

Networking Through Persistence: Case Study on the Position and Development of the Clubture Network

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ABSTRACT This paper uses social network analysis (SNA) to examine the development of the independent cultural scene in Croatia through the lens of scene theory, using the Clubture Network development from 2001 to 2016 as a case study. Cultural scenes are dynamic and constantly evolving networks of social actors who share a common interest or identity. Institutional isomorphism is the process by which organizations adopt similar structures and practices to gain legitimacy and support. The findings show that the Clubture Network is a highly cohesive network with a pronounced temporal dimension. The network is bound together by value homophily, and the behaviour of organizations within the network has changed over time, with older organizations becoming more of gatekeepers to establish the direction for

newer members. These findings suggest that the Clubture Network has played a significant role in shaping the development of the independent cultural scene in Croatia, both by creating a cohesive and supportive community for independent cultural organizations and by legitimizing and institutionalizing the independent cultural scene. However, the findings also suggest that the network has imposed certain pressures on organizations to conform to the norms and values of the network. This may have led to a certain degree of homogeneity within the independent cultural scene in Croatia. In conclusion, it is shown that SNA can be a useful tool for understanding the development of cultural scenes through the lens of scene theory and institutional isomorphism.

Key words: Social Network Analysis (SNA), Independent Culture, Clubture Network, Scene Theory, Institutional Isomorphism, Digital Humanities.

1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, especially after the “relational turn” (Dépelteau, 2013), research endeavors in both the humanities and the social sciences have highlighted the importance of collaborative practices and networks in the arts sector.¹ These include studies on formal or informal artists’ groups and collectives, in which artworks are regarded as products of collective creativity (Block and Nollert, 2005; Brown and Millar Fisher, 2017; Green, 2001; Leclercq and Girard, 2014), or the conceptualization of historical art movements as networks (Bazin et al., 2016; Dobó and Szeredi, 2018; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kemp-Welch, 2019). From a social science perspective, substantial attention has been given to research on transnational cultural policy networks (Cvjetičanin, 2011, 2006, 1996; Davies, 2016; Laaksonen, 2016; Minichbauer and Mitterdorfer, 2000; Staines, 1997). Communication and different levels of cooperation between art organizations have also been researched from the perspective of organizational networking behaviour (Aerne, 2020; Kirchberg, 2014; Moldavanova and Akbulut-Gok, 2022; Srakar, 2018). Scholarship in both scientific fields also includes attempts at systemic analyses of historical relationships formed within the arts sector (Brown, 2020; Crossley, 2015; Kolešnik and Horvatinčić, 2018; Tonković and Sekelj, 2016).

Notwithstanding singular examples of research, scholarship on collaborative and networking practices within Croatia’s arts and culture sector is still lacking (Sekelj, 2022). This can be applied to historical cultural networks, but it also holds true for more recent examples, even those that have, in recent years, received more scholarly atten-

¹ This scientific article was written within the framework of the research project on public cultural centers. The project is called “New Public Culture and Spaces of Sociability” (UP.04.2.1.06.0015) and is funded by the European Social Fund Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources at the invitation of the Thematic networks for socio-economic development and the promotion of social dialogue in the context of improving the working conditions. The project coordinator is the Clubture Network.

tion. Such is also the case with the *independent cultural scene* in Croatia – a cultural complex that has significantly shaped the structure of the art field in Croatia from the 1990s onwards. It is most commonly defined as a complex consisting of non-governmental organizations that are connected through shared aesthetic and ideological values (Tonković and Sekelj, 2018; Vidović, 2010b; Višnić, 2008). Existing scholarship on the independent cultural scene includes monographs on individual organizations (Bago et al., 2010; Cvek et al., 2013; Kovačić et al., 2020; Šeper, 2018), studies focused on in-depth investigations of their precarious working conditions (Barada et al., 2016; Buršič, 2014; Kardov et al., 2006; Primorac et al., 2020; Vidović, 2018), and studies directed at giving a historical overview of the scene's origins and development in a period covering two to three decades (Bodrožić, 2009; Eckenhausen, 2019; Jakšić, 2011; Vidović, 2012, 2010b, 2007).

The insights on the independent scene gained from all these studies are invaluable; however, they rarely capture its complexity. There are multiple reasons for this, one of the principal ones being that there has been no systematic examination that would consider the agency of a myriad of different independent actors and focus specifically on how their positions and values change over time. Most studies, especially those directed at giving a historical overview of the scene's development, base their conclusions on the experiences of only a couple of prominent organizations. The limitations present in previous scholarship stem from difficulties in defining the boundaries of the independent scene, reflected also in the above-mentioned definition encompassing loosely described shared values and organizational similarity. As stated by the participants themselves, the establishment of the scene in the 1990s was “recognition-based [...] it was all about recognizing each other on the street” (Tonković and Sekelj, 2018).

This article addresses these gaps by analyzing the independent cultural scene through the application of social network analysis on the Clubture Network, the umbrella network of nonprofit organizations in Croatia. Founded in 2001, Clubture can be considered an example of the functional and/or spatial specialization of cultural policy networks at the beginning of the new millennium (Cvjetičanin, 2011; Sekelj, 2022), that occurred because of the awareness that changes in cultural policy mostly take place at the national level. However, in addition to advocacy activities, the specificity of Clubture stems from the fact that, from the moment of its foundation, it also served as a platform for exchange and collaboration between “independent” organizations. On the one hand, it embodies the often-repeated claim of the protagonists of the scene, that collaboration constitutes its main resource (Medak, 2010; Tonković and Sekelj, 2018; Vidović, 2010b). On the other hand, it functions as a *pars pro toto* of the independent scene as a whole. The wider range of organizations active within the network – in terms of art sector, longevity, outreach, mission, and goals – allows for more systemic conclusions on the processes happening within the scene as such. The analytic approach presented in this article is focused on the questions of hetero-

generality and homogeneity within the independent cultural scene. What is the role of the Clubture Network in the establishment of the independent cultural scene as a singular cultural complex? Did the structuration process of the independent scene as a specific organizational field result in similar behaviour of organizations that make up its structure? The first section of the article provides an explanation of the theoretical background of the research, focused on the notions of scene and institutional isomorphism. After the data and methods section, the central part of the article presents findings from a social network analysis of data related to the Clubture-HR programme. Finally, the concluding section discusses the findings and proposes avenues for further research.

