INSIGHTS ON BARCAMPS – EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS ON A STILL YOUNG EVENT FORM

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1 Barcamps: An Endogenous Event Form of the Internet Scene

The buzzword „Web 2.0" first came up in 2003 and gained global attention in 2005 with Tim O'Reilly's article „What is Web 2.0" (see O'Reilly 2005). Since then, we have been living in the Web 2.0 era. Further versions are already under discussion (cf. Aghaei et al. 2012). But the actual qualitative caesura –- technologically enabled, socially longed for – came to light with the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, as the following feature comparison is intended to illustrate (cf. Tab. 1.).

Tab. 1: Feature comparison between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Web 1.0	Web 2.0
B2C	C2C
Monologue	Dialogue/Interactive
Consumer	Prosumer
Reception	Participation
Producer generated content	User generated content

Source: own illustration

Tim O'Reilly was also the one who created a special event form in 2003, which was specifically related to the Internet scene and has accompanied and regularly brought it together ever since: Barcamps (cf. Hellmann 2012). Initially, the term foocamps was used, usually deciphered as Friends of O'Reilly camps, because these events were initiated by O'Reilly, took place on his farm in the San Francisco Bay Area, and participation was only possible through his personal invitation.

In 2005, however, this event form emancipated itself from its inventor, was renamed „Barcamp", democratized and spread worldwide very quickly. As early as 2006, the first barcamps were also held in Germany (cf. Hellmann 2007). In the meantime, barcamps have become a permanent fixture of the Internet scene; and because the range of topics discussed at the first barcamps grew explosively, the first theme camps, i.e., barcamps with a specific thematic focus, emerged in 2008. Over the years, the variety of theme camps has become hard to keep track of (cf. fig. 1).

Figure 1: Selection of theme camp logos from recent years

Source: own representation

In any case, this is a form of event that is particularly related to the discursive-creative culture of the Internet and its pioneers and claims to realize to some extent the utopian aspirations of the founding era of this medium. Thus, much-discussed innovations and phenomena of the Web 2.0 era such as co-creation, crowdsourcing, interactive value, open innovation, peer production, prosumers, sharing economy, swarm intelligence, user-generated content, wealth of networks, wikinomics or wisdom of the crowd consistently represent components of a successful bar camp and give this event form a noticeably unconventional touch. Not without reason are barcamps also referred to as „unconferences" (cf. Langbehn 2013; Timm 2014).

Against this backdrop, if one briefly examines the canon of values that provides the general framework for barcamps, several interconnected guiding ideas can be mentioned, such as diversity, egalitarianism, informality, inclusivity, creativity, participation and self-organization.

- Creativity: Barcamps are designed to enable and promote creativity. Inhibition thresholds of what can be said are lowered as much as possible in order to be able to present the most diverse ideas and perspectives.

- Diversity: In order to generate a creative-participative atmosphere, a certain diversity of participants is needed. It must be ensured that the widespread tendency toward conformity and mutual adaptation does not come into play too much. The different

evaluation of ideas and projects requires different competencies and perspectives.

- Egalitarianism: Interaction during a bar camp should be as a-hierarchical as possible; differences in rank are temporarily suspended; people meet at eye level. Basically, anyone can say anything and talk to anyone.

- Informality: Barcamps favor a very personal, direct tone, a direct approach to each other and talking to each other, in order to promote the flow of impressions and ideas, but also criticism and problem awareness, which are indispensable for creativity and joint learning. Thus, barcamps are sometimes referred to as ongoing „coffee breaks," „field camps," or „class meetings."

- Inclusivity: It is also important for the implementation of barcamps that everyone has access, that everyone feels invited, and that the offer is as low-threshold as possible for active participation.

- Participation: A guiding principle of barcamps is: „No spectators, only participants! In principle, anyone can participate; participation always implies active involvement, if possible through one's own contributions and sessions.

- Self-organization: At the beginning of a barcamp it is always pointed out: „You are the barcamp! The framework is provided, but the content and sessions must be provided by the participants right at the beginning and during a barcamp and are not acquired in advance by the barcamp organizers.

