

FÊTE DES VIGNERONS DE VEVEY (SWITZERLAND): REFLECTIONS ON THE TENSIONS BETWEEN THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND THE EXPANSION OF THE MARKET LOGIC



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ABSTRACT

Result of several years of ethnographic notes devoted to the study of the Fête des Vignerons (FDV) in Vevey, Switzerland. One of the many objectives of this celebration is to reward the work of the best Vignerons Travailleurs. In this sense, it is a competition that generates rivalry and competition for the award in the form of dividends and the crowning, represented by the symbolism of the crown placed on the head of the best worker in the vineyard. Although the festival gives rise to various interpretations as an ethnographic object in contemporary Western societies, we will focus here on analyzing the commercialization of the FDV, a striking component at different stages of the construction of the festival, in order to understand the form of the advance of market and community relations in this context.

Keywords: Fête des Vignerons, Mercantilisation of the festival, Ephemeral factory, Community logic, Commercial logic.

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INTRODUCTION

Known as the Fête des Vignerons (FDV), it has curious and stimulating elements, such as its dynamics - it is carried out more than two decades apart - and, even more, the fact that it is an event organized largely thanks to the altruism of volunteers who give of themselves, before, during and after the festival, in order to contribute to ensuring that the memory of this celebration is always alive and present in history. In addition, we cannot forget the dynamics of financial compensation in the process of carrying out this event which, over time, has been the subject of spectacularization and commercialization. To do this, it has been imperative to understand how the process of mercantilization is structured to the point of transforming the festive space into an ephemeral factory strategically organized to enhance and promote everything related to it in one way or another, because as the secretary of the Brotherhood of Winegrowers, Sabine Carruzzo, points out, on the brotherhood's website: "If the Festival is an exceptional event in many respects, it is also an economic object that does not escape the laws of the market and marketing" (Confrérie des Vignerons 2018). We are therefore in the presence of a multifaceted celebration, but above all impregnated with commercial links, links between different sectors of society, in the form of win-win relationships.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Vevey is a quiet town of around 19,871 inhabitants that retains rural features that have been preserved over time. It is located in the western part of French-speaking Switzerland, in the canton of Vaud, a region where the language spoken is French and whose climate is temperate semi-continental (STATISTIQUE VAUD STATVD, 2019). At the end of the Middle Ages, several preponderant factors marked the process of economic development of the region, including the high concentration of bourgeois and a population composed of nobles, vineyard owners, farmers and vineyard workers known in the region as winegrowers-taskers; and, even more, its privileged geographical position. Its location, in a strategic area on an important communication route linking France to Italy, and in the centre of the important Lavaux vineyards, are all elements that have contributed significantly to the economic development of Vevey. But it was especially with the arrival of Protestant refugees in the second half of the sixteenth century, mainly from France, that the work of the land began to develop. Agricultural methods were perfected and improved, and

there was a significant economic expansion which, within a few years, significantly changed local habits and customs, allowing industrial practices to flourish (HILFIKER, 1966).

Today, Vevey is home to a thriving trade, in addition to the fact that Nestlé has its headquarters there, and has been elevated to the rank of "the most commercial city in the canton of Vaud" (HILFIKER, 1966: 66), fed by industries and a heterogeneous shopping centre. According to Gétaz (1969), the rural characteristics are still very well preserved, with marshy land, forests, meadows, pastures and vines, which stands out for being a growing crop from the eighteenth century. However, it was during the nineteenth century that the city industrialized with the installation of several companies in the region, at a time when the local workforce was mainly made up of craftsmen. Renowned for its landscapes and its rich and diverse cultural fabric, as evidenced by the leisure offer, museums, fairs, contemporary art spaces, theatres, exhibitions, open-air markets, popular festivals, and also thanks to its contrasting landscapes between the Alps, the vineyard walls and Lake Geneva, this region is a tourist and cultural attraction that enhances the wines produced in the region all the more. It is also home to many famous poets, writers and philosophers who have contributed with their work to the image of the place and to the internationalization of the region. In addition, a strong attachment to the culture of the vine and the inauguration of a "place of memory", the Museum of the Brotherhood, testify to the link of the region with this tradition which has hosted the Fête des Vignerons for generations. "A unique event, with a distant temporality, which takes place in the Market Square, known as a centre of exchange" (HILFIKER, 1966: 64), a space for celebration, but also a place of convergence in the production of various events and related activities.