2. Homogeneity within Heterogeneity: Theoretical Background of the Research

The independent cultural scene in this article is considered in a dialectic between heterogeneity and homogeneity. Taking the cue from its very name, the heterogeneity of independent culture is approached through the concept of scene – a theoretical framework thoroughly developed within music research from the 1990s onward. Positioned somewhat in opposition to previous scholarship on subcultures, researchers have highlighted several advantages of the notion of scene. It is more dynamic and elastic; it offers a flexible relationship between the scene and the remainder of the field of cultural production; it includes a wide range of aesthetic practices and does not presume homology between its participants (Bennett and Rogers, 2016). Additionally, what makes something a scene is often “an affective sense of oneself as a part of something that is alive [...] and woven into the cultural landscape” (Bennett and Rogers, 2016:2). In other words, participating within a scene “‘works’ to ‘produce a sense of community’” (Bennett and Rogers, 2016:16).

Apart from the fact that early instances of independent culture in Croatia were commonly associated with the music sector, the notion is useful in uniting a diverse set of organizations under a common denominator, without imposing a strict homology between them and their practices. Furthermore, it accounts for the affective dimension of the independent scene, and the feelings of belonging and recognition that the participants themselves often mention (Tonković and Sekelj, 2018). The feeling of community is thus produced as a “by-product” of working within the same structural and cultural context, by a diverse range of organizations. Namely, organizations belonging to the independent cultural scene differ in their longevity, size, and annual budget (Buršić, 2014), while their programmes are often directed toward different audiences. Based on such differences, previous scholarship distinguished between two lines of development of the independent scene. The first one stems from subculture, and it is based on “the ideology of anarchism, activism, DIY culture and the heritage of *new social movements* from the 1970s and 1980s”, that revolved around issue-based cultural

production, such as ecology and human rights. The second line of development is described as close to the “so-called institutional culture” and it encompasses cultural projects that posit “artistic value as one of their most important factors” (Vidović, 2010a:14-15). Notwithstanding such differences, organizations active within the field perceive themselves as part of the same scene.

While the usage of the notion of scene serves as a reminder of the heterogeneity of practices within independent culture, the principal question this article wishes to answer is the one of organizational homogeneity. This question is approached through the theory of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). DiMaggio and Powell claim that “[i]n the initial stages of their life cycle, organizational fields display considerable diversity in approach and form”. However, once the field is established, “there is an inexorable push towards homogenization” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:148). Based on different factors that influence the processes of homogenization, they distinguish between three different mechanisms through which isomorphic change occurs: 1) coercive, 2) mimetic, and 3) normative (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:150).

It is widely accepted that during the 1990s organizations working within independent culture were “self-centered” and worked independently, and the “whole field (...) [was] atomized” (Višnić, 2008:12). Only after the change in government in 2000, and the resulting thaw toward NGOs and critical cultural practices (Bežovan, 2005; Vidović, 2010b), these organizations started actively collaborating, to produce a common “framework within which the independent cultural scene [could] operate” (Višnić, 2008:12). This change in attitudes around the new millennium was later often interpreted by the participants of the scene themselves as the “institutionalization” or “self-institutionalization” of the scene (Tonković and Sekelj, 2018; Medak, 2010). The Clubture Network was integral in building this framework, focused as it was on programme collaboration and knowledge exchange between “independent organizations”. The purpose of this joint activity within the network was, on the one hand, the decentralization of cultural activities within Croatia and capacity-building of organizations, especially the ones that were smaller or newly established. On the other hand, the gathering of organizations within a single umbrella network also provided them greater negotiating power in their efforts to influence cultural policy (Medak, 2011; Vidović, 2012, 2010b; Žuvela, 2018). The next section of the article ties these historical and theoretical observations more closely to the used data and methods.

3. Data and Methods

The research presented in this article was conducted on data related to the most important programme of the Clubture Network: the exchange and cooperation programme entitled Clubture-HR. A distinguished feature of Clubture is that membership is only possible through activity and collaboration (Višnić, 2007). An organization becomes a member by responding to an annual call and proposing a collaborative project in partnership with at least one current member of the network. A specific characteristic of the programme is its participatory decision-making process to allocate the funds: it is not based upon the judgment of an expert body but on the decisions of the programme applicants and network members themselves. More precisely, the representatives of each member organization and programme applicant organization have a certain number of points used to grade² the proposed projects regarding a) their quality, b) their relevance for the independent scene as a whole, and, c) with relation to their costs (Clubture Network, 2022).³

Clubture Network's symbolic status as the umbrella network of independent culture, the continuity of the Clubture-HR programme, and the constant influx of new collaborative projects and members make the Clubture Network the ideal case study to analyze the dynamics of the independent cultural scene. It helps surpass the difficulties of defining the boundaries of the scene that were mentioned in the introductory chapter of the article. A focus on the grading system, moreover, brings into play the agency of "independent organizations". It gives insight into how these organizations saw the organizational field in which they were working, and whether they – over time – assumed similar behavioural patterns within the decision-making process.

The data was extracted from the Clubture Network's grading documents.⁴ It was prepared for network analysis in order to examine relational patterns in the grading process.⁵ The data was restructured as follows: the grading organizations became source nodes of the network; the applying organizations were the target nodes; the ranks - after being normalized (see below) - were taken as values of directed edges between source and target nodes. With this approach, a network covering the years 2001 (the inception of the Clubture Network) to 2016 (the year of a major crisis in

² The participants of the scene humorously refer to the grading system as "Eurovision".

³ The description of all the projects implemented through the network is available in the online archive of Clubture: <https://www.clubture.org/arhiva>.

⁴ The documents are archived in the Clubture Network's offices and are available on demand. They can also be found in the Supplementary Data of this paper.

