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CharlesArcodiaPhD & MichelleWhitfordPhD

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Festival Attendance and the Development of Social Capital

Charles Arcodia, PhD
Michelle Whitford, PhD

ABSTRACT. Festivals are emerging worldwide as a growing and vibrant sector of the tourism and leisure industries and are seen to have significant economic, socio-cultural, and political impacts on the destination area and host groups. While there are a number of scholars working on developing valid models to determine the economic impact of festivals on host communities, there are few studies published which focus on the social, cultural, and/or political impacts of festivals and events. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to determine the degree to which festival attendance facilitates the augmentation of social capital by drawing upon the literature from various disciplines in order to conceptualize the synergy between festivals and social capital. To achieve this, the paper will (1) examine the relevant literature on the key characteristics of “festivals” as distinct from other events and (2) investigate the current uses of the notion of “social capital” within the academic debates in a variety of disciplinary contexts. doi:10.1300/J452v08n02_01 [Article copies available for a fee from *The Haworth Document Delivery Service*: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2006 by *The Haworth Press, Inc.* All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS. Festivals, festival attendance, social capital, social impact, cultural impact, political impact

Charles Arcodia (E-mail: c.arcodia@uq.edu.au) and Michelle Whitford (E-mail: m.whitford@uq.edu.au) are affiliated with School of Tourism and Leisure Management, UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.

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INTRODUCTION

Festivals are emerging worldwide as a growing and vibrant sector of the tourism and leisure industries and are seen to have significant economic, socio-cultural, and political impacts on a destination or host community. Concomitantly, there is an increasing interest in developing ways of identifying and understanding the various costs and benefits associated with festivals. While there are a number of scholars working on developing valid models to determine the economic impact of festivals on host communities (Gitelson, Guadagnolo, & Moore, 1988; Long & Perdue, 1990; Yardley, MacDonald, & Clarke, 1990; Faulkner, 1994; Mules & Faulkner, 1996; Anderson & Solberg, 1999; Burgan & Mules, 2000; Rees, 2000), there is a paucity of studies which focus on the social, cultural, and/or political impacts of festivals and events.

Thus, the purpose of this paper is to determine the degree to which festival attendance facilitates the augmentation of social capital, that is the processes between people which allow the establishment of a sense of co-operation, goodwill, reciprocity, belonging, and fellowship. In order to achieve this, the paper will first examine the relevant literature about the key characteristics of festivals as distinct from other events, provide an overview pertaining to the evolution of festivals, and highlight the dominance within the relevant literature of economic impacts over socio-cultural impacts. Second, the paper will discuss the current uses of the notion of social capital within the academic debates in a variety of disciplinary contexts; and finally, it will describe the relationship between festival attendance and social capital and argue the benefits that a host community may derive from participating in or staging festivals.

DEFINING FESTIVALS

Falassi (1987) maintains that the social function of a festival is closely related to values that a community regards as essential to its ideology such as social identity, historical continuity, and physical survival. Furthermore, according to Arcodia and Robb (2000), a festival revolves around the marking of special occasions and the celebration of significant events. Essentially, festival may be regarded as “the cultural resources of an area that make possible the successful hosting of visitors” (Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993, p. 5). South Australian Tourism Commission (1997, p. 2) offers a more comprehensive definition of festival:

Festivals are celebrations of something the local community wishes to share and which involves the public as participants in the experience. Festivals must have as a prime objective a maximum amount of people participation, which must be an experience that is different from or broader than day to day living. It is not necessary to extend hands on experience by more than one day, though it is often economically desirable.

A key characteristic of a festival is the sense of community and celebration engendered by an occasion, which is a public and freely accessed social gathering involving a variety of media such as arts and craft, performances and demonstrations (Goldblatt, 1997). Getz (1997, p. 8) quotes Falassi's summary of festivals as "a sacred or profane time of celebration marked by special observances." Moreover, it may be argued that throughout history, festivals have emulated cultural traditions or marked a religious or historical occasion associated with the community staging the festival (Arcodia & Robb, 2000).