"KEEP IT AND SELL IT IN 25 YEARS": THE PROCESS OF ADDING VALUE TO THE PRODUCTS DERIVED FROM THE FÊTE DES VIGNERONS

While walking through the streets of Vevey, I came across the "Clef de Sol", a bookshop that sells and buys second-hand books and has a rich collection of publications on the Fête des Vignerons (FDV). I went in to sell one of the three copies of the *Book of the Spectacle* that I had received in duplicate. At the beginning of the discussion, the owner showed me a lot of the same books for sale for the sum of 38 francs each, and concluded by saying "*keep it and sell it in 25 years, then it will be worth ten times what it is worth today*". This argument led me to reflect on the accentuated commercialization of the festival and past commercial uses, as well as on the dynamics of the added value to derivative

products that use its temporality as a medium for the projection of the image. Thus, the objects go from being mere ornaments to a new meaning, through the value of the brand according to the edition of the event - the product by edition, where the emphasis is on the dilapidated state of these accessories, due to the fact that they are linked to a specific holiday of the past, such as the 1977 costume, the backpack of the 1955 event or the hat of the 1999 celebration, displayed like trophies. One of the extras of the 2019 party recounts her experience and family memories of the FDV:

Many of us perpetuate the memory of the old festivals: for example, on the shelves of my mother's library, there are scores of the various festivals and many family souvenirs relating to Carlo Hemmerling, composer of the 1955 Festival, cousin of my maternal grandfather (24 Heures 2018).

There is also an increase in the marketing and sale price of these items on specific websites in the region (Anibis, Marketplace, Ricardo, Tutti, among others), a circumstance that, according to Adorno (2002), is due to a sudden reversal of events. Indeed, intensive commercialization ends up penetrating and permeating different segments of social life, including cultural components, which eventually move from the position of purely artistic expressions to that of commercial objects carrying new meanings and whose ultimate intention is to make a profit.

We have thus arrived at a time when information is dissipating by "giant leaps", at an intensity never seen before, thanks to today's technological tools, resources used to access messages about the FDV, through the festival's websites, local newspapers and magazines and various social networks, in which updates and the process of information were constant. However, with a certain critical sense, it was possible to sift through these communications and focus on what was really important. We then noticed the sharp *marketing* adopted at all stages of the production of the party, an important element for the promotion of its image and derivative products, but also a mercantile side through a very structured corporate logic, resulting from today's consumer societies in which the media play a key role in terms of dissemination and persuasion, as Roiz (2002, 157) has recalled: "[...] The phenomenon of media influence manifests itself on a daily basis." For the 2019 edition, this dynamic was no different, given the use of different tools, related to precise and specific objectives, having been studied by a team of professionals specialized in this segment, called the FDV Communication Commission, divided into four sectors (Communication, Marketing, Public Relations/Media and Sales). Each department had a set

of attributions, with the aim of not only targeting those who maintain a close relationship of loyalty with the festival, but above all to work to conquer an increasingly wide audience. In this regard, a first question arose: what is the degree (in percentage) of spontaneous knowledge of the Fête des Vignerons among the population? From this investigation, a curious scenario was born, to everyone's surprise. In fact, only 7% of the Swiss population spontaneously knew about the Fête des Vignerons, barely 0.9% of the inhabitants of German-speaking Switzerland recognised the event and only 2% of the population aged 15 to 29 knew what the celebration represented. The vast majority of the population of Vevey, a total of 81%, was indeed aware of the FDV (Swiss Marketing Vaud, 2018). This result revealed to the Marketing team possible gaps and problems, leading to strategies based on this reality. The strategic work of publicizing the event had been articulated and discussed by the communication department since 2016, in order to create the visual identity that would be used in all the articles, but which would mainly serve to position the FDV brand. As part of this process, graphic design companies began to compete for the *marketing*³ contract, sending proposals and ideas that had to show not only the professional nature of their work, but also the motivational context of the event. As a result, in 2017, the holiday began to be more and more present in people's minds thanks to the merchandising designed with the logo⁴. Some contained attractive messages such as, "I can't. I repeated"; "Fête des Vignerons 2019, j'y etais" or "Une fête perdue, vingt ans de malluc", highlighting several of its values, such as tradition, the scope of the 25-year interval; its community dimension, since it is mainly composed of volunteers; but also its singularity, as an oversized show that requires significant financial resources. It is interesting to note that even the products marketed by the Post Office are created specifically for the event, such as stamps for example, a tradition that has lasted since 1955, as well as a diversified range of advertising media developed gradually, such as the balloon (September 2018), the TGV Lyria connecting Switzerland and France (October 2018), or the Swiss Air plane which was given a makeover by a graphic designer from Vevey (February 2019), as well as other objects that, over time, have been incorporated into the event. In addition, companies have

³ As for the marketing contract, in 2017, the Balmer Hählen studio in Lausanne, one of the selected, created the advertising design that became known through the festival's media ("Fête des Vignerons 2019" and the slogan FEVI2019). Every detail has been the subject of a strategic study by a team concerned with transmitting something, taking into account the values to be shared, interests and desires. During the selection process, each company produced a video demonstrating their motivation to be part of the party.

⁴ The range of products for the party was varied: caps, shirts, jackets, keychains, kitchen utensils, purses, backpacks, mugs, glasses, umbrellas, stickers, phone case, artwork, envelopes, Christmas cards, books, wines, yogurt, butter, Swatch watches, clothing, etc.

also been hired for the manufacture (Serigraphie Uldry), marketing, management and *merchandising* of products (Many Ways), underlining the importance attributed to the media aspect of the *Fête des Vignerons*⁵. Figure 1 shows one of the ways the VDF was using in 2018 to raise awareness of the 2019 event.