⁵ A relation between two organizations points to a certain level of affinity between them, while the entirety of ranking decisions over a longer period could be considered as the "historical imprint" (Perczel, 2019) of the independent scene's development.

the financing of culture in Croatia)⁶ was constructed for further analysis. The resulting unimodal network consisted of 181 nodes representing organizations that were connected with 9,132 directed edges. From this network, the 10 isolated nodes were filtered out: three of them never graded other organizations, while seven of them never received any grades. The analysis was, hence, performed on a network consisting of 171 nodes connected with 8,910 edges (Diameter = 4; Radius = 2).

During the defined timespan the ranking was sometimes performed on a single scale of 12 ranks, other times on a 10-rank scale, but mostly on a composite 15-rank scale. Since the ranking scales were of different kinds, they were averaged where that was necessary (on the two and three-component scales), and then all the values were transformed into z scores. Since the z scores below the mean are negative and the mean is zero, a score of 3 was added to all the z scores with the intention of making them positive while still maintaining the same distance.

The constructed network visualization was analyzed by the implementation of classical Social Network Analysis (SNA) approach, a set of theories, models, and applications that enable “explicit formal statements and measures of social structural properties that would otherwise be defined only in metaphorical terms” (Wasserman and Faust, 1994:17). Because the article considers the interrelationship of a multitude of different organizations that make up the structure of the independent cultural scene (most of which have not been the object of any kind of scientific examination), an exploratory approach was adopted to examine the constructed network for meaningful patterns. Such an approach “assumes that the structure or pattern of ties in a social network is meaningful to the members of the network and, hence, to the researcher” (de Nooy, Mrvar and Batagelj, 2018:6).

The open-source visualization software Gephi was used to construct the network and analyze its properties (Bastian et al., 2009). The analytic potential of SNA was directed at exploring network communities and node centralities. Community algorithms were used to search for clusters of strongly associated nodes with minimal connections to the larger network, which may display specific features that differ from other network’s behaviour. Multiple node centrality measures were tested, but in the results section a focus is placed on results obtained by the PageRank centrality (Page et al. 1999): it points to the dominant values present within the network, while still accounting for the differences between in-degree and out-degree measures, with an emphasis on the quality of connections.

⁶ Changes made in cultural policy structures by the government elected in January 2016 set in motion a strong reaction by the local cultural sector, embodied in the initiative *Kulturnjaci* 2016. The initiative protested against decisions such as the abolishment of the Council for Non-profit Media, political appointments in institutions and expert bodies, and against what they qualified as revisionist discourse of the minister of culture. The government was in office until November 2016. For more information see Domladovac (07 April 2016), Letinić (25 February 2016) and Mrakovčić (29 January 2016).

As is customary in an exploratory network approach, no prior structural hypotheses were prespecified. However, in the inspection of the network, a specific focus was placed on examining whether the “art sector” of an organization exerts influence on the vote, i.e., whether the “subcultural” and “institutional” part of the independent scene communicate within the network. This was done by qualitative means, relying on the exploration of practices of specific organizations (Clubture’s online archive, press clippings, websites, programme attendance),⁷ as well as on the insider-knowledge of most of the authors.⁸ The explorative approach to the network acts as a mapping process of sorts, the added research agenda of which is to make available information on organizations that were until now marginalized in the scholarship of this cultural complex.

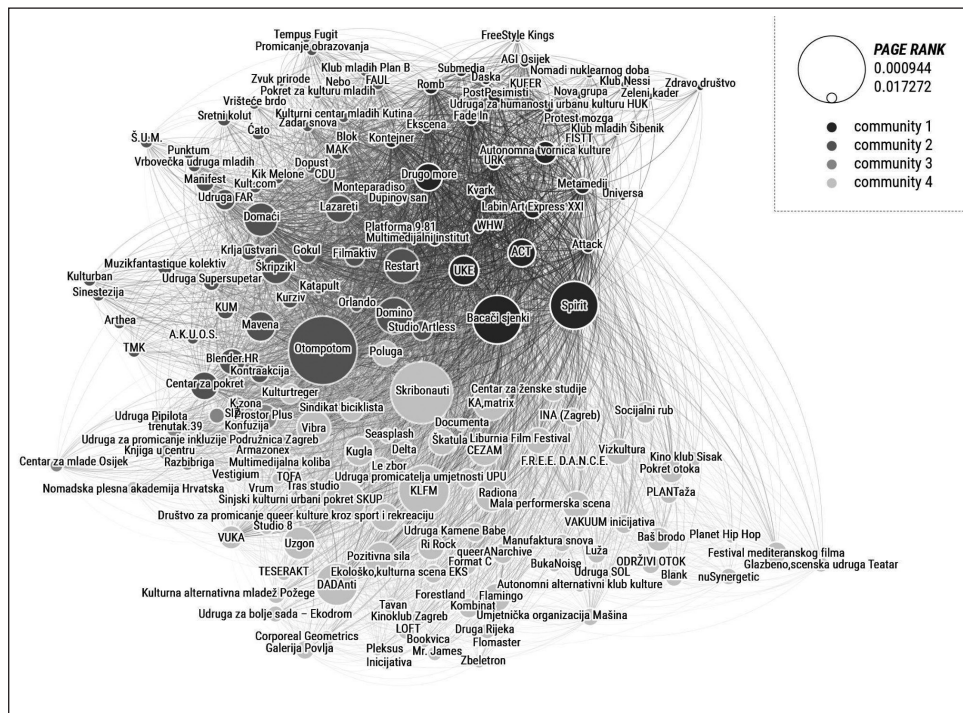
4. Results

The properties of the network were examined at the level of the entire structure and individual nodes. Network density for the entire structure, composed of 171 nodes and 8,910 edges, was 0.307, which means that 30.7% of all possible directed edges were present. The relatively high percentage of established relations already pointed to a certain level of social cohesion within the network. To examine this result, multiple community detection algorithms were tested in order to determine whether there were cohesive subgroups in the network. Namely, one of the initial assumptions of the research was that the previously mentioned “subcultural” and “institutional” lines of development of the independent scene would be reflected, at least partially, in the grading system within Clubture.