EVOLUTION OF FESTIVALS

Historically, the way festivals celebrated special occasions was through art, ritual, and festivity. They were seen as communal gatherings that objectify people's collective wishes and dreams and provide an important occasion for a unique experience in their social lives (Earls, 1993). The generic origins of this type of public celebration which has cultural meaning to the host community (Pardy, 1991) can be traced back to the carnival of Europe.

Most cultures celebrate carnivalesque events such as festivals, market fairs, and harvest celebrations. Carnival comes from the Latin word, *carnivale*, meaning "farewell to the flesh" and essentially refers to "a period of celebration of the body, of physical abandon where licentiousness, hedonism and sexual excess are expressed to music, dancing, masquerading and feasting" (Nurse, 1999, p. 664). The carnival of the Middle Ages provided an occasion of mass celebration during which "the normal course of social life was turned upside down as participants in the carnival would engage in the mockery of public officialdom" (Hughson, 1998). However, Amanatidis (1998, p. 127) claimed that carnival is "a creative space for multiple expressions and reflections on the everyday realm" and has its own level of social reality. Bakhtin (1984) on the other hand, argued that carnival is in fact revolutionary in

that it is a process in which people could confront issues pertaining to class, gender, and race, and where people from the lower classes could release pent-up frustration.

By mid-1850 in Britain, carnivalesque fairs were considered to be out of date, in contrast to the carnivals of Latin America and the Caribbean, which have evolved to be dynamic expressions of cultural and racial identity and regional harmony. Interestingly, Pardy (1991, p. 19) believed that contemporary festivals are not only vehicles for celebrating, "enhancing or preserving local culture and history," but arguably facilitate the development of social capital.

DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The concept of social capital is complicated because it has been used in a variety of ways, but as Portes (1998, p. 6) concludes, notwithstanding the differences in usage, there is some consensus in the literature that the term is used to name the capacity of individuals to secure benefits by virtue of their membership in social structures. Social capital is clearly grounded in the connectivity of human activity and, as Putnam (1993, pp. 35-36) explains, it involves "features of social organisation, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit." As Ford (1999) suggests, it signifies a web of relationships, norms of behavior, values, obligations, and information channels. Social capital is conceptualized in this paper, not as a resource in itself but as a vehicle to acquire resources.

Furthermore, when social capital is present, it is generally found in the social structures of society, allowing individuals to act effectively within these structures (Coleman, 1990). It is not privately owned as financial, physical, human, or intellectual capital may be, but it is best conceptualized as a cumulative and transferable public good, freely accessible by the community. As Portes (1998, p. 7) argues,

Whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships. To possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage.

It involves civic engagement, associational membership, and the development of social networks (Cooke & Wills, 1999). Social capital is

similar to other forms of capital in that it is regarded as a community asset which can be increased or decreased, but it is distinctive from other forms of capital in that it does not remain static. If social capital is well used, its stock is increased for further use in other areas which may be unrelated, but when social capital is not used, the community progressively loses its capacity to access it (Hemingway, 1999). As Putnam (1993, p. 37) suggests,

Stocks of social capital, such as trusts, norms and networks tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Successful collaboration in one endeavour builds connections and trust-social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other, unrelated tasks.

Putnam (1995) and others (Cox, 1995; Pascoe, 1996) present strong evidence that social capital is generally in decline. They attribute this to residential mobility, the welfare state, increased demands on time and money, the changing role of women, and the advent of television. Cox (1995) supports this perspective and proposes that social capital is the most significant of all capitals because it provides the basis upon which a civil society may be established. She explains (p. 13):

Without our social bases we cannot be fully human. Social capital is as vital as language for human society. We become vulnerable to social bankruptcy when our social connections fail.