The specific participation culture of barcamps is expressed in eight rules, the octolog of barcamp culture, so to speak, which received great attention in the early days of this event form:

Rule 1: Talk about the barcamp.

Rule 2: Blog about the barcamp.

Rule 3: When you present, write your topic and name on a presentation slot (all slots are then attached to a single session board).

Rule 4: Introduce yourself with only three keywords (make yourself known, but don't take yourself too seriously).

Rule 5: There are as many presentations at the same time as there are presentation rooms.

Rule 6: There are no pre-arranged presentations and no „tourists" (who only listen and contribute nothing).

Rule 7: Presentations last as long as they need to – or until they overlap with the following presentation slot.

Rule 8: It would be good if you hold your own session right at your first Barcamp participation (dare to, even if it's hard at first).

In the meantime, the strictness of following the rules has somewhat faded. Not everyone who participates gives a presentation; some barcamps are just too big for that. But the spirit of the first barcamp generation is still alive today.

2   Procedure and execution of barcamps

For the organization of barcamps, several factors are crucial for success. First of all it has to be stated: What people outside the scene often hardly notice is the intimate networking of many organizers in the respective scenes, which not infrequently maintain regular „regulars' tables" in the form of face-to-face meetings. Most bar camps are therefore created in and out of such scenes, and are communicated and explored there at an early stage. Whereby many organizers are themselves long-time members of such scenes, equipped with a certain multiplier function and reputation, whereby they can find out relatively early whether there is any demand for a planned bar camp. Thus, it can be estimated in time who will come, how many participants can be expected and where the barcamp should take place.

This preparatory effort is supported by certain Internet platforms that have established themselves in recent years specifically for bar camps, as well as by a rather small number of multipliers within the respective Internet scenes, a network of experts within the networks, so to speak. In addition, bar camps, which are usually free of charge for the participants or at most require a small participation fee, are dependent on the support of sponsors – not infrequently former start-ups, which are often thematically and socially close to the scenes – in order to cover the basic costs for catering and other services. This acquisition of sponsorships takes place months in advance, and its success is based on the trustworthiness of individual organizers, while there are different gradations in terms of sponsorship amounts (around 200, 500 and 1,000 euros per sponsor, sometimes there are also major sponsors, as well as donations in kind, such as drinks and food).

In the meantime, interested parties are already exchanging information on the Internet days or even weeks before the start of a planned bar camp. Participants contact each other and arrange to meet in advance. Due to long-lasting relationships, the barcamp then resembles a class reunion. Accordingly, thematic agreements are made informally at best, since official anticipations and specifications of content and speakers on the part of the organizers are usually omitted.

This raises some important questions: How does the conference agenda for a barcamp actually come about? Where does the content come from? And who are the speakers? These questions will be answered in the following detailed analysis of the barcamp structure.

The kick-off of a barcamp often takes place the evening before, as a „get-together" at a typical location outside the actual barcamp location. Many Barcamps extend over two days, mainly on weekends. The first day is the actual „frequency day", where the majority of the participants come together, often ending with a party in the evening. The second day, on the other hand, is considered a „quality day", since the number of participants is often one third lower, which brings much more peace and reflection to the barcamp and the individual sessions.

The official ceremony on the first day of the Barcamp is now decisive. Admission is against 9 o'clock, until 10 o'clock you can have breakfast in peace – everything is free of charge. Friends, colleagues and acquaintances meet each other; it is very lively. From 10 a.m. onwards there will be a big round of introductions. Now all participants are welcomed by the organizing team (rather rarely it is a pure „one man show"). What is important about the moderation right at the beginning is that it is briefly explained what actually constitutes a barcamp, namely a pronounced participation culture and the self-organization of the sessions, even if more than half of the participants have already attended a barcamp. The slogan is „No spectators, only participants". Afterwards, all participants introduce themselves personally with their names and three keywords („hashtags") to briefly inform about their background, professional situation, interests or hobbies – all without any restrictions, as long as there are no more than three, and conducted by a moderator with barcamp experience. This round of introductions alone can take up to an hour, depending on the number of participants.