⁷ Most of the organizations active within the scene cannot be easily identified with a single sector. Cultural policy research that relies on data obtained from the organizations themselves usually addresses this issue by enumerating different art sectors on a Likert scale. See for example Barada et al., 2016, pp. 34-35. An added issue with the Clubture Network presented in this article is that some of the organizations are not active anymore. The information on organizations that did not pass the vote in the early years of the network is especially scarce.

⁸ Three out of the four authors of this article were active within the independent cultural scene for a shorter or longer period. All three of them have participated in the Clubture-HR voting process at least once, and one of them performed a high-ranking function within the Clubture board.

Figure 1. Communities within the Clubture Network grading system, 2001– 2016. The properties of the communities are explained in Table 3.



The results obtained from the Leiden algorithm (Traag et al., 2019) and Girvan-Newman method (Girvan & Newman, 2002) confirmed a high level of cohesiveness within the network. While the Leiden algorithm showed that the network had no communities, the Girvan-Newman clustering detected 63 of them. However, the biggest community accounted for 63.74% of the network, while the remaining 62 communities each comprised only 0.58% of the network, i.e., each of them was composed of only one node and was situated on the periphery of the network. The density of the network core was even higher (59.3%) and it consisted mostly of organizations that were officially admitted to the Clubture Network. These results pointed to a certain level of homogenization of the network; however, they did not indicate possible discrete alliances between subgroups of nodes, which could be used as the basis for conclusions on how relations within the network were formed. The final community detection algorithm that was tested – the Louvain method (Blondel et al., 2008) – detected four communities within the network structure (Figure 1). These four communities underwent a detailed visual inspection, focused on the specific organizations that form them. The expected result – that the communities will exhibit similarity based on the “art sector” or “line of development” – was refuted. To give

an example, the first community (orange⁹ cluster) includes both organizations such as the Pula-based Monteparadiso, an underground hardcore punk collective, and the Zagreb-based association What, How and for Whom / WHW, a curatorial collective focused on visual arts, that was running the Nova Gallery in Zagreb during the period under inspection. The former was previously highlighted as an example of the “subcultural” line of development of the independent scene, while the latter can be regarded as close to “institutional culture” and as an example of an organization working mostly within a single art sector.

The disposition of nodes within the network and the logic of relation formation were finally determined with a closer inspection of the edges. Namely, within the data preparation stage of the research, all the relations were time-stamped with the year in which a particular vote was given to an organization. An exploration of the network through the Timeline function in Gephi, which allows the researcher to animate the visualization over a time-based variable, indicated that the organizations that proposed projects in a similar period were positioned more closely together. Moreover, the comparison of the animated network and the communities detected with the help of the Louvain algorithm pointed to the fact that the principal binding mechanism of the detected communities was, in fact, the period in which they joined (or attempted to join) the Clubture Network. This comparison also suggested that organizations tend to be very active at the very beginning of their admission to the network, both as project producers and graders, while over time they stop actively proposing projects to be implemented through the network and settle in the role of administering the inclusion-exclusion process of others.

Since previous scholarship demonstrated that the Louvain algorithm “may yield arbitrarily badly connected communities” (Traag et al., 2019), an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the four communities and the number of years the organizations participated in the grading system. The ANOVA, which is a method to test the differences between two or more group means, was performed on the means of the ratio of how many times an organization applied for funds by how many times it voted, divided per year of entry for the four communities.¹⁰ The used formula is:

$$[(\text{Times graded} \div \text{Times applied}) \div \text{Year of entry}] \times 1000$$

⁹ The original graphics were in colour, but the journal doesn't support coloured graphics, so they are presented here in grayscale. The grayscale tone that represents a colour is the background of the word for the colour. The original coloured graphics are in the Supplementary material.

¹⁰ This ratio was used to see how active an organization was with proposing projects (applied with a project for funds) divided by how many times an organization voted (as having more of a passive role), normalized by the years it started to propose projects and/or voted. The number was multiplied with 1,000 to diminish the decimal places in order to make the number more human readable.

To determine if there are differences among communities 1) based on the year of accession, and 2) in the ratio of frequencies of grading and proposing projects, two ANOVA tests were conducted.

The ANOVA conducted on the years of accession in the Clubture Network and the four detected communities were significant at the .05 level, $F(3, 167)=256.83$, $p<.001$ (Table 1).

Table 1
The mean year of the detected communities

Community	N	M	SD
1	36	2001.86	1.64
2	48	2008.75	2.88
3	10	2011.10	4.18
4	77	2014.43	1.71

A post hoc Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean year of community 1 (the oldest community) was significantly different than those of communities 2 ($p<.001$), 4 ($p<.001$) and 3 ($p<.001$). The mean year of community 2 was significantly different from those of community 4 ($p<.001$) and community 3 ($p=.018$), while community 3 was significantly different from community 4 ($p<.001$). In other words, organizations are more tightly connected when they are similarly active in both proposing and ranking projects. There are more mutual directed edges.

The second ANOVA was performed on the ratio of grading and applying for funds (see the formula above) and the four communities. It was significant on the .05 level, $F(3, 167)=6.84$, $p<.001$ (see Table 2).

Table 2
The mean ratio voting/applying for funds of the detected communities.

Community	N	M	SD
1	36	1.16	1.07
2	48	.87	.85
3	10	.60	.32
4	77	.56	.21

A post hoc Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean ratio of grading/applying for funds of community 1 was significantly different from the same mean ratio of community 4 ($p<.001$), but not from those of communities 2 ($p=.25$) and 3 ($p=.11$). There were no significant differences among communities 2 and 3 ($p=.65$) and 4

($p=.06$), as well as between communities 3 and 4 ($p=.99$). This ANOVA confirmed that the older, founding organizations have stopped proposing projects, but that they remain active within the network and continue to rank project proposals of potential member organizations.

Since the two ANOVA tests confirmed the temporal dimension's paramount influence on the arrangement of nodes within the network, the previously identified four communities were renamed to represent four successive time periods of Clubture's development (Table 3).¹¹ The names of the time periods were determined based on both network properties and insights gained from qualitative research.

Table 3
Description of communities in the network (Figure 1).