Figure 1 - FDV stand at the Morges Book Fair



Source: own author (2018).

Similarly, there is a gradual increase in investment in advertising and a diversification of the means of propagation of the FDV, which benefits from significant media capital insofar as it offers a showcase of the region to the whole world - a total spectacle. Thus, in this perspective, Debord ([1967], 2003: 15) already revealed that: "[...] In all its particular forms, information or propaganda, advertising or direct consumption of entertainment, the spectacle constitutes the present model of socially dominant life." All the media coverage of the Fête des Vignerons, mass communication, etc., was the result of meticulous and planned work, during which nothing was neglected. It cannot be denied, therefore, that this is one of the roles of the media, because:

The mass communication function of advertising therefore does not come from its content, its modes of distribution, its manifest objectives (economic and psychological), it does not come from its volume or its real audience (although all this has its importance and serves as a support), but from its very logic as an autonomous medium. that is to say, not referring to real objects, to a real world, to a frame of reference, but from one sign to another, from one object to another, from one consumer to another. (Baudrillard [1970], 1995: 131).

It is true that there has been an increasing investment in the most diverse means in order to position the FDV on the regional, national and international scene. To do this, advertising campaigns were launched well in advance on a wide variety of communication

⁵ Information taken from the YouTube video of the interview with Priscilla Balmer, creator of the logo of the Fête des Vignerons 2019. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBQFtBLkBCo>. Accessed on: January 20, 2019.

media, at first discreetly, but as the event approached, the volume of material on the market increased. For example, Tissot launched an advertising spot in the country's three spoken languages (French, Italian and German) presenting watch models made exclusively for the festival (official Tissot 2019 website). Likewise, the cantons have invested in advertising campaigns to make their cities and regions known, as was the case with the Jura and the city of Basel, which created a graphic identity with the slogan: "Jura and Basel-Stadt - Carnival and much more" (Pomzed 2019), as well as many others that were born before and during the festival which, for the sake of saving text, will not be detailed here. Over time, the commercial bias, strongly intertwined with *merchandising*, took shape and developed concomitantly; on the other hand, considering the previous festivals, we cannot conclude that this dynamic is recent, because meticulous work on the image, the promotion and the creation of a strong brand and derivative products has always been a favorite subject and concern for the Fête des Vignerons, revealed in the excerpt below.

When you think of the medals of the 1889 Festival, the plates of the 1905 Festival or the yellow umbrellas that some Lausanne residents had after the 1977 Festival, these were bought and kept as souvenirs of the Festival in which these people had participated. The Festival has been associated with this commercial dimension for a very long time. On the other hand, the fact of defining a commercial policy, working on the image of the Festival and entrusting its implementation to sales and communication professionals has developed above all in recent decades with the emergence of the company as a legitimate social institution, the intensification of capitalism and the globalization of economic exchanges. (Vinck 2019:53-54).

Even the products designed and manufactured for the 2019 event have been categorized into seven distinct groups: the Fête des Vignerons collection, the artisans' label, around wine, clothing, accessories, festival wines and the Julie collection. In the light of this categorization, with a division into two distinct groups, a certain antagonism has been perceived, where on the one hand we have a certain massification through a basic and diversified production of items, at various prices and, on the other hand, a commercial segmentation through a specific range of luxury objects, unique pieces created by local craftsmen, intended for an elite audience, given the high prices charged⁶. In this perspective, Godinho (2010: 223) makes his contribution when he warns us that: "[...] beings, objects or rituals have become materials capable of being multiplied, in order to be inserted into a process of accumulation". Boltanski and Chiapello ([1999], 2009) go even

⁶ The products made by local craftsmen had prices between 700 and 3000 francs. Among these products are bells, jewelry, cutlery, leather, stone and wood objects (official website of the Fête Des Vignerons 2019).

further by asserting that, as mass production takes place, the massification of individuals occurs, because:

The standardization of objects and functions leads to a similar standardization of uses and, consequently, of users, whose practice is thereby massively unwilling or even unaware of it. This massification of human beings, as users, through consumption, extended, with the development, at the end of the interwar period and especially after the Second World War, of marketing and advertising to one of the dimensions of people which nevertheless seems to be among the most singular, the most intimate, anchored in their interiority: desire itself, the massification of which is in turn denounced. Between my desire for any object and the desire of another for an identical object belonging to the same series, there is no longer any relevant gap. (Boltanski and Chiapello, [1999], 2009: 441).

We are also witnessing the transmutation of the festive place by the installation of stands of high-end product companies, such as Tissot which launched exclusive watches for the event, the luxury store Manor which sold tickets for the arena and the wines of the FDV, alongside Lavaux Vinorama, a specialist in refined and distinguished wines, and the Nespresso Nestlé boutique in the city of Vevey. These products showcased the region's artisans and their craftsmanship as a symbol of belonging, cultural heritage and heritage, and incorporated the world of the Fête des vignerons into the specific artistic context⁷. Thus, for the sake of marketing, various points of sale have been set up, with virtual commerce as a strong ally, unlike the 1999 festival when technology and computerization were advancing "at a slower pace". Specific FDV brand stores have also been set up in different regions of the country, with a wide range of products, from foodstuffs to luxury items, sold in supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, bookstores, bakeries and at side events.

