We Are Opening the Gate with a Clef. Encounters Between People, Space, and Objects Through Chamber Music

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism development, in general, is challenging with its multiple dimensions. In heritage destinations with mostly privately-owned properties, an additional challenge is to find the limits within which the local community can receive tourists and simultaneously continue the ordinary town life. Data for this paper was collected in Old Rauma World Heritage Site (WHS) with semi-structured research interviews and participatory observation during the Carpe Diem event, that forms part of the chamber music festival Festivo during August 2019. The results point out the importance of communication between the local community and the visitors. In the case of Old Rauma WHS, the traditional communication method is the gate of the house: the opening and closing of the gate set the limits of hospitality. To respect these limits, visitors need to know this tradition. The role of tourism communication is, therefore, vital for the sustainable conviviality of tourism and ordinary town life.

Keywords: hospitality, living heritage, historic town, communication

1 Introduction

This paper discusses encounters between people, spaces and objects, using empirical data collected from the actors of the chamber music festival, Festivo, arranged annually in the maritime town of Rauma in Western Finland. More specifically, a unique series of free entrance concerts called Carpe Diem contributed to the data. Carpe Diem takes place during one day of the festival in the very heart of the town, which is known as Old Rauma World Heritage Site (WHS). Old Rauma made it to the World Heritage List in 1991 as an outstanding example of an old Nordic city constructed from wood, a veritable conservatory of traditional settlements in this part of Europe (criterion V). Old Rauma is also typical of the architecture and urbanism of old North-European cities and is one of the most beautiful and extensive of those preserved thus far (criterion IV). Old Rauma WHS consists of the still functional town centre, where most of the 250 residential and 100 commercial buildings with their 240 outbuildings are privately owned and used for residential and commercial purposes. Only 20 buildings are public. The community equals to approximately 700 residents and entrepreneurs, who run the 150 shops and other business services [1,2]. During the Carpe Diem event, some homeowners volunteer to open the gates of their inner yards for the concert. One concert lasts approximately 20 minutes, and they are scheduled to start every hour between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. following each other around Old Rauma. Concert places are chosen

together with the resident society, depending on the homeowners who are willing to participate.

The critical elements of this event are hospitality and heritage and the encounters they enable between people, spaces, and objects. It is offering a unique experience of live chamber music in a historic urban setting, valued as outstanding universally. The evaluation of Old Rauma, a World Heritage Site, is mostly through the lens of tourism (for more about the review of Old Rauma as WHS see Vahtikari 2013[3] and Dumitrescu 2016 [4]). Festivo is not produced for tourism, although it forms part of the local tourism marketing in Rauma. It is a volunteer operation of local music enthusiasts who revived the Rauma Chamber Music Association (est. 1944) in 1983, after its fading in the 1960s. The first Festivo was in 1984, seven years before the listing of Old Rauma as a WHS in 1991. Even today, after 35 years, the festival is a local event produced by local people for themselves, although it also attracts visitors.

1.1 Opening the gate with a clef

Carpe Diem saw the light for the first time in 2011. The artistic manager of that time wanted to try a concept, which enables people just to come and listen to the music for a moment without any regularity of entering a concert hall, like dressing up and showing a ticket. Short pop-up gigs in a private yard in the middle of a heritage setting like World Heritage Site as an unconventional venue, being enough to shake the pattern of a traditional chamber music concert. The house owner community was willing to participate and allow people into their yards. Playing at the Carpe Diem concert is part of an artist's contract. Homeowners join for free, and as part of their community voluntarism, Old Rauma Society contacts them and maps out suitable places or lists the initiatives to host from homeowners. In this setting, chamber music is the key to collaboration.

From the beginning, the concept was a success. Houses, hosting Carpe Diem concerts, are selected together by the CEO of Festivo and the Old Rauma Society, which is a resident NGO. The selection process is a negotiation of needs and wishes from musicians, who have local knowledge of the physical environment in which the houses and yards allow performance to take place, and suggestions from house owners to host one of the concerts. Homeowners are quite active in this role, and their voluntarism inspired by an experience of joining performances as guests, seen in previous years.