This is followed by the „session pitch", where as many participants as possible briefly introduce and explain their session offers or requests, again using three keywords, to see if anyone is interested and how many (for room allocation). This session pitch is almost the heart of every barcamp, because all content at a barcamp is contested solely by the participants themselves: It is mainly up to their initiative how the agenda looks like on the first day and which sessions or topics are offered. This second round can also last up to a good half hour, depending on the number of offers. Both rounds of introductions are fixed barcamp rituals and de-emphasize central values of barcamps such as diversity, inclusivity, informality, creativity and self-organization right at the beginning.

Then, session topics are posted, displayed, or pinned by note on a large board that often columns several session rooms throughout the event day, with session slots typically lasting an hour each. During the day, participants are provided with catering two to three times a day, as well as all-day beverages, which is why barcamps often resemble a permanent „coffee break," both inside and outside of ongoing sessions. Around 6 p.m., the first day of the barcamp often ends with a feedback session. Afterwards the party takes place. On the second Barcamp day, these rituals are repeated.

What should have become clear is the self-organization of the sessions, a special feature of barcamps, basically their quintessence: Everything that is offered and discussed at a barcamp is generated exclusively by the participants themselves (user generated content); the organizers are usually completely uninvolved. However, the organizers provide a very special framework that works in the background and yet is crucial for a successful barcamp. This framework includes the following factors: catering, interior, location, moderation, technology, networking, website.

- Catering: The catering should be as uncomplicated as possible; self-service and do-it-yourself are not undesirable. Provided a certain diversity, with consideration for special diets, everyone eats the same, without distinction, without table order, without strict time regulations, as in a large camp.
- Interior: The furnishings should be rather spartan and focused on the essentials: Conviviality and exchange of ideas. Nothing should be unnecessarily distracting; a balance between practicality, fun and confidentiality is important.
- Location: It is very important to have a suitable location, not only for the sessions, but also for the meetings, discussions and meals. In addition to the session rooms in sufficient number, if possible within walking distance, it is essential to have a larger

meeting room where everyone can gather on a regular basis, with comfortable seating.

- Moderation: The very first round of introductions and proposals are highly significant for the success of a barcamp. This is where the basic values of barcamp culture such as diversity, informality, and inclusivity are publicly demonstrated and standardized, which requires authentic moderators with experience in the scene and jargon, in short, moderators with a „scene smell.

- Technology: Barcamps are an invention of the Web 2.0 scene. That's why digital media and related techniques are very popular. There is continuous blogging and tweeting; photos are constantly taken and immediately posted on flickr and other suitable platforms (2nd rule: Blog about the barcamp). For this, an appropriate infrastructure, fast, secure and resilient, must be made available.

- Networking: For the success of a barcamp it is also important that networking takes place in the run-up to the event via multipliers, regulars' tables and the Internet (facebook, twitter etc.) in order to talk about it, to exchange ideas in advance and to make arrangements (1st rule: Talk about the barcamp).

- Website: Special barcamp platforms have emerged for this type of networking, such as at Barcamp Hamburg and CommunityCampBerlin. Through these platforms, participants register for free and communicate with each other.

Thus, some essential characteristics of the barcamp organization have now been brought together. It should be clear that barcamps have certain characteristics that distinguish them from conventional event formats. But how does the barcamp culture fit into the state of event research?

3   Classification in event research

Without recapitulating event research in its entirety here, it can be said with reference to Zanger/Drengner (2009) that barcamps provide a special combination of affective, cognitive, physiological, and social benefits due to their distinctive participation culture, without one of these factors clearly standing out (see also Drengner 2014; Ermer et al. 2014). In a successful barcamp, all four benefits are in balance. This is also reflected in the often optimal match of event object and event content: Basically, at barcamps the respective primary target group of this event form usually addresses itself. In principle, this

also applies to the secondary target group, i.e. the broader social network from which the participants of a barcamp originate, because they participate in it virtually on an ongoing basis due to the intensive use of social media technologies by the barcamp visitors before, during and especially after the event. Even a tertiary target group, namely the companies in which many members of the primary target group are employed, benefit from barcamps because it is precisely about those topics and products that they offer and sell in certain scenes.