It is important to note that the success of this edition was the result of an articulated effort of professionals, chosen from among the best, and well-planned strategies. For this reason, different promotion and marketing mechanisms were implemented through large-circulation newspapers such as "24 Heures", which offered a souvenir of the holiday in exchange for a subscription to the newspaper. The dairy products manufacturing and marketing company "Cremo" which launched coffee creamers with the designs of the costumes of the 2019 show, as well as butter with the logos of the event served in different places in the country (hotels, hospitals, restaurants, etc.); department stores and bakeries that sold FDV merchandise – such as breads made from wine; sailing trips; Exclusive

⁷ Data extracted from the official website of the Fête des Vignerons. "The craftsmen create for the Festival". Source: available at: <https://www.fetedesvignerons.ch/les-artisans-creent-pour-la-fete/>. Published date: December 04, 2018. (Accessed on: 11/2019).

Kodak products created for the occasion; and the photographers who circulated throughout the festive space taking photos that would then be sold in the form of personalized objects (calendars, albums, key rings, etc.). In addition, there are postage stamps with the logo of the festival, numerous multimedia resources, and even Swiss lottery tickets. One of the derivative products is reproduced in Figure 2, below:

Figure 2 – FDV butter



Source: own author (2019).

In this dynamic, it should be noted that the products marketed serve as a memorial reference for future generations, as many of these souvenirs are a symbol of pride and belonging to a region, its vineyard and its festival, and are preserved for generations, to be reused in future celebrations after more than two decades. That is why one of their special features is the quality of the materials used in the manufacturing process, so that they can be kept in perfect condition during the long hibernation period of the holiday - waiting for the next one.

During the manufacturing process of nearly six thousand costumes used in 2019, the contract for the production of the garments was the subject of controversy and litigation. This was mainly due to the fact that the workforce hired was made up of seamstresses from Italy. The organization of the festival justified this choice by the lack of local labor. However, between the paradoxical speeches, behind the scenes, this decision seemed to be linked to the high production costs in the country. As a result, this deliberation has generated a lot of deadlocks and discontent, involving different social actors, as evidenced by an excerpt from Radio Télévision Suisse in June 2018, in which the director of the Seamstresses' Association, Mireille Dessingy, states: "We know how to organize these major events, but we do it in a network spirit that always brings something to French-speaking Switzerland" (Crevoisier 2018), in a sentiment highlighting the discredit and resentment of local professionals.

Although it is not the wine that is crowned, but the work that comes from it, wine, as a marketing product and host, has always held a special place at the *Fêtes des Vignerons*. In 2019, it was a matter of concern, strategically studied by a commission called "*Vins de la Fête*". This group was responsible for both the positioning of the wine during the festival and the image of the Lavaux vineyard. At the same time, she was in charge of marketing, responsible for selling nearly five hundred thousand bottles, an essential component for vineyard owners whose profit is essential for the continuity of their activities, and who see, in the event, an opportunity to increase their income, given the significant investments made before and during the celebration.

Therefore, we can admit that this celebration is, in fact, a complex, ephemeral, diversified and constantly evolving commercial machine, where everything is scrutinized by *marketing* for financial profits. This was the case, for example, with the arena, which, even before its construction was completed, was a space for various experiences and uses, with guided tours organized during the works, and until the last day of the festival, with the slogan "*visit the arena and discover a unique construction*", with prices ranging from 25 to 250 francs. The idea was to raise awareness of the arena more closely, hoping to reach different market niches and audiences, especially those who considered ticket prices expensive, but were curious to see its physical space.

Among the different uses of the arena in the run-up to the festival, we can mention the performance of the International Festival of Street Artists, who had, thanks to this space, an opportunity to publicize their own festival, or the rehearsals with the extras and the catering sector. Another structure built, the eminent themed restaurant on the shores of Lake Geneva, the *Terrasses de la Confrérie*⁸, was a place of meeting and conviviality between extras, inhabitants, visitors and members of the brotherhood, but above all a space reserved for guests from the political, artistic, wine, national, international and economic circles, such as sponsors. In this space, a special show, with advantages, took place with lots of wine and selected guests. The venue has also served as a stage for different events such as yoga classes, *techno* nights, recordings of local radio and television shows and tourist itineraries with packages formatted for the occasion. According to Godinho (2010:40), such circumstances exist because:

⁸ Extract from the official website of the Fête des Vignerons. "The Terraces of the Brotherhood". Available on: https://www.facebook.com/fetedesvignerons/videos/381515589378618/?__tn__=H-R. Published Date: June 20, 2019. (Accessed on: 10/01/2020).