Carpe Diem allows homeowners to volunteer as hosts. This paper aims to understand the motivation behind the residents' willingness to volunteer as hosts, opening up their gates for visitors for free as a concept about considering the Other. Furthermore, how these dynamics shape and transform the roles of hosts and guests in these short-term tourism encounters will be investigated [5]. The limits that may affect the socio-cultural sustainability of this event is another point of discussion.

1.2 Theoretical framework

This paper uses the study of hospitality as a human phenomenon [6] as a point of departure. The historical meaning of hospitality as a concept directing thoughts towards encounters between strangers. In many cases, it is a relation between host and guest as an act of welcoming a stranger into one's home.

The compact between host and guest has three main features. The first is protection; the guests are entitled to expect, that he is protected while staying with the host. The second is reciprocity; the host is entitled to expect, that his guest will offer protection when needed in return. The third is duty; the guests have a responsibility to obey the house rules [7,8].

Home is not just a place of residence; it allows for extra space for the arrival of guests. Studies of lifestyle entrepreneurship and commercial friendship, recognise the home as a hybrid space of public and private spaces, where practices of intimacy always shape that space. The host's income may increase at the expense of privacy if the limits of hospitality are expanded along with a revised business strategy. In some cases the openness and personality of the entrepreneur or extreme competition between other entrepreneurs may overcome the need of privacy and personal space[9,10]. In this socially constructed process, the roles of the host and the guest are also continuously reshaped, and the dichotomy between them unravels [5,9,10,11]. The home can also be seen as a transforming stage for hospitality. In the theory of self-presentation of Erving Goffman (1959)[12], we perform our daily life in different stages. Harnessing a home for the reception means dividing it into sections — transforming it into a frontstage and a backstage, according to the position of the audience. In front of the audience - a frontstage - human actors perform according to social norms and expectations. In the backstage only the performers are present, hidden from the audience. In the backstage actors can let their guards down at least to some point, and perform with more permissible norms, along with their own [13].

Hospitality in this case study, however, is a non-commercial venture of human encounters (between the host and the guest). Emmanuel Levinas's (1969) [14] philosophy of being as" being for the Other" grounds the thought of unconditional hospitality, where we encounter face to face the Other, unconditionally, without knowing where we are going but accepting the absolute adventure it offers [15]. Although this paper follows Levinas's philosophy of 'being for the Other', the thought of unconditional hospitality does not apply in this case [14].

Hospitality is not merely a social practice but also a spatial practice. It is a mixture of people, spaces, and objects. It involves the crossing of borders from the public (street) to that of a private (yard) when the homeowner now welcomes those 'others' from the outside inside. Hospitality makes a particular space to become into being [16]. Sarah Whatmore (2002) [17] describes this mixture as *the re-ordering of the ethical community beyond the `human`*[17]. Bruno Latour's (1993) [18] writings of hybrids and networks, explains the spatial practice of hospitality as a networked collection of actors.

Sustainability refers to the United Nations report Our Common Future (1997) [19], this report famously defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In this paper, cultural sustainability and social sustainability depart from local community needs and include two activities: development and preservation. Aesthetic sustainability as a development, allows the community to preserve and develop local culture according to their needs, but in a way, which secures mutual possibilities to future generations. Social sustainability, as a development, allows the local community to live ordinary town life while forming social and spatial practices around the local

culture and heritage objects. Development refers to tourism as a part of the local economy and as a source of income, developed for broader community needs, also outside the World Heritage area.

2 Methods

The researcher collected data with semi-structured interviews and participatory observation during the event of August 2019. The researcher did not contact the informants directly; the CEO of the Festivo organisation sent an inquiry to the participating homeowners asking for their willingness to participate in the research.