Cox (1995) further suggests that the disharmony, which has been documented in many societies globally, is linked to conceptualizing citizens as competing individuals rather than socially connected human beings. She takes the view that the values responsible for holding a society together, such as co-operation, goodwill, trust, and reciprocity are rapidly disappearing. She personifies the problem by recognizing the current significance of "Economically Rational Man" and suggests that this constructed individual is only interested in maximizing short-term advantages. "If he takes over," she suggests, "he will destroy society because social connections have no place in a world full of self-interested, competing individuals." Her vision is to facilitate the development of "a new century of optimism that will allow us to move co-operatively and not competitively toward a more civilised future" (p. 2).

Although there are growing efforts to measure social capital (Leeder & Dominello, 1999), the concept is difficult to benchmark quantitatively and may provide some explanation as to why a great deal of attention has

been devoted to the economic rather than the social benefits of festival attendance. Although there are now tenuous attempts at exploring the correlation between festival attendance and the development of social capital, an inherent danger brought about by the current economic rationalist environment (Pusey, 1992) may lie in attempts to measure economically social capital and potentially jeopardize its very essence.

As Portes (1998) suggests, social capital has been used in a variety of contexts and this diversity of use makes it more difficult to pinpoint its distinct meaning and contribution. Furthermore, attempts to reduce the notion to a measurable single index (Schuller, 2000) have been criticized (Lemann, 1996) because reliable tools that measure social capital are not yet available. As Schuller (2000, p. 33) succinctly puts it,

It may be that social capital will never be fully measurable, but will appear as too much of a moving target to be pinned down by conventional techniques . . . whatever the analytical quality of social capital, in the sense of its capacity to yield valid and tested information, it may arguably have most strength as a heuristic device, opening up new issues, stimulating fresh hypotheses, and promoting creative policies or initiatives.

Accordingly, this paper uses the notion of social capital in a heuristic sense which cannot, at this stage, produce measurable responses, but nevertheless has the potential to challenge underlying assumptions and provide useful opportunities for theoretical exploration. Although the links between the development of social capital and festival attendance are still theoretically tenuous, it is possible to identify some clear connections.

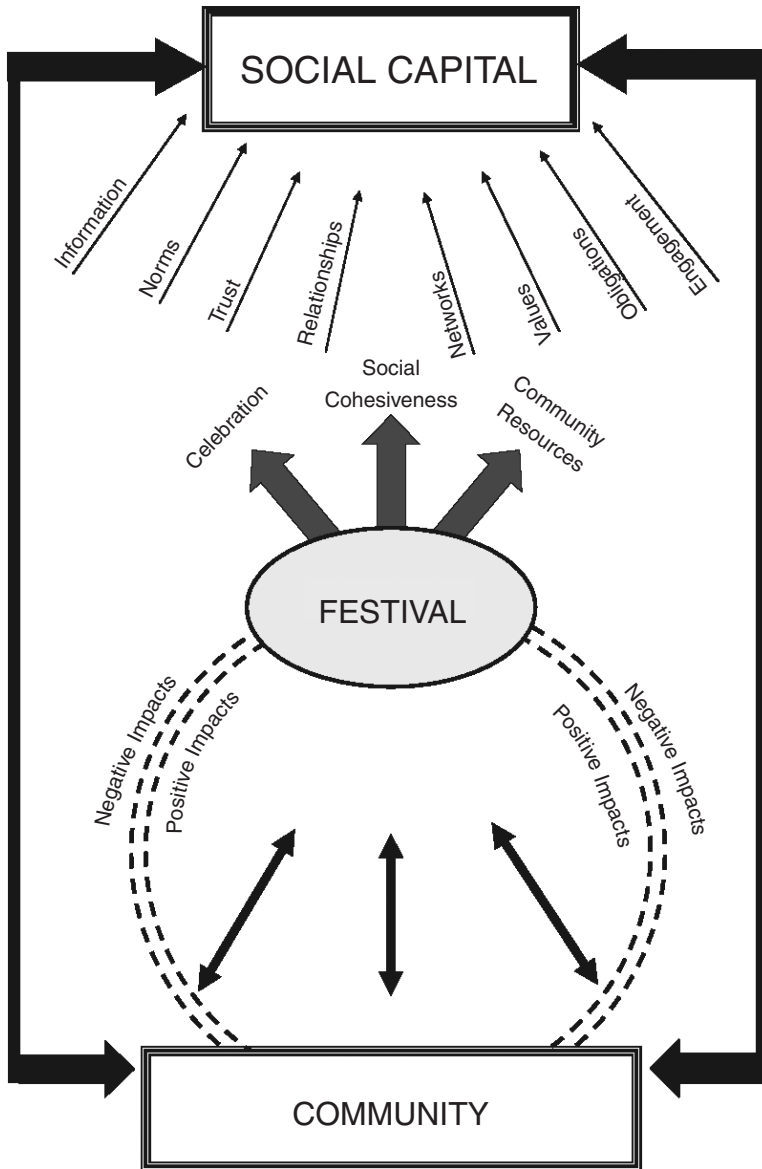
POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF FESTIVALS