A significant change is due to the spectacularization of certain festive moments, linked locally to the construction of identities, which now serve to assert sub-national political powers, associated with investments by local authorities and companies, which also expect something in return

The organization, apparently focused on the realization of a sustainable event, as a reflection of its time, has adopted measures to encourage ecological behaviors, with a view to transmitting an image of social responsibility, concern for the protection of heritage and minimization of the negative impacts resulting from the organization of the show. These measures included some contemporary aspects such as urban mobility, by encouraging the use of public transport, waste management, through environmental awareness, and sustainability, through the policy of reuse. Thus, although the festival has benefited from the payments received for parking in the car park, its partners, such as the shipping company CGN and the railway company SBB, have increased their fleets and schedules. As far as catering services are concerned, a waste management plan has been adopted in collaboration with the town hall, with the participation of many student volunteers. They went through the festive circuit by picking up waste in the streets, but above all by raising awareness among the population with shocking phrases such as "under a sewer grid like this, there is always a fish" or "your waste can end up in the lake". The organization also adopted an economically sustainable strategy through the use of reusable objects (glasses, forks, spoons, cups, etc.) that were returnable. This last trick, very well thought out by the organization, made it possible to raise public awareness about waste reduction, while converting into sales, because not all customers returned these objects, most of the time, because they decided to keep them as souvenirs. This was seen in the field, where several people had different coloured lenses, or even through overheard conversations, in which some said that a certain colour was missing to complete their collection. On the other hand, this practice made it possible to reduce the washing time, since each person reused his or her own glass, which is ecologically viewed positively by the region because it demonstrates a reduction in waste, which increases by 600%⁹ during the event.

It is important to emphasize that all the materials used to build the arena (700 tons of metal structure) were recycled and sent back to the company that made them. The use of new trends took into account what was in vogue (organic fabrics, ethnic fabrics, biodegradable

⁹ Data extracted from the 24-hour newspaper. Source: available at: https://www.24heures.ch/vaud-regions/imagesprennentviesolarene/story/20875268?fbclid=IwAR0p67LPit7j_eK5nhBMHEjMQvRKwwRUPrQsihP8vYHppLfOvh5QcSh1nw. Published date: June 18, 2019. (Accessed on: 20/06/2020)

products, urban mobility, sustainable waste management, gender equality, inclusion, etc.), signalling an event that reflected the 21st century. But, at the same time, he demonstrates a certain contradiction, because he is interested in festive expansion, gigantism and surpassing oneself each time, gradually resorting to an unusual dimension with the intense adoption of new technologies¹⁰, as observed in 2019, with the use of *FeVi Family* applications, food cards, tools for managing extras and volunteers such as *dodle*, the festival's website, *Facebook*, *Instagram* and other social networks, the online sale of the festival's items and tickets, optical scanning to verify the authenticity of the tickets.

Indeed, it is clear that the FDV has taken several paths, generating a horizon of possibilities that go beyond the simple, but no less important, transmission of tradition, but mainly it has promoted the notoriety and knowledge of the region, at a time when hypervisibility was notorious. In addition, the festive atmosphere and the pinnacle that the event brings to each generation have contributed to making known the heritage of the "*Lavaux en Terrasses*" vineyard, local and national tourism, tradition and culture, know-how and the urban and rural landscape. This celebration also offers countless financial opportunities to its actors, as evidenced by the archives of the *Confrérie des Vignerons*, which house a large number of documents from companies offering their services, but mainly the gigantic means, material and financial, necessary for the organization of the festival, generating, according to Vinck (2019), colossal expenses.

In addition, it is an event that has been internationalized mainly since 1955, taking on greater proportions, both in terms of its size and the increase in demand from visitors from all over Switzerland and other countries, and having been featured on several international newspapers in 2019, such as "The New York Times", "CNN", "Forbes", "The Guardian", "Paris Match", "TF1". The long marketing work contributed to the internationalization of the celebration, but also to the promotion of the event in other contexts, such as in the Lyon metro in France (in February 2019), where a delegation of extras presented themselves with the aim of reaching a foreign audience, as well as the "Tour de Suisse promotion" (traveling through the cities of Château-d'Oex, St. Gallen, Valais, Neuchâtel, Aigle), which publicized the event in a few cities in the country, especially in German-speaking

¹⁰ FDV 2019 kept pace with modernization and technology. It had an LED floor (800 m²), 3132 panels positioned on the ground, 500 spare plates in case of repair or replacement. Source: 24 Heures newspaper. Available at: https://www.24heures.ch/valud-regions/images-prennent-viesolarene/story/20875268?fbclid=IwAR0p67LPit7j_eK5nhBMHEjMQvRKwwRUPrQsihP8vYHppLfOvh5QcShl1nw. (Accessed on: 15/09/2019).

Switzerland because of the communication problems that occurred in this region in 1999, linked to a certain lack of knowledge of the festival.