Finally, the intensive use of social media technologies before, during and especially after a barcamp also plays a decisive role in securing and monitoring results (cf. also Zanger/Drengner 2004, p. 32 ff.; Jahn/Zanger 2013). Through the constant textual and pictorial documentation of a barcamp and the subsequent descriptions and mutual evaluations by the barcamp visitors, many processes during such a barcamp are recorded for „posterity" and stored for a long time.

The decision whether barcamps are commercial or non-commercial events, as distinguished by Zanger (2010), is not easy, since barcamps can be used for both. And even if the non-commercial should prima facie prevail, keyword „class reunion", it may become apparent in retrospect, if one considers the three visit motives „exchange of experience", „making contacts" and „further education", as they were most frequently mentioned by barcamp visitors in the online study presented below, that tangible commercial advantages do arise from such barcamp visits.

With regard to the „typology of events" as proposed by Shone/Parry (2004, p. 5) with the two parameters „complexity" and „uncertainty", barcamps are likely to be located in the fourth quadrant at the top right with regard to both dimensions (cf. also Zanger/Drengner 2004, p. 45 ff.). After all, barcamps are believed to have considerable potential for creativity and innovation.

This point leads to a final attempt at classification. As Wohlfeil/Whelan (2005), but even more so Sistenich/Böcker (2012) have emphasized, event marketing is developing in the direction of significantly more participation by event visitors. Sistenich/Böcker (2012) even see „prosumption theoretical implications" that should be taken into account more strongly in event planning and execution in the future (cf. on the prosumption topic Hellmann 2009, 2010). If one considers the special features of barcamps against this background, they can be seen as ideal prototypes of this event evolution. For what distinguishes barcamp visitors is their high degree of activity, their declared

willingness to continuously organize themselves, which gives them the appearance of exemplary prosumers. To what extent this is true for barcamps in general would have to be tested empirically. However, from the point of view of the self-claim of barcamp culture, this attribution seems legitimate.

As an interim conclusion, it can be stated that barcamps originally emerged in the Internet scene, are closely linked to the culture of this scene, and have been significantly shaped by it. And many barcamps still represent central interactive meeting points of the Internet scene (cf. Hellmann 2012). Nevertheless, little is known about the participants of barcamps – who they are and why they attend, how they evaluate the barcamp event itself, and which influencing factors play a role for renewed barcamp attendance. For this reason, an online study among the participants of Germany's largest barcamp, Barcamp Hamburg, was initialized and conducted in 2013. The results of a first social science study in this area are presented below.

4   An explorative online study

On the occasion of the seventh Barcamp Hamburg (BH) on November 16 and 17, 2013, an explorative online survey among the participants was initialized and conducted with the aim to get a general overview of the participant structure and to find out which satisfaction and loyalty values exist towards this young event form. The survey was conducted using Globalpark. The target group included all registered members of the Barcamp Hamburg homepage. Through this platform and several newsletters before and during the field time, attention was repeatedly drawn to the online survey. Thus, 96 participants could be generated over a field period of four weeks.

4.1 The Demographics of the Barcamp Hamburg Visitors

The respondents of Barcamp Hamburg were 65 percent male, 35 percent female. The average age was 36 years. When asked about marital status, 23.1 percent of the Barcamp respondents said they were married; 30.8 percent lived in a partnership; 42.9 percent were single; and 3.3 percent were divorced or widowed (see Fig. 2).
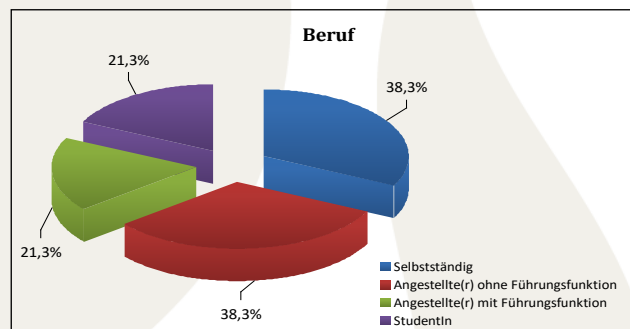
Fig. 2: Marital status
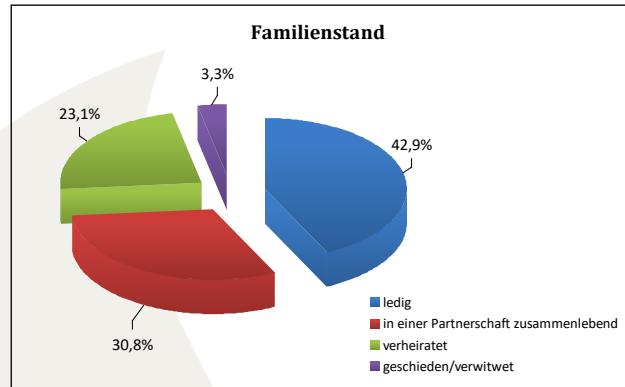
Source: own representation