Figure 1 clearly shows that there are positive and negative impacts associated with a festival. The literature generally clusters these impacts into economic, physical, political, and socio-cultural categories.

Economic Impacts

While many economic impacts are incalculable, or if calculable, best considered as estimates only (Hiller, 1998), there appears to be little argument that festivals have the potential to boost the economy in local re-

FIGURE 1. Conceptual Model of Festivals and the Development of Social Capital



gions (Soutar & McLeod, 1993; Alston, 1998) due to their ability to provide various opportunities for positive tourism and commercial outcomes. For instance, arts festivals in Australia and New Zealand have become multimillion-dollar businesses with festivals in Australia such as The Adelaide Festival and The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras generating around \$13 million and \$27 million respectively (Robinson, 1998). Similarly, considerable economic receipts benefiting the local community emanated from The Woodford Folk Festival on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland, and in 1998 about \$3 million was injected into this local economy (Kither, 1998).

Consequently, it would seem fair to assume that festivals have the capacity to generate to varying degrees, positive economic impacts, including increased revenues and employment (Ritchie, 1984; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000). Importantly, it is not only these positive economic impacts, but also the negative economic impacts of festivals, such as inflated prices, residents' exoduses and interruption of normal business (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000), that appear to have generated the greatest interest among researchers to date. However, Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, and Mules (2000) warned that the success of a festival or event should not only be measured by direct economic contributions, but also incorporate positive and negative impacts concerned with the physical, political, and social environments of a festival.

Physical (Environmental) Impacts

Environmental issues associated with festivals have generated, and will undoubtedly continue to generate, varying levels of debate. For instance, in 1876, Albert Park in Melbourne was permanently reserved as a public park. A few motor races, excluding Formula One racing, were held in the 1950s on established roads with no impact on the park environment. Nevertheless, despite the Bolte government banning all further racing in 1959 on the grounds of noise and denial of public access to parkland, the controversial decision to use Albert Park as the venue for the Australian Grand Prix was announced on 17 December 1993 (Save Albert Park, 2001).

Invariably, a host destination such as Albert Park has unique physical characteristics that can be used advantageously in the process of marketing a festival. Yet those same physical attributes may be environmentally fragile and require specific policy to ensure protection against negative impacts including environmental damage, noise, and overcrowding, especially from a local population standpoint.

Conversely, festivals can help bring about enhanced quality of life and urban renewal in a neighborhood through increased tourism infrastructure and the construction or redevelopment of venues. For example, the Olympic Games staged in Melbourne in 1956 provided major facilities that contributed to the city's reputation as a sporting center for many years (McDonnell, Allen, & O'Toole, 1999). Moreover, festivals such as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade also raised public awareness of environmental issues through the participation of environmental organizations and government support.