THE EPHEMERAL MERCHANT FACTORY: LINKS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL LOGICS OF THE FÊTE DES VIGNERONS

The grandiose character of the festival and its spectacular and commercial trend, which is manifested in the infrastructure, equipment, technology used, marketing, communication, innovation and skilled workforce, combined with the concepts related to the event, generate high financial costs and, therefore, the need to have important sponsors, more than 54 companies in 2019. This is a current trend which, according to Jacques (2004: 347), "is based on a new logic of consumption where culture is perceived as an 'economic culture' in the image of a brand or a symbol of ready-to-consume entertainment". Some figures of this gigantic structure are presented in the table below:

Table 1 – Amounts spent on the 2019 Fête des Vignerons

AMOUNTS	COST CENTRE	TYPES OF EXPENSES
103 million	<i>Party budget</i>	Party production
13 million	Arena Cost	Construction of the arena on the Place du Marché
7 million	Cost of the <i>Ville en Fête</i>	Structure near the FDV.
6 million	<i>Terraces of the Brotherhood</i>	Construction of the restaurant on the shores of Lake Geneva.
13 million	Technical area in the arena	Sound, lighting, scenography, stage managers.
13 million	Communication, Marketing and Media	Disclosure of the event.
12 million	Costumes	Seamstresses, alterations of figurinos back costumes, workshop.
8 million	Payments to the Municipality	Security and use of the public domain.
6 million	Exceptional charges	Unforeseen expenses.
1 million	Insurance	P&C insurance contracts.
20 million	Restoration	Feeding extras, volunteers, etc.

Source: 24heures (2019).

Regarding the financial aspects, the benefits of a Fête des Vignerons are not the same for everyone, as in the case of catering. In 2019, there was a rigorous and restricted selection of authorizations to operate at the event, with safety and hygiene being paramount criteria in the selection process. Thus, little by little, the party space was "invaded" by new bars, restaurants, cafeterias and stalls that competed for space with existing establishments. On the other hand, the competition seemed unfair to some, because depending on the distribution and location, many did not have the same earnings. This was mainly the consequence of poor distribution, favouring

the dispersion of the audience, and concentrating them on a few points of the festive venue - in particular on the shores of Lake Geneva and around the arena, while other areas remained empty. This situation was observed particularly in the vicinity of the station, which came to function as a place of passage for visitors, generating financial losses, given that many vendors planned their production, purchases and stock taking into account the magnitude of this event, with the possibility of reaping considerable dividends.

From this perspective, we can say that we are facing two distinct festivals. The pharaonic show, for which access is paid by the purchase of tickets at astronomical prices, which is carried out by a team, of a very commercial nature and close to the local business circles, with specific skills to manage all the stages of the festival. The other is free, outside the arena: the "Ville en Fête". On the other hand, although located in a public space, in the area of the free cultural programming, it was part of the strictly commercial area, being a source of profit for the *Confrérie des Vignerons* and its actors. The event also relies on the work of volunteers and their skills in various professional fields and on the partnership with major companies in the country. Vinck (2019) also agrees, as according to him, they are in fact two festivals that intersect and move apart according to different interests, one related to the economic benefits of specific groups and the other based on the communal altruism of people who dedicate time to festive construction. Adorno (2002) points out the commercial dimension of the "cultural industry" at a time when everything is consumed.

The tickets for the 2019 celebration were a point of conflict. On the one hand, the festival adopted a contradictory discourse, claiming that due to tradition, these tickets could not be reduced, a context very similar to that of 1999, which had the effect of emptying the stands. On the other hand, three weeks before the event, a website (Qoqa) carried out a promotion of tickets for the opening night - the famous coronation - at unusual prices, provoking a series of reactions, according to the Journal 20min of June 2019¹¹. In an effort to promote an image of triumph, as well as attract more spectators, the organizers sought to fill the arena spaces at all costs. This situation was criticised by those who had bought the same tickets at much higher prices - ranging from 79 to 359 francs. In the context of festivals, confrontations are part of the game, since, according to Del Priore (1994), historically, these celebrations mark a moment of utopia

¹¹ Tickets initially sold at 139 francs were on sale at 49 francs. Even more spectacular, those at 299 francs, in Category 1, were sold at 99 francs. Source: Journal 20min. Raid on a series of tickets sold at the sales: Fête des vigneronns. Published Date: June 29, 2019. Available at: <https://www.20min.ch/ro/news/vaud/story/Une-razzia-sur-les-billets-vendus-a-prix-casses-24731067>. (Accessed on: 15/09/2019).

associated with too much freedom and permissiveness, and, therefore, a space open to disagreements, reprisals and frustrations between the social groups involved.

By analogy, we can say that in each generation, this festival functions as an ephemeral "factory", for which we can consider the industrial building as the *Brotherhood of Winegrowers*, through all the work of sectorization, delegation of tasks, prioritization, attraction and use of paid and voluntary labor, to end up in the manufacture of goods and services, with the Fête des Vignerons as its main product. Once a small traditional event, organized by a small group, it has transformed over the years into an internationalized and touristized show, imbued with financial stakes, focused on profit, what Ortiz (2001: 18) calls "the commodification of culture", and has become an object of consumption (Mesnil 1974). It has a physical and material structure in which all the processes are elaborated through rigorous control and planning and the support of the sponsors – in relation to working capital – who, together with the Brotherhood of Winegrowers, walk together towards a common goal, thus contributing to the survival of this celebration.