69 percent of respondents had studied. And with regard to current employment, the following distribution was found between self-employed persons, employees and students (see Fig. 3):

Fig. 3: Employment relationships

Source: own representation

4.2 The descriptive evaluation

In order to find out which group of people participates in the largest barcamp in Germany, different questions were asked about previous barcamp experiences and their professional background. Regarding the frequency of barcamp visits, the following picture emerged with regard to the respondents (cf. Fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Frequency of visits to Barcamp Hamburg
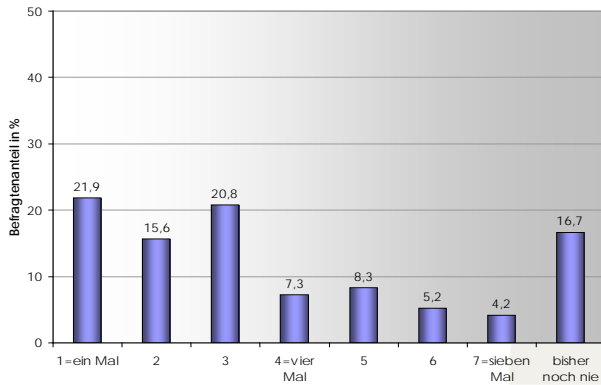
Source: own representation

The set of questions (N>90) about whether other bar-camps had been visited before and what experiences had been made there and to what extent the eight barcamp rules were known was aimed at the re-spondents' familiarity and networking with the bar-camp culture. Sixty-seven percent of respondents said they had attended another barcamp at least once. The question to those who had attended more than one barcamp about whether the initial idealism of barcamp culture had diminished compared to today was answered in the affirmative by 30 percent (N=63). The knowledge question, which referred to the existing octolog knowledge, thus the knowledge of the eight Barcamp rules, was answered by the participants as follows: 21.9 per cent indicated to know all eight rules, 44.8 per cent still some of it, and 33.3 per cent knew none of the eight rules at all. The fact that the first bar camps were an epiphenomenon of the Internet scene led to the process of how the flow of information about planning and holding a bar camp is structured today. The question how the respondents became aware of the barcamp was answered as follows (cf. fig. 5).

Fig. 5: Information flow for announcement
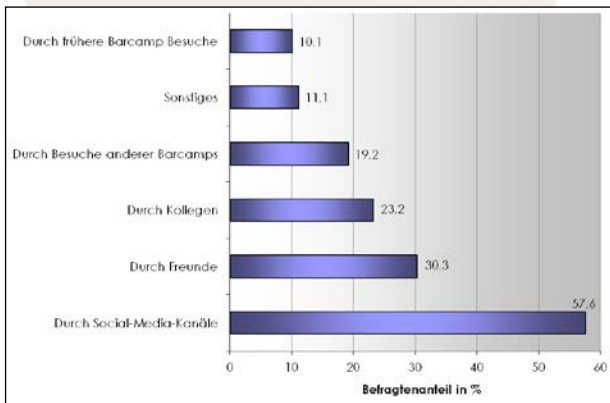
Source: own representation

57.6 percent said they learned about it through social media channels, 30.3 percent through friends, 23.2 percent through colleagues, 19.2 percent through vis-its to other bar camps, and 10.1 percent through pre-vious visits to the same bar camp (11.1 percent indi-cated „other").

