strengthening social capital.

The role of social capital in local development

Social capital is seen as one of the drivers of development, it is an intangible asset referring not only to individuals but also to groups of people or nations. A vast number of studies is dedicated to analyse the sources of social capital and the consequences of its development, especially in regions where other resources are limited. The concept of social capital is in the scope of interest of a great number of scientific disciplines. From a geographical perspective social capital is seen as a mean to achieve social and economic growth and the research concentrates mostly on presenting the spatial distribution of social capital level. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is considered to be the first of contemporary researchers who indicated the existence of social capital and undertook its analysis. Bourdieu defined social capital as "the sum of real and potential resources that are associated with having a permanent network of more or less institutionalized relationships based on mutual knowledge and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 2). According to Bourdieu, the size (volume) of social capital owned by a given entity is directly proportional to the capital held by other related entities and depends also on the possibility of "launching" this network of connections.

The author also indicates that the social capital possessed gives the possibility to use other forms of capital - economic, cultural or symbolic, owned by other units in the group. Social capital is not given by nature, nor does it result from family connections - it has no genealogical background, but is the result of work dedicated to creating and maintaining lasting and useful ties with other individuals. The purpose of these ties are benefits of material or symbolic significance. According to Bourdieu, what ensures mutual knowledge and recognition is the "alchemy of exchange" (French *alchimie de l'echange*) which is the basis for the transformation of accidental bonds into bonds resulting in lasting obligations expressed in gratitude, friendship or respect or rights.

As Bourdieu emphasizes, social capital is the least material of all types of capital, because it exists only in the sphere of relations and social networks, while human capital is hidden in human abilities and physical and economic capital take material form. Social capital, in particular its impact on the creation of human capital, was also the subject of research by James Coleman. According to Coleman (1988, p. 101), the key function of social capital is its utility - the ability to use resources arising from the existence of social capital by individual units to meet their own goals.

Coleman suggests, that individuals would not be able to satisfy these goals (both economic and non-economic) in the absence of social capital. Particularly valuable may be those relationships that enable the acquisition of information needed and thus facilitate the undertaking of specific actions (Coleman, 1988, p. 104). When analysing the impact of social capital on local development, it is possible to take into account local differences affecting the "baseline" of this capital. These differences may result from historical, ethnic, religious, political and other conditions.

However, the basis for this analysis should be the "existing" supply of social capital at a given aggregate level (Triglia, 2001). The condition for choosing the right path for development may be the general availability of social connections networks, stretching between individual units (companies, employees) and collective actors (interest groups, public institutions) (ibidem, p. 433-434). Trigilia (ibidem) makes interesting observations regarding social capital as a source of local development in the context of the impact of globalization processes. In his opinion, globalization has a twofold impact on the use of social capital in local development. On the one hand, it makes it easy to move businesses and choose the most advantageous locations from the entrepreneur's point of view, which harms regions that are unable to offer the right resources. On the other hand, it enables more innovative and social capital-using areas

to benefit from a growing market. Attracting companies and investors to a given region may depend not only on the incentives offered to them (e.g. in the form of support for investment location and other facilities) but on the ability to use social capital in the development of a certain level of knowledge and specialization, which will ensure sustainable development of the area in the future (ibidem, p. 433).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research covered 7 cultural events located in the 5 voivodships of Eastern Poland. They were periodical events of a cultural nature referring to specific elements of the tradition of each region. The range of the examined events can be defined as local or regional for 6 events, in the case of one of the events it is supra-regional (as defined by Koh & Jackson, 2006). When choosing the events for the study, the location, type of event and its tradition (periodicity) were key factors. In the case of location, the basic factor determining the choice was the location on the territory of Eastern Poland.

Four voivodships were covered by the research (Table 2). Podlaskie voivodship was not covered by the survey research among vendors due to technical problems, but a questionnaire was administered to the manager of “Jarmark Dominikański”, an event held in Choroszcz. The focus on events promoting local culture (related to the tradition of a given region) meant that the organizers of the examined events included only self-government institutions or non-governmental organizations. The research was carried out between July 4 and August 16, 2015. A comparable methodology was used by Bakas et al. (2019) to study small-scale events in Portugal.