The researcher did not want to contact the house owners personally, because of the fear they might feel obligated to also participate in the research, and not just hosting the concert. During the interview, the CEO proposed contacting some of the former hosts to get more data. The CEO mentioned some people who, in her opinion, would not mind being involved, or would have the courage to refuse if they do not want to participate in the research. The researcher has been working on a community project related to sustainable tourism in the same area earlier and knew many of the homeowners — the persons whom she suggested as informants were also well known. There was a risk that they might have agreed because of the previous working history, therefore after careful consideration, the researcher proceeded with the original research design, and collected only data from the participating homeowners of the 2019 event who volunteered to share their opinions.

The first interview was with the CEO one week before the Carpe Diem event. The second interview was with a homeowner couple of the Carpe Diem a day before the concert tour reached their yard. In 2019 the Carpe Diem concert was arranged in 8 places, of which two were public places, and six were private houses. One of the private homes is a semi-public place, an artist community that has only art studios, and none of the artists or the owner himself resides there. Neither the owner of this house, nor the artists, were considered as informants because they do not let people in their home yard. Owners of only one house out of these five private concert venues were willing to participate in the research.

On the day of the event, the researcher attended the concerts and made field observations about the experience by taking notes, photographs, and recording a piece of one of the performances. The researcher identified herself with an identification card worn around her neck. All volunteering homeowners were notified, that the researcher is attending the concerts for field observations, even though they had refused to participate in the research interview. They were informed about her presence to enable the homeowners to observe the researcher at her work and to allow them to ask her not to collect data in their yard in case they felt uncomfortable with it. The identification had another purpose, too: to enable the perception of the audience about another process, the research, running simultaneously to the concert.

2.1 Fieldwork

The first concert started with the gate opening ten minutes before the event is about to start, and visitors were invited to step in. The homeowners grouped their garden

furniture between two apple trees, facing the terrace of the house, cleared out for the musicians.

Visitors reserved their spots in the yard, intuitively leaving an open horseshoe-shaped space between the terrace and apple trees without any guidance or organisation. The homeowner couple quietly blended into the audience, shifting their roles from hosts to that of guests. The master of the house took photos of the event, that altered his yard into a concert hall, and transformed it from the backstage to the frontstage region when the gate opened. His wife has chosen another corner of the yard. At 10 a.m. the main doors opened, and two musicians took their seats. The CEO of Festivo stepped out, introduced the musicians whose identity is always kept as a surprise to visitors until the concert begins with the chords of Bach; these guests invited to change groups into hosts for visitors and homeowners, who are now together as guests to the show.

Fig.1. The morning concert in Wähä-Wuarla house.

Throughout the day, concerts toured around Old Rauma, beginning every hour. Some visitors followed the tour; some participated in a couple of shows or just one. Musicians always appear as a surprise to the visitors, and also to the homeowners. The CEO checked the yards in advance to inform the musicians about their pop-up stage. The CEO also confirmed that a backup plan is in place in case of the rain, because the instruments are sensitive for moisture.

In the afternoon, the August weather presented all the challenges it can, turning a mild sunny day into a thunderstorm and pouring rain. At the Esi-Puandi yard, the backup plan became active, and musicians moved to the woodshed of the outbuilding, performing through an open door. Visitors opened up their umbrellas if they had one, moved closer to each other to give shelter to their unknown neighbours when needed and focused on the concert. Owners of the house blended with the visitors again, listening to the music from their main stairs together with other guests, hardly seeing anything but being able to hear what everyone else hears.

The rather small yard primarily covered by vegetation packed more than 80 people, even with everyone standing. Because of the rain, guests occupied the spots under the

apple trees first. People who were standing under the trees put away their umbrellas to give more space and not to block the minimal view to the woodshed more than necessary. People who were standing on the lawn and in the pathway shared their umbrellas and held them at different heights trying to create a contemporary shelter for everyone. For the next 30 minutes, everyone stood still side by side. When the music stops, the moment of unity is over, and visitors head back to the streets. Musicians pack their instruments, thank the house owners who have returned to their role as hosts, and continue their festival with another concert. The yard is like any private yard with a closed gate and people who were strangers to each other before the show are strangers again. Frontstage is now shut; the yard has transformed into the backstage of the house owners.