Since the FDV is characterized by a show that requires significant resources, it mainly needs companies willing to invest financially in the event that may or may not be profitable, such as the 2019 celebration that accumulated a loss of 15 million, due, above all, to the fact that tickets for the daytime show¹² were not sufficiently sold¹³. Of this loss, 1.9 million corresponded to the amount owed by the brotherhood to the canton of Vaud. However, after many meetings and discussions, the government exempted the debt according to the "law concerning the invoicing of security costs during events" (Law 11263), which allows the State to exempt the organizers of "events of public utility for the canton or for which an exemption is justified". Moreover, according to an excerpt from the newspaper Le Temps¹⁴, the brotherhood used its own resources, about ten million, to settle two-thirds of the party's debts, leaving a negative balance of five million to be negotiated with the partners. An action plan has therefore been drawn up in order to collect the amount necessary for the accounting regularization of the event. These measures included the sale of equipment, costumes, sewing workshop machines, objects used in the show, various furniture, decorative objects, books and all types of items created for this purpose.

¹² The daytime shows were more accessible than the evening ones. But it was in the evening that the public was intensely present, while, during the day, there were many empty seats, thus generating a considerable financial loss.

¹³ Data extracted from the July 2020 24Heures newspaper. Edited by Renaud Bournoud. Source Available at: <https://www.24heures.ch/le-conseil-detat-fait-une-ristourne-de-1-9-million-a-la-fevi-848340768000>. Published date: July 7, 2020. (Accessed on: 20/07/2020).

¹⁴ Data obtained in the Journal LE TEMPS. Source: Available at: <https://www.letemps.ch/culture/reste-5-millions-trouver-couvrir-deficit-fete-vignerons>. Published date: October 1, 2019. (Accessed on: 20/07/2020).

The festival also used other strategies to increase its revenue. In June 2020, a letter was sent to all the actors-extras and volunteers. She proposed that they join the association "Friends of the Fête des Vignerons", created with the aim of keeping the flame of the festival alive, through a process of self-feeding the spirit of the festival, because according to the Abbot President, "traditions have value only if they live" (Beda 2020). In return, it asked for a donation, in the amount of 50 and 200 francs for individuals and companies respectively. Thanks to this, the donor would become part of the MAFEVI association, allowing him to receive information about the institution, participate in events related to the brotherhood, obtain discounts on the products of the festival, as well as financially support future celebrations. These aspects are very different from those of the past, when this community event, which had no financial interests, was carried out by groups of winegrowers. Today, it is evolving against the tide of what it was in the past, because it is no longer intended to spend only what it has collected, and its expenses are greater than its revenues, accumulating debts, which is due, above all, to this need to be ever more excessive.

This event turns out to be a factory of relationships, of objectives that diverge and converge, of belonging to a common wine-growing universe - knowing that the vineyard continues to play an important social and economic role in the region, although this activity currently occupies a small part of the population that has survived various storms: financial issues related to profit and strong competition, the advent of globalization and the explosion of wines arriving from other countries at very low prices; the difficulties for exports, in the succession of wine estates due to the lack of interest of the younger generations in getting involved in this sector of activity; problems related to the need for renovations on the land; administrative costs, pesticides used in vineyards, lack of labour and vine diseases. On the other hand, it creates intense links between its actors and a great social cohesion thanks to the regular meetings during rehearsals, the performances of the show, the additional events organized by the extras, the social relationships that are established and last over time, also contributing to the dynamism of this locality. This celebration is in line with the concept of Turner ([1969], 1990: 97), who admits that, in terms of human relations, there seem to be two alternating and juxtaposed models:

[...] The first considers society as a structured, differentiated and often hierarchical system of political-legal and economic positions involving many types of evaluation, separating people in terms of "more" or "less". The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is that of a society, regarded as an *unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated "comitatus," a community, or*

even a communion of equal individuals who together submit to the general authority of ancient rituals. (Turner [1969], 1990: 97)

So there is this pattern or form of social relations, recognized as *communitas*: "an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated community, or a communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ancient rituals" (Turner [1969], 1990: 97). Reflecting on the notion of celebration, an articulating concept is based on the anti-structural form that relies on the links established between social groups or, as Turner ([1969], 1990: 96), "*the people of the Threshold*" states. According to the author, in this context, what he calls a liminal situation occurs through the interactions and relationships established, conducted in an atmosphere of community, of communion. On the other hand, this dynamic contrasts sharply with the social practices adopted in everyday life, given that relations are based on a series of principles, where positions are very defined. Moreover, from this perspective: "the attributes of liminality or of persons in a liminal situation are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons escape the network of classifications that determine states and positions in cultural space" (Turner [1969], 1990: 96). According to him: "[...] The life experience of each individual involves alternating exposure to structure and *communitas*, as well as to states and transitions." (Turner [1969], 1990: 98).