	Year	Freq.	%	Cumul. %
Community 1: The founding period (orange cluster)	2001	27	15.79	15.79
	2002	5	2.92	18.71
	2003	2	1.17	19.88
	2004	4	2.34	22.22
Community 2: The stability period (yellow cluster)	2005	2	1.17	23.39
	2006	5	2.92	26.32
	2007	12	7.02	33.33
	2008	3	1.75	35.09
	2009	3	1.75	36.84
Community 3: The crisis period (blue cluster)	2010	10	5.85	42.69
	2011	7	4.09	46.78
	2012	15	8.77	55.56
	2013	14	8.19	63.74
Community 4: The safe haven ¹² period (purple cluster)	2014	17	9.94	73.68
	2015	22	12.87	86.55
	2016	23	13.45	100
	Total:	171	100.00	

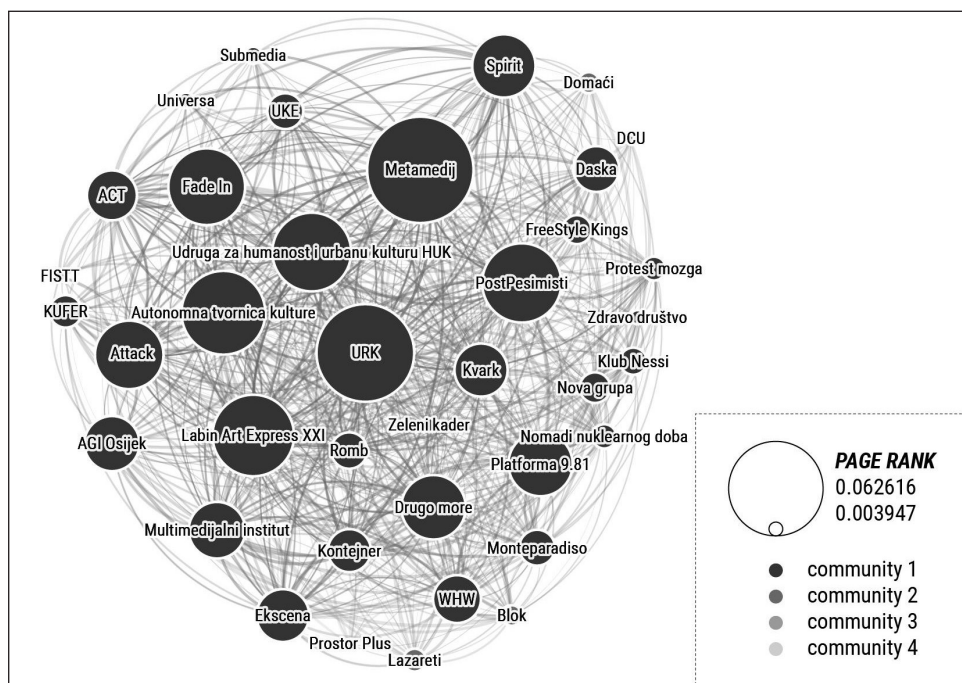
The four communities were then divided into separate networks (Figures 2-5). In all of the visualizations, the size of the nodes corresponds to the values of PageRank cen-

¹¹ It was decided in a stipulative way to add the adjacent years to the means to get periods that represent a meaningful whole. For example, adjacent years that had fewer newcomers were collated.

¹² This community received this name because it was a period when many organizations applied for funds with the Clubture Network because of the general instability with public funding of independent culture.

trality¹³, while the color indicates an affiliation to one of the communities identified in Figure 1. The Network size is as follows: the Founding Period (Figure 2) consists of 38 nodes and 1,104 directed edges; the Stability Period (Figure 3) is composed of 52 nodes and 1,967 directed edges; the Crisis Period (Figure 4) is made up of 83 nodes and 2,540 directed edges; finally, the Safe Haven Period (Figure 5) consists of 113 nodes and 3,299 edges. Apart from Figure 3, which has a Radius = 0, all the networks have the same Diameter and Radius (Diameter = 3, Radius = 2).

Figure 2
The founding period (2001-2004).



A focus on the information visualized in Figures 2-5 makes evident some of the changes that the Clubture Network went through from its inception in 2001 until the end of the observed period. It can be stated in a general fashion that each of the periods is dominated by a new generation of organizations. The founding organizations (color orange), which make up almost the entire network in the first couple of years of Clubture (Figure 2), start slowly receding from the network already in the Stability Period (Figure 3) and have only a modest presence in the last two visualizations.

¹³ The PageRank algorithm is used by Google Search (Page et al. 1999). It is used to establish the importance of a website based on the number and quality of links. In the present case it is used to show how many directed edges are directed towards an organization by organizations which, on their behalf, are the targets of directed edges from other organizations. The weights of directed edges are also taken into consideration, so it is possible to see which organizations are highly graded by other highly graded organizations.

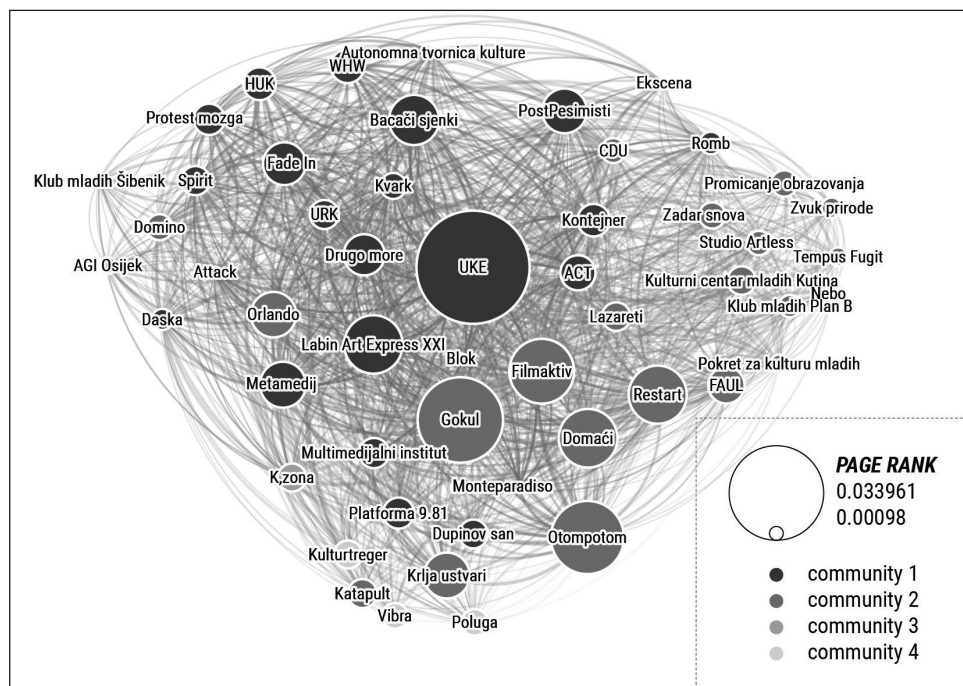
The organizations with the highest PageRank in each of the periods could be said to have proposed projects that the network members deem are the most representative of Clubture's values. However, since PageRank centrality takes into account the receiving links of the nodes, a smaller node size does not necessarily mean that an organization is not influential within the network. Within the constructed networks, a low PageRank can mean both that the organization proposed a project that did not receive enough votes from others, or that it did not propose a project to be implemented through the Clubture-HR programme at all. The latter is especially visible in the behaviour of the founding organizations (orange nodes) throughout the observed period.