Table 2. Distribution of studied events

Name of the event	Location	Voivodship
Powojenne T argi Końskie	Lutowiska	Podkarpackie
Turniej Rycerski o Miecz Króla Kazimierza Wielkiego	Szydłów	Świętokrzyskie
Jarmark św. Kiliana	Skierbieszów	Lubelskie
Jarmark Holeński	Hola	Lubelskie
Święto Mazurskiego Kartoflaka	Szczytno	Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Regionalny Festiwal Pogranicza Kartaczewo	Gołdap	Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Dymarki Świętokrzyskie	Nowa Słupia	Świętokrzyskie

The research tool was an interview questionnaire composed of 21 questions, including 2 general questions (participant type, place of business) and 19 specific questions (7 open-ended questions, 7 closed-ended questions and 5 semi-open questions).

RESULTS DISCUSSIONS

88 vendors took part in the study, among them were craftsman and folk artists (the largest group, $n=40$) as well as farm owners or representatives of rural associations. In the case of all the examined events, the vast majority of participants came from the voivodship in which the event was carried out ($n=78$). In contemporary literature social capital is analysed in relation to various administrative units, both on a macro scale (e.g. social capital of the European Union) through the mezzo scale (social capital of a given country, province) to the micro scale (social capital of a commune or town). The location of participants in the surveyed events indicates that they participate primarily in events located within the region in which they operate. A total of 10 of the participants surveyed came from outside Eastern Poland: 4 from Mazowieckie Voivodship, 3 from the Śląskie Voivodship, and respectively 1 from the voivodships of Małopolskie, Łódzkie and Pomorskie. The scale of the effects of social capital arising as

a result of mass events organization is difficult to determine. However, one can point to a certain range of economic and social results appearing in the form of benefits for both participants and event organizers (broadly understood not only as the institution but as the host community of the event). Referring to the views of Theiss (2007), it is possible to observe the emergence of social capital at the regional and individual level. At the individual level, consisting of cooperation between participants, it is possible to observe:

1. Informal coordination, which is more favourable than formal coordination: a direct effect may be, for example, the influence exerted by the participants on the organizers in matters related to the implementation of the event.

2. Reduction of transaction costs, which may result in the exchange of semi-finished products or joint creation of final products by a group of participants, as well as a better adjustment of the quality of semi-finished products to the needs of the final product manufacturer.

3. Maximizing the benefits of participating in the event by sharing the costs of participation (e.g. transport, accommodation).

4. Information flow, including sharing detailed knowledge about individual events in terms of their artistic values and potential earning opportunities.

At the organizer level the following results are visible:

1. Better cooperation with participants - matching the program and infrastructure of the event to their needs, co-creating the event program.

2. Involving the local community in cooperation: dialogue between the local authority and the local community.

3. Improving the quality of life of the local community by enabling it to expand its network of contacts and strengthen its sense of connection.

4. Improving the efficiency of governance by strengthening the sense of purposefulness of expenses incurred for the organization of mass events.

The effects presented above refer to key resources at the disposal of individual participants. The relationships taking place on the basis of participation in the surveyed events lead to knowledge, information and experience exchange. Those resources constitute the endogenous potential of local development. Undoubtedly, they are used in the particular interests of individual participants (vendors), but they can also be a drive for the development of a given commune, especially if this development is based on cultural values. The key here is cooperation between the market sphere, social networks and development policy (Triglia, 2001). As field studies have shown, the organization of a cultural event can be based on the use of human resources and "existing" infrastructure in a given location. Social capital facilitates the flow of information. The provision of information allows to obtain detailed knowledge directly, reduces the risk of economic failure and the associated costs. Social capital, like any other form of capital, is characterized by productivity, leads to the achievement of a certain specific benefit, which can undoubtedly be information.

The study showed that when searching for information about events, their participants use knowledge derived directly from other participants (28 out of 95 answers), some participants also receive invitations from the organizers. An interesting answer given by respondents regarding the question about the source of information on the event was a reference to the event's tradition, which suggests that in many cases the event is "inscribed" in the minds of the participants. This situation results from the geographical proximity of the participant and the event being examined. The source of information about the event is also the Internet, which has no clear picture as to the impact on social capital. Its strength, as a factor creating social capital, can be both mobilizing, neutral and negative (Markowska-Przybyła, 2017). Unfortunately, the study

did not allow to indicate to what extent knowledge obtained by participants from the Internet, comes from websites and to what extent from social media sites. There is no doubt, however, that information about various cultural events circulates between event participants and these are both positive and negative opinions about them.