Analyzing the FDV's production process, the feeling of "*communitas*" is evident. This dynamic is revealed through a certain ritual levelling as evidenced by the links established between the volunteers, the extras, the Confrérie des Vignerons, the winegrowers, the local community, the vineyard workers and the sponsors who, over time, shared a common space, leading to a perception of apparent uniformity between individuals, in accordance with what Foucault ([1966], 2013) has been called heterotopia or illusory space, and in which an inversion of reality occurs. This perspective is legitimized by the speech of the extra and councillor Jean Pierre Chollet in February 2020¹⁵: "[...] When you're there, you're a volunteer. So, as a student of sociology or anthropology, you can work with someone who is a sweeper [...] you have the same value, you are a volunteer." Thus, this group is destined to contribute to the feast, giving of itself, in a spirit of union and pride in being part of the event - even if only during the time of the feast, or simply, as defined by Maffesoli ([1944], 1996: 13) "to be together".

¹⁵ Chollet, Jean-Pierre. [02.2020]. Winegrower and Honorary Advisor of the *Brotherhood of Winegrowers*. Interviewer: Giselle Schmid, 2020. MP3 file (1h43min). Free translation

It is through the celebration and its interactions, the association of symbols and the most diverse motivations that individuals strengthen their sense of belonging to themselves and to others. The same author uses the word "sociality" to designate a certain social force oriented towards a dynamic of gathering and interaction with the community. Thus, we can observe a new aesthetic reality related to modern society in which aspects such as the spirit of solidarity, community, and belonging are essential components in this context (Maffesoli [1944], 1996). Indeed, "aesthetics has extended to the whole of existence. Nothing is spared. It has contaminated politics, corporate life, communication, advertising, consumption and, of course, everyday life" (Maffesoli [1944], 1996: 12). In a reading of social relations, Maffesoli ([1944], 1996: 12) shows us that:

They are no longer guided by a goal to be reached, always distant, in short, what is delimited by an economic-political logic, or determined according to a moral vision. Rather, these relationships become relationships animated by and based on what is intrinsic, lived on a daily basis, organically; moreover, they come to be centered on proximity. In short, the social bond becomes affective. Thus a way of being (ethos) develops where what is experienced with others is primordial. This is what I will refer to by the expression: "the ethics of aesthetics".

Like many other festivals in different parts of the world, the *Fête des Vignerons*, according to Vinck (2019: 125), "remixes society and introduces, at least for the time of its gestation and the festival, a relative social mix. The volunteers find a sense of hope in society."

In the case of the FDV, this crown, placed on the head of the best *winegrower-tasker*, carries within it juxtaposed economic interests, directly associated with the coronation ceremony. It not only crowns the best winemaker, but also, although indirectly, it highlights the estate in which this winemaker worked and the wine produced, promoting an increase in sales and a consequent media coverage of the festive place. In addition, it allows the owner of this estate to be the object of all attention, he being one of the characters interested in this award, because only he can register his employee for this competition of excellence to then hope to win the crown. This same crown favours a complex mercantilised system, in the background, and the often hidden - games of interest between the social actors involved. On the other hand, it can mask a certain strength which, in addition to the Confrérie des Vignerons, the sponsors and the volunteers, contributes to bringing this festival back to life for each generation.

FINAL REMARKS

To study the purpose of this research, the starting point was to analyze the process of valorization of the products conceived, designed and produced for the event, but also the strong marketing that takes place in the field throughout the process of carrying out the event. Understanding the commercial workings of this field has proven essential to understanding the interlocking relationships. At the same time, an analogical look is taken at the links between this component and its influence on this unusual show. From the information gathered in the field before, during and after the festival, it was possible to perceive the considerable commercial trend that permeates this celebration. Several contracts have been signed thanks to counterparties that have been discussed, analysed and agreed well in advance. Restricted meetings between a specific group, but also constant flexibility in the mediation and resolution of disputes expressed on the ground, such as the use of public space, the economic losses that affected local merchants during the construction of the arena, the dissatisfaction of some of the inhabitants who find themselves in front of a space transformed to host the festival, which shapes the place to settle in, contributing to a change of routine among the inhabitants. Similarly, the scale of the event has been the subject of much criticism, with some believing it to be so disproportionate and "spectacularized" that it distances itself from the local sphere. Others admit that one day, the city will no longer be able to host the party, or even that it will end up suffocating the party space itself.

The high ticket prices for the show, the large donations from sponsors, as well as the influences and connections between the political world and big business in the region have been the subject of speculation and judgment. Finally, it is clear that it is a celebration imbued with various and specific interests that are accentuated and expanded as the event takes shape.

That is why it transforms the city into a great commercial center, and the population into a driving force capable of operating the mechanisms of this great machine that generates monumental sums of money and that, for this reason, needs sponsors capable of covering extravagant expenses, as well as volunteers capable of acting directly and indirectly in different parts of the festive process. While some recognize that the Fête des Vignerons is part of the local DNA, others disapprove of the volunteer support by the population, pointing out that it is a commercial event, focused on profit and aimed at a privileged social stratum.

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