Fig.2. The interplay of rain, vegetation, people, buildings, and fences surrounding the plot created a momentary space of hospitality.

3 Results: Perceived limits of local hospitality

The hosts of the Carpe Diem event, the homeowners, have many conditions for their generosity. They are elected to become a host for one concert, and then they have to take care of their guests by ensuring that the concert venue is safe for both musicians and the audience; so, they cannot be in an equal and unconditional position with their guests [15]. Instead, they have to position themselves concerning others with the praxis of care [17]. Being a host requires intensive preparational activities before opening up the gates of their yards and face that Other in the form of a guest, may that be a musician or a member of the audience. These protective preparations for hospitality underlay the production of space of hospitality.

Objects, in this case, the house with its outbuildings, fence surrounding the plot and the gate separating the yard from the street, homes, plants, instruments, benches, and people weave the network, where these different actors interact.

This hybrid entity of objects and subjects creates a special place with practices of attending a concert [20] which creates the above-mentioned space of hospitality. People

who attend the show, enabled by the caring preparatory activities of the host, interact and familiarise firstly with the environment by searching for a spot to stand or a place to seat. Secondly, they interact with each other when organising the space without any pre-reserved seats or stands. Only then are they prepared to interact with the musicians by settling down and quieting to listen. This event is a hybrid manifestation of thinking about hospitality in a limited space where subjects and objects form inter-relations and create a momentary place. The art of hospitality is expected not only from the host with his caring practices but also from the guests, who are not likely to insist on any rights or privileges but to respect the host and the musicians with good behaviour towards the people, objects and spaces [5,15].

Before the hourly concerts begin the roles and the tasks of hosts and guests are clear. As a starting point, there are two groups of hosts and two groups of guests. The first group of hosts, homeowners, are expected to open up their gates and let the guests, the visitors, to step in. The second group of hosts, musicians, are expected to take the lead when the concert begins. This shift in roles gives the musicians a chance for reciprocity; they are now expected to take the guests through the performance with the music they have chosen. During the performance, there are two frontstages: the yard transformed from a private area to a frontstage. However, in the yard, there is another front stage, the one where the musicians perform. Backstage is limited to the interior of the house, for the duration of the concert. Only when the gate closes behind the visitors, the yard transforms to a backstage again.

When people have located themselves within the environment, found their spot and music has entered the space, the roles of hosts and guests start to fade. Eventually, only 'the Others' are left. In more spacious yards, when the weather allows, people scatter around, keeping a respectful distance between one another. Homeowners act exactly like visitors, obeying the duty of the guest. They never reserve the best spots or seats or make themselves noticeable in any way. In smaller yards, people move closer, bargaining voluntarily for their personal space and intimacy. Others are not just humans but also elements that create physical space. During sunny moments people prefer shade and lean on a wall of an outbuilding or sit on the stairs. During the storm, people find shelter under the apple trees, being careful not to twist the branches or to drop the maturing fruits. Eventually, these unseen and at least partially intuitive actions, codes, and practices aim for a moment of *'Vivir Bien*', living well between ourselves, while the concert lasts [5].

> *CEO: Sometimes, the musician requests a piano…moreover, Old Rauma Society knows the houses and the people best.*
>
> *LP: Do you need to motivate the house owners somehow?*
>
> *CEO: For many years people have contacted me right after Carpe Diem day…that they would like to host next year.*
>
> (CEO of Festivo interviewed on 1.8.2019)

The success of Carpe Diem has been quite steady, and the approximate number of visitors in each yard is 90. The shape and size of Old Rauma yards vary a lot, depending on the location of the plot and the history of the house; whether the original owners were merchants, sailors or crafters, and have the original outbuildings survived

throughout centuries or replaced with modern buildings over the years. The weather is also unpredictable, and everyone has to respond to the changing conditions quickly. Surprises are part of the concept, only once each concert begins, the guests see who the performing musicians are.

