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Sustainability as a factor of self-perpetuation in discontinuous organization
The case of the Eco-Festival of Cabaret Vert

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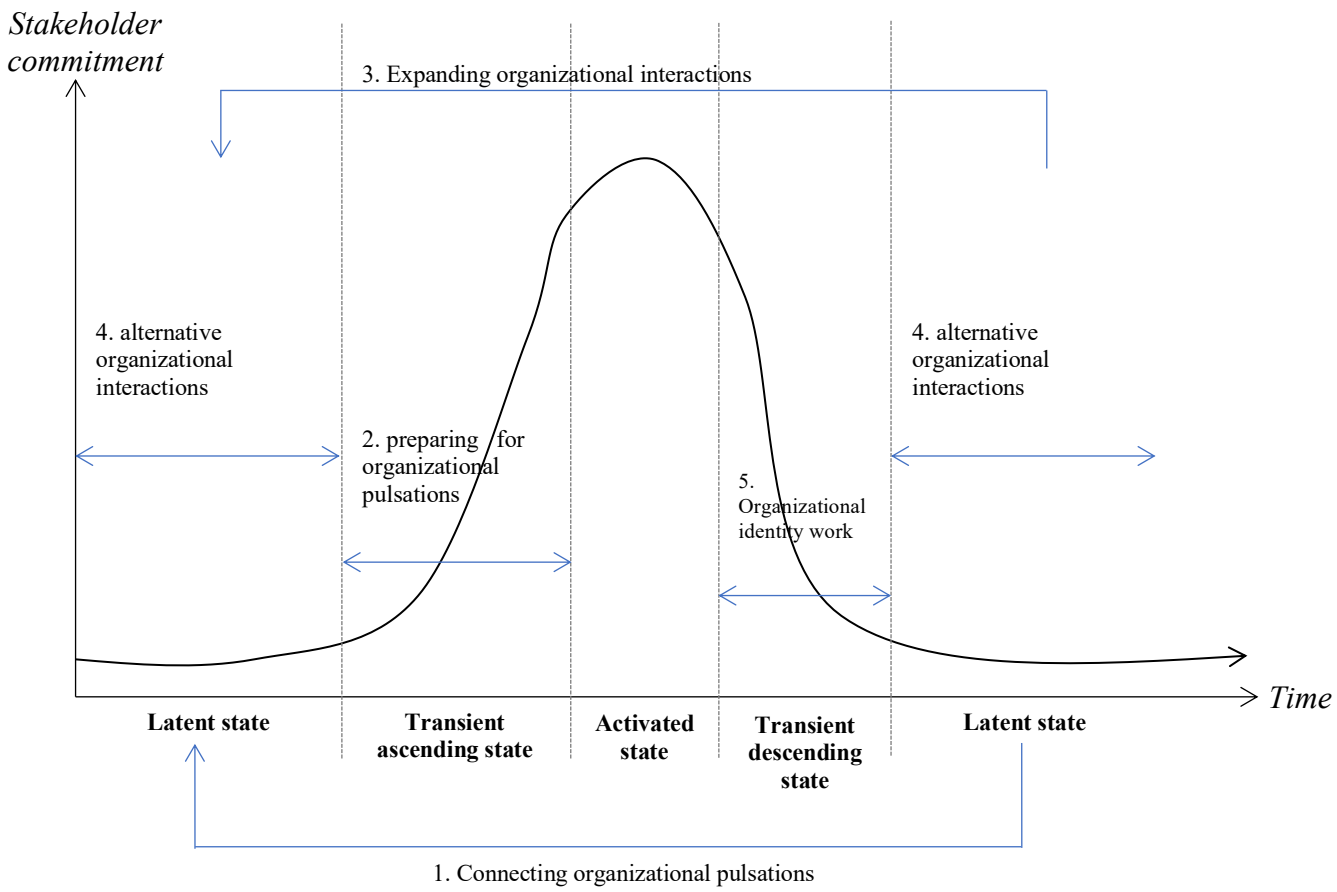
Extended Abstract

Purpose
Frequently overlooked during the 2020 health crisis, the cultural industry has nevertheless suffered very significantly from the consequences of periods of containment. Supported by discontinuous organizational structures, many cultural events have been cancelled. As showed by Salaun *et al.* (2016), event structures operate in a pulsating mode alternating between latent and activated phases. However, one point never seems, to our knowledge, have been addressed by the literature: the impact of pulsation cancelling. Referring to Kreutzer and Rueede (2019), a line of thought emerges by looking at the notion of organizational identity of discontinuous organization. Indeed, identity seems to be what remains when all operations are cancelled. Also, it seems theoretically possible to consider that a strong organizational identity in a Pulsating Temporary Organization (PTO) would allow to keep the links necessary for the self-perpetuation (Aronoff, 2004) of PTO. More precisely, we choose to focus only on PTO with a strong identity, and especially centered on the sustainability and social responsibility. In line with this point of view, we can address this question: How the presence of a strong organizational identity, marked by sustainability, can insure the self-perpetuation of a discontinuous organization?

In order to provide an answer to this question, a theoretical model combining the contributions of Salaun *et al.* (2016) and Kreutzer and Rueede (2019) has been proposed in the Figure 1 (next page). This model is based on the decomposition of the life cycle of PTO into four states (dormant, ascending, activated, descending) and integrates the five factors of consistency of organizational identity in a discontinuous context.



Framework of the model : Salaun and *al.* (2016)
Factors of consistency with numbers from 1 to 5 : Kreutzer and Rueede (2019)

Figure 1 – Theoretical model from Salaun et al. (2016) and Kreutzer and Rueede (2019)

Methodology

To confront this model with empirical reality, and following the recommendations of Mair and Whitford (2013), we chose to conduct a single case study with multiple data sources. The selected case is the eco-festival Rock & Territories of the Cabaret Vert, which takes place every year in France and which has aimed since its creation in 2005 as part of a very strong commitment to sustainability.

Findings

The conclusions highlight that identity work in a discontinuous organization, such as a festival, is a permanent work that affects all phases of the life cycle of a PTO. Indeed, values and identity allow connecting the pulsations between them and keeping the link within the latent network, they also facilitate the preparation and conclusion of the pulsations in the transitional (ascending and descending) states, and finally they act on the conservation of alternative links outside the activated states.

Implications

Beyond these confirmations of theoretical presuppositions, a major academic contribution seems to be to be noted: the highlighting, in the latent state, of micro-activations. This novelty challenges the simple circular model of Salaun *et al.* (2016) in

favor of a more complex model integrating intermediate pulsations of varying sizes. In addition to these two academic contributions, professionals will also find in this research the highlighting of the importance of a strong identity (based on sustainability or another central value like the promotion of territories) to strengthen the capacity for sustainability of the activity.

Keywords: Discontinuous Organization, Event Management, Identity

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