The motives for attending the barcamp were then sur-veyed (see also Zanger/Drengner 2004, p. 44). The top answers were „exchange of experience" (84.8%), „making contacts" (72.7%) and „further training" (67.7%), to name just the first three (see Fig. 6).
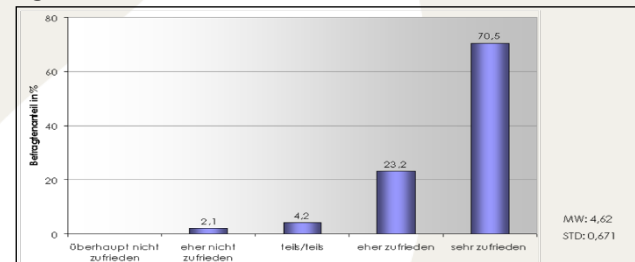
Fig. 6: Motives for visiting (multiple answers possible)
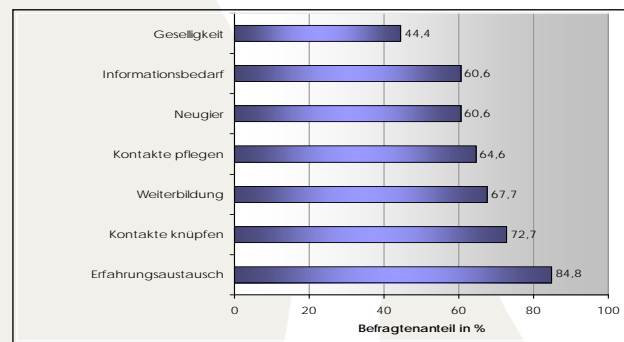
Source: own representation

On the overall satisfaction question, more than 70 per-cent of BH respondents answered that they would have been „very satisfied," and 23.2 percent still an-swered „somewhat satisfied" (see Fig. 7).

Fig. 7: Overall satisfaction

Source: own representation (mean=MW, standard de-viation=STD).

A look behind this aggregated information, i.e. after the underlying motive differentiation, shows that the positive swings of the satisfaction judgments were even more pronounced. Thus, in consultation with the organizers, a list was drawn up of services that appear to be more or less indispensable for holding a bar camp (cf. also Zanger/Drengner 2004, p. 8; Zanger 2007, p. 10). This list included 19 factors: Registration, type and quality of presentations, catering, network-ing opportunities, size of the event, hygiene, infrastruc-ture, location, moderation, newsletter, organization, break times, rooms, supporting program, smoking

facilities, reception, session organization, technical equipment, WLAN facilities. The answers of the BH respondents (4.2≤MW≤4.8 at 0.44≤STD≤0.84; 36≤N≤93) indicate that especially when considering the general conditions of this barcamp (moderation, organization, reception, etc.), i.e. factors for which essentially the organizational team is directly responsible, very high satisfaction levels were achieved overall. At the same time, a certain need for optimization has become clearly recognizable, for example in the break times, the registration, the session rooms, the newsletter or the supporting program, to name only the first five.

Finally, if we look at the quality of the social exchange and the sense of community among the visitors as well as the atmosphere at Barcamp Hamburg 2013, the positive responses predominate across the board. Thus, when asked whether they had felt connected with the other BH visitors, 38.9 percent answered „rather true" and 34.7 percent even „completely true". The positive ratings were somewhat weaker for the question of whether there was a sense of community among the visitors at Barcamp Hamburg 2013. Here, 39.4 percent said „somewhat agree" and 27.7 percent said „completely agree.

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that 93.7 percent of respondents answered „rather agree" or „completely agree" to the subsequent question of whether they intended to attend next year's Barcamp Hamburg 2014.