Motivation to participate as hosts stems firstly from the willingness to enhance community life and give an insight into the private side of the heritage. Festivo is a joint local effort, and community voluntarism among homeowners is a manifestation of stewardship towards the common urban culture which they privately own and nurture.

> *Ho2: I want to support Festivo, I mean it is a local activity, and we do it together.*
>
> *Ho1: It also feels like a volunteer in artistic work. So that locals and others could see these lovely yards, and this private side which you cannot see from the street and many locals come here…I want to transmit that charm.*
>
> (Ho1 and Ho2 are a couple of homeowners interviewed on 8.8.2019)

Secondly, hosting is a smooth and flexible commitment. It is up to the hosts how much effort they want to make. It is good enough to let people in through the gate and let the musicians use a plug for the sound system. Some hosts offer refreshments to musicians before or after the concerts or arrange seats they have in their yard as a stand for guests. Also, the period of voluntarism is short and punctual. The local practice of communicating in space - leaving the gate open when guests are invited and keeping it close when privacy is wanted - is a part of the Carpe Diem concept. When the concert has finished, guests are expected to leave, but they can return to take a closer look at the yard without the crowds later, if the gate is left open. Thirdly, the scale and the style of a chamber music festival in general and especially Carpe Diem is in harmony with heritage destination like Old Rauma. Concert venues fitted into the physical limits set by heritage, and the number of visitors limited with a similar method; smaller yards can host 60 people, larger ones maybe 150. If a visitor cannot fit in, he has to adapt to the situation and wait for the next concert and preserve a spot well in advance.

> *Ho1: That our scale would be consciously kept…but to my opinion Rauma Festivo has succeeded in it, they can get those people and tourists who want to see just this.*

Sustainable tourism development, in general, is challenging with its multiple dimensions. In heritage destinations which are living in historic towns with mostly privately-owned properties, an additional challenge is to find the limits within which the local community can receive tourists and simultaneously continue the mundane town life. If that balance can be found and maintained, such towns have a chance to prosper with tourism without losing their attractiveness as destinations and values as living heritage conservatories.

The data collected in interviews of this study give a hint about the local limits of socio-cultural sustainability related to tourism in Old Rauma. Homeowners feel proud and privileged of the heritage they can keep, and the curiosity of visitors is understandable. At the same time, they want to uphold practices which enable withdrawal and privacy to their home when it is needed. At a Carpe Diem event, it is possible to prepare for

hospitality very carefully, leave the gate open, or even not to be present at all. At the end of the concert, special arrangements like an exceptional grouping of seats or coffee tables for musicians, are removed, the physical environment transforms to its familiar form without any visible traces of the past event. Moment given voluntarily to hospitality is over as planned.

> *Ho1: I like to understand that curiosity…you see here we have a habit that when the gate is closed then, outsiders keep out…I used to have a studio in Suomenlinna for 15 years, and I saw there how that tourism increased and the number of tourists and interest and in the end, it was overwhelming so that if you ventilate the room and open your door then tourist walks in and I felt that it was not in control.*

Perceived limits of hospitality are connected to personality and also personal life situation. Therefore, they are always in flux and may be different even between two days. The local tradition of Old Rauma, communicating with visitors with a gate, is a way to express those limits according to the daily situation.

> *Ho1: When the gate is closed, then you have your right to withdraw, that is where the limit is, and when there are some events then it would be said that we have this habit. So that if you cross that limit, then it is too much.*

4 Discussion: Communicating hospitality

In this case of hospitality, the conditions of participation are always negotiated in intersubjective relations between the self and the other [21]. In occasional gatherings, like the hosting of a Carpe Diem concert, conditions of participation are negotiated with personal interests to contribute to a particular activity. The limits of hospitality stem from the low importance of both research and hosting of performance simultaneously. They are willing to support community activity and to face the Other for a limited time and in a limited role; as a temporary host. They are, however, not willing to expand their role and participate in research or to invite any other guests but those who attend the concert or possibly return to their yard after the show to have a closer look. The researcher hit those limits when asking permission to interview homeowners for this research; she was invited only to enter their yards along with the other guests when it is time, and the gate is open, but she was not invited separately as a researcher except for one house. The gate was not open for any other reason but chamber music and perhaps to share a glimpse of privately-owned heritage. The decision to stick to those limits narrowed the interview data. However, this led the researcher to think about the local limits of hospitality and ways to communicate it.