Political Impacts

Governments are increasingly using festivals and special events as a platform for industry and economic development, and event-related expenditure is justified in terms of the economic impacts that the festival or event brings to their host region (Burgan & Mules, 2000). Political impacts may be favorable, such as the enhancement of the image of a tourism destination or region as a result of an event such as the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games or the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. In 22 years, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has grown from a protest rally against the establishment to a month-long celebration with political undertones. Mardi Gras has been the catalyst for much legislative reform, such as the Public Assemblies Act and the 1982 NSW Anti-Discrimination Act. Over the years, a growing number of politicians have been involved, to varying degrees, in the parade, and this has stimulated wider debate at the organizational and leadership levels of the major parties about their approach to gay and lesbian issues. Moreover, according to Marsh and Galbraith (1995, p. 301), Mardi Gras reflected "the evolving responses of state agencies and of the major political parties to the challenge of movement politics." Today, the parade has become a public icon and a focus for world attention and purportedly contributes to Sydney's reputation as a city of tolerance and acceptance.

A less favorable impact may be the degree to which the holding of a given event may in reality reflect the desire of a small elite to pursue its interests in the name of community development (Ritchie, 1984). For instance, the Woodford Folk Festival appears to strive to achieve an apolitical perspective; however, the image of the Woodford Folk Festival is related to the stereotype of either folknik, that is, those people with a "vague commitment to left-wing politics, peace, truth and beauty" (Gillespie cited Lewis & Dowsey-Magog, 1993, p. 5) or the subculture of the "feral hippie" who has little money, dresses oddly, and uses drugs

frequently (Lewis & Dowsey-Magog, 1993). Thus, some may view the festival as a vehicle to promote alternative political ideology of sub-cultures instead of a means to facilitate positive socio-cultural benefits.

Socio-Cultural Impacts

The staging of a festival or event can impact the social life and structure of a community by either enhancing or detracting from the social environment of the region (Hall, 1992; Soutar & McLeod, 1993; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). For instance, while one of the factors that aids the “success of the Woodford Folk Festival can be traced to the collective longing for community” (Media Release, 2000); another factor is the consultation with, and participation of, the local indigenous Murri people (Goodman, 1999). Festival management strategies that include consultation and participation of host communities appears to assist in avoiding many of the negative socio-cultural impacts associated with festivals. These impacts include disruption to resident lifestyles, traffic congestion, vandalism, overcrowding, and crime (Dwyer et al., 2000). For example, numerous social issues have been brought to the fore by the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, including the relationship between police and gay people (Police-Gay Liaison Group, 1985), the rights of sub-cultures and mainstream society, prejudice and bias, health, violence, social norms, and values. Although Mardi Gras is more readily accepted as a social event on today’s calendar than in previous years, as a direct result of the festival, the latter issues remain contentious and debatable.

Thus, as festivals continue to generate positive and negative impacts pertaining to the economic, physical, political, and social environments, research pertaining to the economic environment of festivals continues to dominate the tourism literature (Formica, 1998) despite some evidence of research interest in the tourism literature pertaining to the socio-cultural environment of festivals. This may be a result of not only the central, socio-cultural role festivals play (Alomes, 1985), but also their apparent ability to generate a positive socio-cultural environment. Nevertheless, compared to the body of research concerned with the social impacts of tourism, Fredline and Faulkner (2000, p. 764) noted that “relatively little progress has been made on social impacts specifically associated with events.” Additionally, within the literature, there has also been some research undertaken pertaining to resident perceptions and host community reactions (Ritchie & McKay, 1991; Soutar & McLeod, 1993; Jeong & Faulkner, 1996; Waitt & Furrer, 1999; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000) al-

though this research focuses more on events, per se, rather than specifically on festivals.

It is generally accepted that festivals constitute some form of representation about the society in which they occur and that a festival, as a cultural artwork, is able to comment on the power relations of the society (Mewett, 1988). Festivals are public in nature, and not only do they encourage citizens to participate in the creation and maintenance of the activities as a part of the shared life of a community (Schuster, 1995), but they also facilitate the development of social capital (Figure 1).

FESTIVAL ATTENDANCE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Developing Social Capital by Building Community Resources

Festival attendance builds social capital by developing community resources. The organizers who are responsible for the administrative aspects of the festival, whether they are paid workers or not, must interact with the local business and the general community to make arrangements about the festival. This interaction over the period of the festival's organization raises awareness of community resources and expertise, produces social links between previously unrelated groups and individuals, identifies possibilities for the development of the community's resources, and generally encourages a stronger interaction between existing community organizations.