Barriers to participation in events can be considered as possible obstacles for social capital development. Participants of the surveyed events in the vast majority declare that they consciously avoid to participate in some events (n=66). Their decision is motivated by economic considerations regarding the organization and nature of the event as well as poor cooperation with the organizers and difficulties in obtaining a place at the event. Economic reasons include: high travel costs (too large distance from the place of business), high fees or lack of time. Organizational issues relate to the low attractiveness of the event (low number of visitors, poor promotion of the event, poor organization). In the area of the nature of the event, participants point to the inappropriate profile of the event (not related to their activities, e.g. traditional folk art or folklore). The most interesting reason indicated as a barrier to participation in some events is the situation of rejection of their participation due to the lack of connection with the local social network. As emphasized by Łuczyszyn (2013, p. 131), strong bonds of local communities are becoming barriers to the influx of new ideas, new residents, and consequently they are not conducive to development.

This observation confirms the common view among participants of local cultural events who stated that they do not travel to some events because they feel "unwanted". They indicated as well that in some cases registration is refused by the organizers because of their origin outside of the region in which the event is being held. It should be emphasized that the respondents have extensive experience related to active participation in events. 80 of them participate in other events during the year, including 35 who participate in more than 10 events. For the respondents, participation in events is not only a source of income, but also a way of life and spending time. As observed, many participants are present at the event with the family. The vendors declare to know each other and meet at various events throughout the year.

The goal of each human activity is to fulfil a certain set of needs and achieve specific benefits. When asked about the benefits of participating in the event, the participants indicated several possible answers. Most participate in events in order to make a profit (n=61), while at the same time many pointed out that this profit is symbolic or additional to income from other activities. Another benefit is the promotion of products sold (n=53). 54 respondents indicated social benefits as those that are significant to them. In this case, as mentioned by the vendors, it is about establishing relationships with the local community and other participants, exchanging experiences, meeting friends and showing respect for the work done by the participants. The answer to the question about mutual relations between event participants leads to an interesting conclusion - 78 respondents know other participants personally or in a professional field. Such result indicates that the participants form a community related to their interests, in which they share knowledge and experience and also support each other by providing information about other events (including whether they are worth participating in). Relations that facilitate obtaining information, which are a resource arising from social capital are derived from joint participation in the event.

CONCLUSION

It is important to note, that tools and measures typical of studies on social capital were not used to conduct this research. The research based on interviews and observations allowed not to determine the specific level of emerging social capital, but

to state that such capital has a chance to arise as a result of organizing small-scale cultural events. The source of this capital is undoubtedly the personal characteristics of individual participants and their mutual relations based on trust and cooperation.

An important factor that supports the creation of social capital is the conditions in which this capital is created, and thus the immediate environment (atmosphere of the event, cooperation with the organizers), as well as historical and cultural conditions. Undoubtedly, the atmosphere accompanying these events is conducive to the emergence of social capital among participants. A study led in South Africa indicates that local events generate social inclusivity, cohesion and empowerment (Bob et al., 2019, p. 1248). If we treat local development, in general, as a set of circumstances leading to a comprehensive formation of optimal living conditions for the community, social capital is an indispensable element of such development (Działek, 2011).

At the basis of development, not only in the local dimension, lies adequate, effective cooperation of various types of formal and informal institutions, as well as individual units. Bartkowski notes that social capital influences the creation of favourable conditions for cooperation and exchange in society, it is a tool that stimulates local and regional development (Bartkowski, 2007, p. 91-92). Small-scale cultural events can trigger social capital and thus support local development through trust, information exchange and cooperation between different stakeholders located in the region. For local development, especially in the conditions of limited availability of external resources, resources that are established within the local community, such as social capital, may be crucial.

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Submitted:
07.01.2020

Revised:
31.03.2020

Accepted and published online
08.04.2020