4.3 The statistical evaluation

Following Drengner et al. (2010), a replication study was conducted to determine the extent to which the research results of Drengner's research group, which examined the event form of a festival, can be replicated for the bar camp scene. Thus, the constructs Overall Satisfaction (cf. Gustafsson et al. 2005), Psychological Sense of Community (cf. Carlson et al. 2008), Emotional Experience (cf. Diener et al. 1999), Loyalty (cf. Zeithaml et al. 1996) and Frequency of Use were integrated into the online study in order to find out which correlations can be estimated. For this purpose, the argumentation of Drengner et al. (2010) was followed to the extent that there is a positive correlation between Overall Satisfaction, Psychological Sense of Community and Emotional Experience to Loyalty in each case. However, these individual correlations were influenced by the Frequency of Use (see Fig. 8).

Fig. 8: Conceptual Model
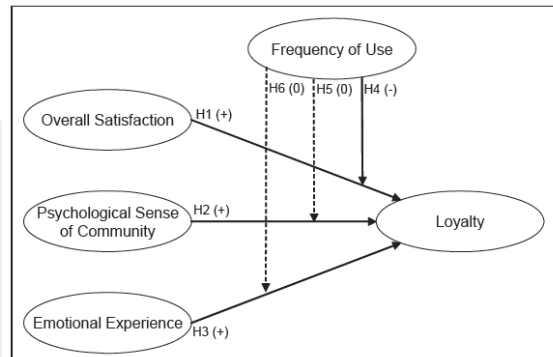
Note: (+): expected positive effect; (-): expected negative effect; (0): expected null effect

Source: Drengner et al. (2010), p. 157

All questions were asked using a five-point Likert scale with the poles „strongly disagree" and „strongly agree". Reliability and factor analysis with IBM SPSS Statistics 20 yielded comparably good or even better Cronbach's alpha values (Cronbach 1951) and factor loadings as in Drengner et al. (2010).

The model was estimated using a regression analysis (Aiken/West 1991) with the dependent variable Loyalty and the independent predictor variables Overall Satisfaction, Psychological Sense of Community, Emotional Experience and Frequency of Use. Contrary to the results of Drengner et al. (2010), the Frequency of Use as well as the standardized interaction terms Overall Satisfaction x Frequency, Psychological Sense of Community x Frequency and Emotional Experience x Frequency had no significant influence on Loyalty. Without considering the interaction terms, the model delivers robust results with a corrected $R^2=0.40$ and $p<0.001$ (cf. Tab. 2).

Tab. 2: Results of the regression analysis

Independent Variables	Beta	p-Value
Overall Satisfaction	,534	,000
Psychological sense of community	,241	,021
Emotional experience	-,042	,728

Source: own illustration

Thus, 40 percent of the variance regarding loyalty is explained by the model. This is comparable to the results of Drengner, Jahn, Gaus (2010). Interestingly, and contrary to the results of Drengner, Jahn, Gaus (2010), only the factors Overall Satisfaction and Psychological Sense of Community have a significant influence on loyalty. Moreover, the influence of Overall Satisfaction is significantly higher and the influence of

Psychological Sense of Community somewhat lower than in the original study (see Table 2).

5 Implications and the future of barcamps as a modular event form

First of all, it was the aim of this article to give the reader an overview of the still young event form of barcamps. After a detailed description of what the characteristics of a barcamp are and how a barcamp basically works, the aim of the empirical study was to find out who the participants of Barcamp Hamburg, the largest barcamp in Germany, are, why they attend this barcamp and how the participants evaluate this event form using Barcamp Hamburg as an example. Furthermore, it was investigated which influencing factors play a role for renewed visits of this barcamp.

The results show that two thirds of the visitors of Barcamp Hamburg are male, with an average age of 36 years. The share of 69 percent of the participants who have studied is striking, with heterogeneous employment relationships between employed and self-employed. A good 60 percent of the participants had previously attended Barcamp Hamburg more than once and 67 percent had also attended other barcamps at least once, so that the repeated attendance of Barcamp Hamburg does not appear to be a Hamburg-specific effect. In addition, barcamps represent, as one would expect, a phenomenon of social networks, whether perceived virtually or face to face. The focus of the barcamp visitors is clearly on the network characteristics exchange of experience, network maintenance and further education. These should definitely be taken into account in the planning and implementation of future barcamps.