To give an example, from the comparison of Figures 2 and 3 it can be concluded that some of the organizations that ranked high in the Founding Period did not propose projects in the Stability Period (such as Attack) or that they did not propose projects in each of the annual open calls (such as Platforma 9,81 or URK). This trend becomes exponential in the last two of the defined periods, as is evidenced by an extremely low PageRank of influential founding organizations, such as WHW, Multimedia Institute, or Labin Art Express (Figure 5). Even though some of them continue to propose projects until the very end of the observed time period (such as Bacači sjenki), a general trend in their behaviour is that they remain active only in the capacity of overseeing the Clubture Network's growth.¹⁴ To determine multiple possible reasons why older organizations stop proposing projects to be implemented through the network, additional research will have to be carried out. However, factors that may have influenced such behaviour, likely, include a greater focus on transnational collaboration and/or the pressure to diversify funding sources internationally to sustain or enlarge the organization. Although most of the independent cultural scene primarily depends on local public funding of their activities, a handful of organizations make use of regular participation in European collaborative projects. This ensures more substantial amounts of funds and, hence, stability, employment opportunities, and diversification of the programme (Barada et al., 2016:39-43).¹⁵

¹⁴ This conclusion is also confirmed by an inspection of out-degree centrality within all of the constructed networks.

¹⁵ In 2016, the amounts awarded by the Clubture-HR programme were divided into two financial categories: 1) 20,000 HRK (\approx 2,600 EUR), 2) 40,000 HRK (\approx 5,300 EUR).

Figure 3
The stability period (2005-2009)



The distribution of PageRank centrality between the networks also varies. It is diffused in the Founding Period (Figure 2), in which most of the nodes have relatively high values. This portrays well the period in which the Clubture Network was established: most of the organizations participated evenly in both the proposing and grading projects. The programme exchange was meant to be as open as possible, not only in terms of the format and content of projects but – more importantly – in terms of availability to a greater number of different organizations. The grading process was, therefore, initially mainly a manifestation of the horizontal and participative relations between organizations within the Clubture Network. This is confirmed by the high acceptance rate of projects in the first couple of years of its existence, in which between 70 and 90% of the projects were chosen for implementation.¹⁶ Although there are bigger differences in PageRank in the Stability Period (Figure 3), with a couple of organizations becoming highly influential within the network visualization (such as UKE or Gokul), this divergence results from the previously described decision of the founding organizations to stop proposing or lower the number of proposals to the programme. There were more organizations voting than proposing projects, but the acceptance rate of programmes was still high.

¹⁶ The acceptance rates per annual open call are archived in the Clubture Network's offices and are available on demand.

This situation slowly starts to change in the Crisis Period (Figure 4) but becomes indisputable in the Safe Haven Period (Figure 5). While the founding organizations mostly continue to exhibit similar behaviour as before, a major change in the network is an exponential growth of applicant organizations to the Clubture-HR programme, coupled with a decrease in the acceptance rate of projects. Previous scholarship has already highlighted an increase in newly founded civil society organizations in the period between 2008 and 2015, with many cultural actors seeking employment in the independent scene (Barada et al., 2016). However, obtaining membership in the Clubture Network in the same period became more difficult. Namely, while the acceptance rate was still above 70% in 2010, it dropped suddenly to a little over 40% in 2011. For the most part, this trend continued until the end of the observed period, reaching 23% in 2016. The result of this process is a growing number of organizations that both occupy peripheral positions in the networks and have extremely low PageRank centralities, meaning that their projects did not pass the grading system and that they, as a result, could not become Clubture members. The pressure these external factors exerted on the Clubture Network is also visible in Table 3, which shows a steady rise in the number of applicant organizations.¹⁷