Festivals also encourage a more effective use of community resources by giving organizers and participants the opportunity to explore local resources that previously may have remained anonymous, perhaps protected by individual gatekeepers or ethnic social boundaries or otherwise lost within the complex social web of community structures and not generally available for everyone's use. The social networks that can develop through the organization of festivals have the potential of being maintained far beyond the short life of the festival. In the case where festivals are regular events, this can have a far greater long-term benefit.

Festivals may not only be a catalyst for revitalizing existing partnerships, but also for developing new ones. For example, those festivals which involve volunteers provide opportunities for training and development in a variety of skills and encourage more effective use of local educational, business, and community spaces (Siriani & Friedland, 2000). These community networks ensure a high level of social connectivity by re-introducing a healthy relational dimension to societies.

Developing Social Capital Through Social Cohesiveness

Festival attendance can also develop social capital by promoting social cohesiveness given that a festival is often a recurring social occasion in which all members of a community have the opportunity to unite and share a worldview through ethnic, linguistic, religious, and historical bonds (Falassi, 1987). While festivals have the capacity to bind society together (Galt, 1973), much of the world's social, political, and economic structures and processes have emanated from the philosophies, ideologies, conceptual frameworks, and experiences constructed by the dominant culture in the area. For instance, in response to the challenges of cultural diversity, Australia has adopted a comprehensive policy of multiculturalism (Inglis, 1999) and Australian society is often viewed as a successful model of multiculturalism. Thus, increasingly, Australians are attending festivals that, until recently, were probably seen as the preserve of Australia's ethnic populations. This may be the result of a multicultural society, which encourages greater participation in festivals that celebrate the character and richness of cultural diversity. It is important to note, however, that the potential for growth in social capital is complicated by the heterogeneity of some communities. For example, it is possible that social capital develops within a particular subgroup and in doing so, alienates another within the same community. Consequently, one of the key challenges that the Australian government is increasingly facing is its ability to not only negotiate the cultural diversity that exists in society, but to develop and nurture a more common purpose (Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1999).

The development of a common social purpose may conceivably be achieved through festivals. Importantly, festival attendance is a socially valuable process because it gives a "voice" to the various sub-groups whose difference is not caused by ethnicity but by lifestyle preferences. This is clearly evidenced by the success of Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, the main purpose being about "coming out," while at the same time focusing on celebration, fun, education, and politics as well as social and political reform (Johnston, 1981). The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (Mardi Gras, 2000) makes the following commitment statement:

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is an organisation formed out of the diverse lesbian and gay communities of Sydney to enable us

to explore, express and promote the life of our combined community through a cultural focus. We affirm the pride, joy, dignity and identity of our community and its people through events of celebration. We are committed to serving our community. We seek to enable individuals and groups within our community to discover, express and develop their artistic, cultural and political skills and potential.

Although Mardi Gras was initially conceived as a political demonstration, today the political undertones are masked by fun and festivity over a three-month period enjoyed by locals and by visitors from all over the world. Arguably, the festival contributes to the increase of social capital through the ever-increasing cohesiveness and co-operation of the host community.

Developing Social Capital Through Celebration

Festival attendance can also enhance social capital by giving communities the opportunity for public celebration. It could be argued that there is a ubiquitous synergy between festivals and celebration (Falassi, 1987; Parady, 1991). On the one hand, celebration is identified by four essential characteristics: (1) performance of cultural symbols, (2) entertainment, (3) undertaken in a public place, and (4) community participation (Salamone, 2000). On the other hand, however, one of the defining characteristics of festival is the potential to facilitate community celebration (Parady, 1991). Although some economists may suggest that it is through celebration that one can achieve stronger economic success, there is an inherent value in celebration in itself when citizens are encouraged to participate in the creation and maintenance of the activities as a part of the shared life of a community (Schuster, 1995).