Local people set limits of socio-cultural sustainability. Defining those limits and communicating those is crucial. This case study also perceived the boundaries of hospitality with communication. Firstly, the interview with the CEO of Festivo revealed the openness of the organiser towards hosting houses; they can set the limits for participation. Commitment is punctual, scalable to hosts and the capacity of the house, and controlled with a physical signalling system. Secondly, the invitation to participate in this research and the rejection and acceptance of it made that limit within each hosting house perceivable.

As noticed earlier, the limits of hospitality are always in flux, and therefore it is not enough to communicate with the local community once in order to find the limits of socio-cultural sustainability. The interaction between the organisers and the local community needs to be constant. In this case, Festivo maintains this interaction naturally, as it is a local NGO arranging a festival for local people by local people. On a larger scale, this interaction model would need to be implied between DMOs and local communities.

Interaction with people is not enough in heritage settings; it should include heritage objects as well to uphold the physical resilience of the town and the tangible heritage archived in it. In Carpe Diem, it means that physical elements of each yard are respected; the number of visitors is limited, and possible preparations for hospitality in the yard can be returned to every day setting instantly. [17]. In this case study, Festivo as an NGO and as an event seems to follow the compact of hospitality. It gives a protective umbrella for the community to perform reception within its limits without questioning them. It also gives protected, yet surprising stages for the musicians to play during Carpe Diem, through the reciprocal activity of the community, when the gates are open for the event. Lastly, Festivo educates its visitors in locally sustainable tourism behaviour. When participating in Carpe Diem, the visitors can learn the communication system of the limits of hospitality with the gates [7, 8, 13].

An above-mentioned quote about Suomenlinna WHS in Helsinki reveals the need for better self-adjustment, communication and interaction: the tourists misinterpreted the opening of an artist's door for ventilation as an invitation to step inside. To practice the art of hospitality and respect a wish of privacy, guests would have needed some signalling system to communicate with the host. In this case, to accept or to deny the invitation to participate in research was one way of communication. In the case of Old Rauma, the local habit of communicating with a gate - by opening it when encounters are wanted and invited and then to close it for privacy - is a transparent system for arranging spaces of hospitality and communicating the limits set for it for those who are familiar with the habit. With such a system local community and its individual members can adjust personal daily limits of hospitality. Self-adjustment may enhance the conviviality of the mundane urban life, living with cultural heritage and tourism in a historic town. In the best-case scenario, it enforces social and cultural sustainability.

In tourism encounters the local community is always in the front stage to some degree. The charm of living heritage destinations comes from the practices of ordinariness and backstage living [1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 21]. Tourism development and income generated through it is essential to the community, as well as the continuity of keeping heritage alive with social and cultural practices in the town. Transforming backstage to frontstage from time to time certainly increases attractiveness, the number of visitors and income in the area. Perceiving the limits, in which these transformations are still locally sustainable, is challenging. Lessons learned from this study show, that features of protection, reciprocity and duty intuitively adapted to Festivo, and especially to Carpe Diem, can contribute to perceived sustainability. It manifests in the willingness of house owners to volunteer for the next year’s event in advance more than needed for a one-day concert tour.

Tourism in historic towns cannot mainly be organised by NGO's, but this collaboration model should be considered on the DMO level. When a living heritage community is used as a resource in tourism, the idea of reciprocity should be adopted to secure sufficient resources for community and heritage protection. Duties of all parties should be communicated clearly if they are expected to be obeyed. In the end, in hospitality, everything intertwines in human encounters. Our willingness for being for the Other defines the adventures we will be privileged to get.

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