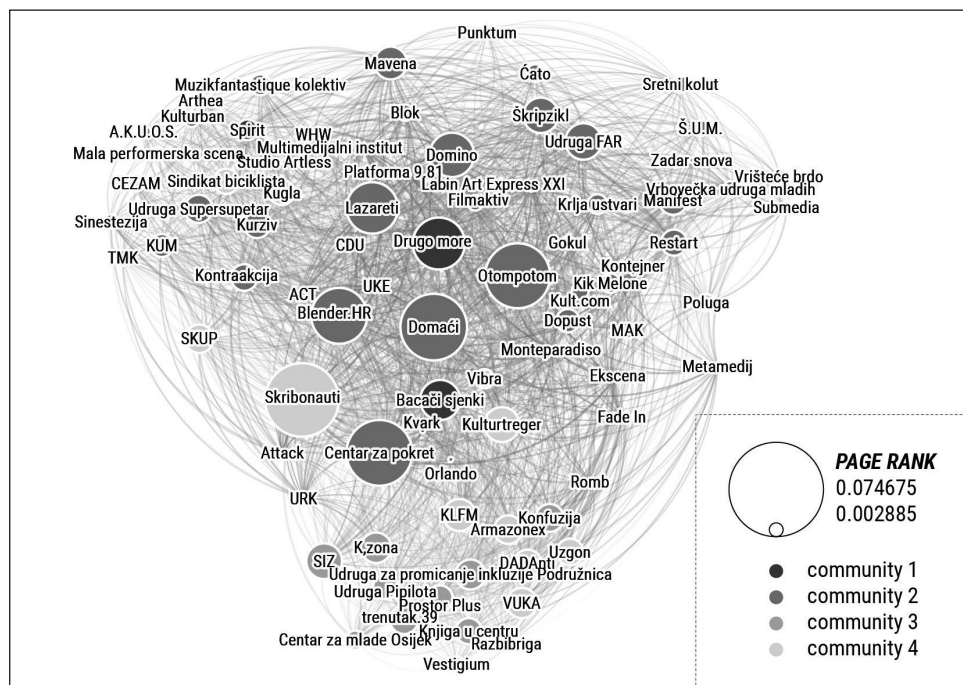
The described differences that exist between the first two and the last two defined periods point to the fact that further research needs to be conducted on the external factors that influenced not only the Clubture Network but the cultural field at large. Specifically, the changes in the Clubture Network suggest that the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, had a delayed and prolonged impact on the culture sector in Croatia, as was already highlighted in previous scholarship on the civil society sector in the region (Srakar, 2018). As stated, further investigation is required. However, it is important to note that archival research related to the Clubture grading process not only underscores the mentioned correlation but reveals that the members knew the model introduced at the beginning of the new millennium was not functioning as intended in the changed circumstances. The minutes from the meetings in 2011 and 2012 show that Clubture members were discussing possible strategies in relation to the “drastic cuts” in the culture sector, while in 2013 this discussion turned specifically to the question of how the cuts in finances affect the network’s most important programme: Clubture-HR.¹⁸ The proliferation of collaborative projects and the “loss of trust” in Clubture, visible in the behaviour of applicant organizations that try out for membership only once, were specifically mentioned, as was the possible change

¹⁷ This conclusion is confirmed by the comparison of network activity of peripheral organizations within the network visualization with information on projects conducted through the Clubture Network, available in the online archive: <https://www.clubture.org/arhiva>.

¹⁸ The minutes from Clubture Assemblies from 2010 onwards are available on Clubture’s website: <https://www.clubture.org/info/rad-skupstine> (accessed on October 23rd, 2023).

in the meaning of established relations within the programme.¹⁹ While the primary aim of the model from the moment it was initiated was “programme exchange and collaboration”, in the new circumstances it was actually contributing to “competitiveness” within the independent scene.²⁰ Since Clubture was meant to be as open as possible and foster horizontal relations between different organizations, from then on, the question of possible modifications of the system, as well as new possible directions in advocacy activities of the entire independent scene, became of paramount importance.

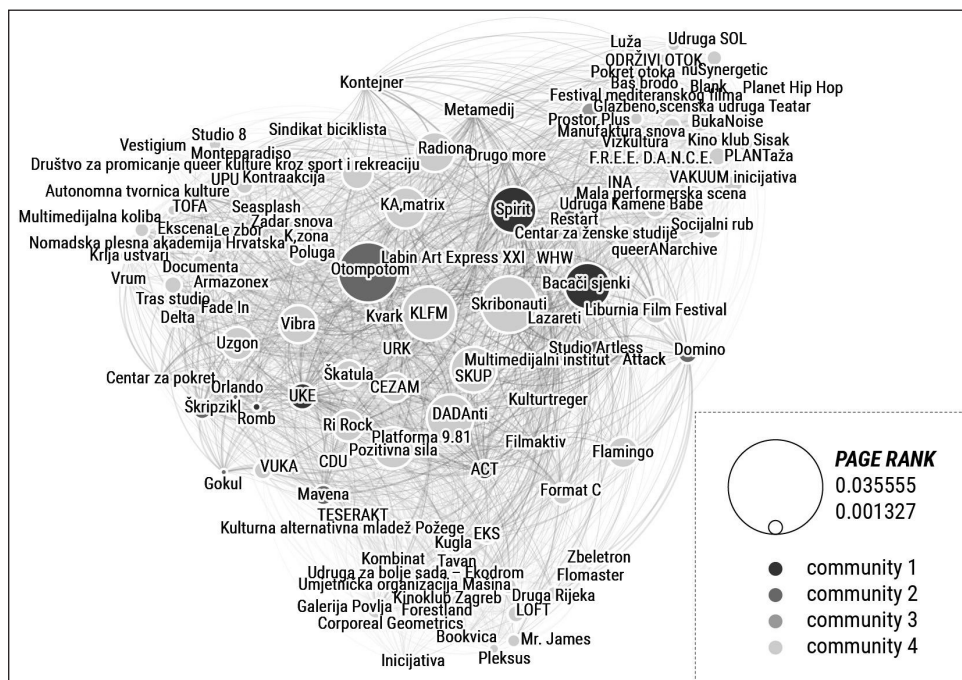
Figure 4
The crisis period (2010-2013)



¹⁹ Since all of the relations were timestamped, the fact that most of the newcomers try out for membership only once in the last two periods is also discernible within the Open Supplementary Data and can be further explored by comparing in-degree and out-degree centralities of nodes.

²⁰ See the minutes from the Clubture Assembly held in 2013: https://www.clubture.org/system/article_document/file/52/CT_19_skupstina_zapisnik.pdf (accessed on October 23rd 2023).