While reasons for, and types of, celebrations are culturally bound, the phenomenon of celebration itself is found in all cultures. Consequently, festivals that have a celebratory theme allow people, regardless of culture and status, to participate in an occasion that generates a feeling of goodwill and community or a spirit of “*communitas*” (Salamone, 2000). Thus, “celebrations and festivals have the potential for strengthening communal ties and uniting people” (Earls, 1993, p. 32). These community celebrations, often developed as arts, fringe, and/or folk festivals, are representative of the many aspects of the social and cultural fabric of the community in which they are celebrated. Furthermore, they not only

facilitate the development of contemporary cultural identity, but enhance the well being of the community by, among other things, providing an “opportunity to break away from daily routines and allowing us to socialise with family and friends within the larger community” (Earls, 1993, p. 32).

CONCLUSION

Thus, to varying degrees, festivals play a key social role in different societies and cultures (Alomes, 1985). While the role of festivals may vary in significance according to the socio-cultural environment, arguably, community celebration is a common denominator. Alongside the provision for a community to celebrate, festivals can provide the host community with opportunities for increased benefits from tourism, such as the development of new infrastructure and employment opportunities. However, while the latter are positive aspects to festivals, there are a range of negative socio-cultural impacts that may impinge upon the host community. For instance, overzealous attempts at commercialization may destroy the desired development of socio-cultural values and traditions of a host destination. Additionally, other socio-cultural consequences such as community alienation, substance abuse, increased criminal activity, loss of amenities, and social dislocation (Getz, 1997; McDonnell, Allen, & O’Toole, 1999) may have direct negative impacts upon the host community. However, the management of an event can determine whether the impacts on social life and the structure of the community enhance or detract from the social environment of a region. McDonnell, Allen, and O’Toole (1999) maintain many negative impacts may be addressed by, among other things, intervention and awareness. Thus it would appear paramount that festival and event organizers facilitate community collaboration and consultation before, during, and after the festival in order facilitate a positive recurring community celebration (Falassi, 1987).

Although negative impacts on the socio-cultural environment may occur, debatably, the potential for a community to experience positive impacts from festivals appears much greater. For instance, the necessity to draw upon the resources of a community for the development and implementation of festivals not only facilitates an increased awareness of the expertise within the community, but also encourages co-operation between groups that otherwise may not have had the opportunity to experience interaction in the business and/or social environments of the

community. This interaction serves the dual purpose of increasing the awareness of community resources while engendering social cohesiveness through co-operation brought about by common goals. Furthermore, upon achieving a common goal, such as the staging of a festival, the impending community celebration serves to further increase the development of social capital via the generation of community spirit and a general sense of goodwill. While the literature recognizes that negative socio-cultural impacts may, and do, occur, it could be argued that this may result in the development of negative social capital. However, this is a moot argument as the concept of negative social capital is an oxymoron because social capital does not develop in a community experiencing negative impacts.

The underlying proposition in this paper is that while there are clearly significant economic benefits to communities that host them, festivals are primarily social phenomena with the potential to provide a variety of predominantly positive social benefits. Consequently, it is vitally important to widen the current discourse pertaining to festivals beyond the dominant economic frameworks which are predominantly concerned with the development of economic capital, and to incorporate debate in relation to utilizing festivals as a vehicle for the development of social capital. Importantly, the development of social capital will only occur in a positive social environment, and as a result, negative impacts emanating from festivals have the potential to destroy the very notion of social capital development.

Nevertheless, the literature has revealed that throughout history, festivals contributed to the overall well-being of communities, and this paper has argued similarly that in contemporary society, festival attendance develops social capital by providing the community with specific opportunities for accessing and developing community resources, improving social cohesiveness, and providing a focus for celebration. However, further research is required to investigate the connection between festival attendance and the development of social capital. Potential areas of investigation include the relationship between social capital and sustainable tourism development, participants' and organizers' perceptions of social capital, and the relationship between social capital and economic impacts. Moreover, there is a need to further develop more sophisticated indicators of the effects of festivals on social capital. However, it is important that these measures of social capital are not benchmarked within an economic framework.

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