The evaluation of Barcamp Hamburg convinces with high satisfaction ratings. In addition to a high overall satisfaction, some previously defined hygiene factors can be attested the best judgments. Likewise, the social exchange, a very important motive to participate in a barcamp, is evaluated to the extent that a large part of the respondents felt this to be completely fulfilled. It is therefore hardly surprising that almost 94 percent of the respondents intended to attend Barcamp Hamburg again in the following year. By the way, a small participation fee introduced for the first time did not harm Barcamp Hamburg in any way.

These descriptive results are also confirmed by the statistical analysis. Especially the high Overall Satisfaction and the Psychological Sense of Community contribute to strengthen the intention to visit Barcamp Hamburg

again. Thus, according to this first sociological analysis, Overall Satisfaction and enabling a strong sense of community represent key success factors for the organization of future Barcamps.

In view of such high satisfaction ratings, which are also regularly expressed in feedback rounds at the end of barcamps or in subsequent blog and Twitter posts, it should be easier to understand why barcamps are regarded as almost ideal interactive meeting places for the respective Internet scenes. At the same time, it is not at all clear that barcamps can function and be used exclusively in this form, as it has prevailed so far, as a separate event format – quasi on a greenfield site, and organized only for and by members of an already highly networked Internet or professional scene itself. Rather, it is obvious to offer bar camps in combination with much more conventional event formats such as congresses, trade fairs or even a first semester introduction week in a modular way and to trigger creative-innovative impulses for them as well. Even the realization of a Barcamp for and within companies does not seem to be excluded, one thinks for example of a company party or a further education measure. This possibility will be briefly explored at the end of this article.

Conventional, familiar event formats usually exude routine and reliability. Having gone through the same scenario a dozen times, organizers and participants alike know in advance what is going to happen. The surprise value of the event itself tends toward zero: a stock-conservative scenario that is certainly suitable for many occasions and sets clear standards to which one can confidently abandon oneself.

However, this high degree of security of conventional event formats also harbors risks. Disinterest and boredom, lack of motivation and weariness are by no means rare side effects. Opportunities for innovation and creativity rarely arise as a result.

Barcamps could help here due to their specific participation culture. Not as a substitute, but as a supplement. If you imagine an association meeting, for example, the usual procedures and rules are maintained. In the middle of it all, however, a bar camp suddenly appears, i.e. an event format that temporarily breaks the corridor of the usual and invites the association members to experience a relatively new, unconventional form of meeting and discussion, for example for one day. Association leadership and membership dare a small experiment, let themselves be introduced to the barcamp culture by an experienced moderator, introduce themselves again by means of three hashtags for each other, are then encouraged,

as in a session pitch, to independently propose ideas and topics for discussion, some of which one would never have come up with through conventional program planning, and then leave themselves to the chance of what is to come, without any routine, security, reliability. However, this guarantees a considerable surprise value.

Breaking out of routine in this way is certainly a challenge for everyone involved. But it also offers the chance to leave the well-trodden paths for a short time and to experience oneself, the other participants and the circumstances as a whole in a new way.

Such a planned integration of a Barcamp into an ongoing, much more conventional event is certainly conceivable within a company. If you take, for example, a works meeting, then the standard procedures for this are well known. The management takes a stand, the staff asks questions. To integrate a modular barcamp into this procedure, if the time frame allows it, is not without risk for the management and perhaps also for the works council. But barcamps can usually count on such a high level of commitment and involvement on the part of their active participants, as long as they are appropriately attuned and prepared, that this aspect should always be attractive enough to try out such a combination of the conventional and the unconventional. Of course, this requires the support of external experts who know exactly how to organize and moderate bar camps. Nevertheless, the very decision to integrate a bar camp into a conventional event format speaks for the management's innovative ability, courage and willingness to take risks. After all, barcamps also invite cultivated criticism; discussion at eye level is one of their core values. Accordingly, the management should expect that perhaps also sometimes not beautiful things will be discussed, as this circumstance has been hotly debated for corporate blogs for quite some time. However, it is a sign of optimism and foresight on the part of management or department heads if they dare to take this step, and it promises new experiences, a new way of dealing with one another, learning effects, and possibly even corrections of prejudices if they proceed innovatively and consider barcamps as a modular event form.

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