Figure 5
The Safe Haven period (2014-2016)



5. Conclusions and Implications

The main purpose of this article was to contribute to the existing scholarship on the independent cultural scene, one of the most significant network phenomena in contemporary culture in Croatia. Focusing on the Clubture Network, the umbrella organization of the independent scene in Croatia, an exploratory network approach revealed two principal mechanisms that affected the pattern of relations in the grading system of the Clubture-HR programme, i.e., the network's growth: 1) a tension between the core and periphery of the network, and 2) a pronounced temporal dimension in the disposition of relations between organizations. An examination of the network through multiple measures, at the level of the entire structure and individual nodes, pointed to its high cohesiveness. A high network density and the results of community detection algorithms based on betweenness centrality point to a certain level of homogenization in this organizational field. In other words, the comparison of results obtained by different community detection algorithms points to the fact that value homophily should indeed be further explored as the principal binding mechanism of different organizations that make up the independent

scene. This is further confirmed by the fact that the art sector in which an organization is primarily active does not influence its decisions on which type of organizations should be accepted to the Clubture Network. The communities identified with the help of the Louvain algorithm thus do not show clear-cut differences between various organizations, but only indicate that organizations within the network adopt different behaviour over time.

The most pronounced changes in the Clubture Network over time are influenced by both internal and external factors. However, they can be separated only at an analytic level. A change in behaviour of the founding organizations of Clubture, from an active proposition of projects to a more passive role of administering the inclusion-exclusion process of new organizations, can serve as an example. On the one hand, their withdrawal from a more active role within Clubture's collaborative programme can be seen as external pressure to diversify funding sources, to ensure the stability and growth of the organization. Not participating in Clubture's collaborative projects, in which funding is sufficient only for project implementation, could then be seen as a corollary of these pressures. On the other hand, their behaviour can also be approached through the lens of care for younger organizations and the desire to sustain and grow this entire organizational field. Having reached a certain level of development, the withdrawal from active participation in projects can also be interpreted as them creating opportunities for others to thrive and develop. A similar dialectic unfolds when we view the process from the vantage point of newcomers: the aspiration to become a part of the Clubture Network is not only a crucial step towards reaching organizational stability but also a rite of passage in their effort to firmly position themselves within the field of independent culture. Nevertheless, the rapid proliferation of CSOs, without an equal increase of public funding for the Clubture Network, suggests a shift from a role of care to one of gatekeeping, leaving many aspiring organizations unable to secure membership. This gatekeeping may be also interpreted as curatorial work for defining the scene on behalf of the older and more stable organizations which base their scene-keeping on the adage "When I see one, I know one", or, in other words, the experience in and on the scene helps define the scene from the inside.

An examination of the outcomes of the exploratory network approach through the framework of institutional isomorphism offers some conclusions but also reveals promising avenues for future investigations. The creation of the Clubture Network as such can be understood as a response to the uncertain situation of actors working within the field of cultural production at the turn of

the millennium. New cultural actors decided on a model through which their activities were to be framed from then on: members of Clubture are CSOs and artistic organizations, and their work is project-based. The very act of founding Clubture was a result of both coercive and mimetic mechanisms. This initial decision, while rational, could be said to have established the organizational field of independent culture as such, imposing further coercive restrictions on its activity and offering a model for others grappling with uncertainty. From the perspective of the institutional model, DiMaggio and Powell's claim that organizational actors "construct around themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change further in later years" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) could be said to be valid for the independent cultural scene. What is more, Clubture's activities could be interpreted through the prism of normative isomorphism. Not only does the Clubture Network facilitate the exchange of knowledge in the face of coercive mechanisms, but it can also be argued that Clubture effectively institutionalized collaboration as the main resource within the independent scene. This is in line with the findings of Eder (2022; 2023) on organizations in independent performing arts in Europe in a state of precarity. Among other things, he found that in a precarious situation "Even if there are isolated regional differences, the independent performing arts are in a process of isomorphic field consolidation and are converging throughout Europe" (Eder, 2022:10). It seems that isomorphic alignment of organizations in independent arts and culture is a phenomenon that has become prominent in critical and precarious situations.

Finally, further research needs to be conducted to ascertain whether newcomers draw inspiration from established organizations in facets beyond institutional models. The research presented here suggests that in terms of cultural production Clubture found ways to sustain cultural diversity despite organizational similarity. A research agenda focused on exploring the concept of value homophily within the independent cultural scene is a necessary next step in this line of investigation, i.e., an exploration of socialization as a possible isomorphic force. While here we cannot offer conclusions on this important aspect of the scene, we maintain that the defined time periods of Clubture's development can serve as guiding criteria for future research endeavors.

7. Open Supplementary Data

The network data used for this research is available at: <https://osf.io/qcyrj/>

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Umrežavanje upornim nastojanjima: studija slučaja o položaju i razvoju mreže Klubtura

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Sažetak

Ovaj rad koristi analizu društvenih mreža za ispitivanje razvoja nezavisne kulturne scene u Hrvatskoj kroz prizmu teorije scene, koristeći razvoj mreže Clubture/Klubtura od 2001. do 2016. godine kao studiju slučaja. Kulturne scene su dinamičke mreže društvenih aktera koji dijele zajednički interes ili identitet i stalno se razvijaju. Institucionalni izomorfizam je proces kojim organizacije usvajaju slične strukture i prakse kako bi stekle legitimnost i podršku. Rezultati pokazuju da je mreža Clubture vrlo povezana mreža s izraženom vremenskom dimenzijom. Mreža je povezana vrijednosnom homofilijom, a ponašanje organizacija unutar mreže mijenjalo se tijekom vremena, pri čemu starije organizacije postaju sve više čuvarice koje uspostavljaju smjer za novije organizacije. Ovi nalazi sugeriraju da je mreža Clubture imala značajnu ulogu u oblikovanju razvoja nezavisne kulturne scene u Hrvatskoj, i to stvaranjem povezane i podržavajuće zajednice za nezavisne kulturne organizacije, te legitimiziranjem i institucionaliziranjem nezavisne kulturne scene. Nalazi također sugeriraju da je mreža nametnula određeni pritisak organizacijama da se prilagode normama i vrijednostima mreže. Moguće je da je to dovelo do određenog stupnja homogenosti unutar nezavisne kulturne scene u Hrvatskoj. Zaključno, vidljivo je da analiza društvenih mreža može biti koristan alat za razumijevanje razvoja kulturnih scena kroz prizmu teorije scene i institucionalnog izomorfizma.

Ključne riječi: analiza društvenih mreža, nezavisna kultura, mreža Clubture, teorija scene, institucionalni izomorfizam, digitalne humanističke znanosti.