ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY IN CRITICAL EVENT STUDIES

Edited by
Rebecca Finkel, Briony Sharp and Majella Sweeney

Accessibility, Inclusion, and Diversity in Critical Event Studies

Most early social research into planned events had the effect of broadcasting narratives of dominant cultures and privileged groups. More recently, however, convergences of gender, sexualities, ethnicities, age, class, religion, and intersectional analyses and events studies have started to drive new critical understanding of the impacts of events on non-mainstream, non-majority communities around the globe. This timely book addresses current gaps in the literature surrounding issues of accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in various event landscapes.

Structured into four parts covering the main types of events, the chapters present original topics using innovative methodological approaches. Each chapter employs a case study to illustrate the key intertwining issues in these various experiential realms. Further, the chapters are all cross- or interdisciplinary, drawing on gender, sexualities, cultural, race/ethnicity studies as well as multiple literatures that feed into critical events studies and exploring a variety of global examples.

This significant book opens the path to further research on the role and importance of accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in events environments worldwide. It will be of interest to academics and researchers of critical event studies as well as a number of related social science disciplines.

Rebecca Finkel is an urban cultural geographer and Reader in Events Management at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. The main focus of her research frames critical events studies within conceptualisations of social justice, equality and diversity, and identity. Her main research interests include resistance to globalisation processes through cultural events, doing gender at festivals, and mapping human rights and international sporting events. Her new research explores the relational wellbeing dimensions of human–animal interactions in events, tourism, and leisure contexts.

Briony Sharp was awarded her PhD in Events Management from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and is currently a Lecturer in Events Management at the University of Huddersfield. Her research examines social impacts from an individual, community, and organisational perspective, and possible social legacy routes from these impacts. Specifically, this includes social engagement initiatives pursued in conjunction with the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, and the relationship between social capital, community engagement, and potential social legacies. New research investigates innovative methodologies in events with a focus on event volunteering and tourism motivations.

Majella Sweeney is a Senior Lecturer in International Hospitality and Tourism Management at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Research interests include small hospitality enterprises, focusing on the host–home relationship and self-identity. Qualitative research methods, specifically visual methods within the hospitality, tourism, and event industry, are another area of interest. Her new research explores hospitality and tourism events with conceptualisations of family inclusion, marginalisation, and accessibility.

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Contributors

Roaa Ali is a Research Associate at the University of Manchester, Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE). Her research explores the representation of ethnic minorities and the politics of cultural production post-9/11. Roaa completed her PhD at the University of Birmingham and is preparing her thesis for a monograph. Some of her publications appear in the *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, Journal of Arts and Community, Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Equality and Diversity*, and *The Methuen Drama Companion to Theatre and Interculturalism*.

Daniel Barrera-Fernández is Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the Autonomous University of Oaxaca, Mexico. He is delegate of ATLAS (Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research) for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. His research interests focus on urban and cultural tourism, tourist-historic cities, and urban planning in heritage contexts. His doctoral thesis 'Schools of Thoughts in Heritage and Tourist Management of the Historic City', was awarded the Extraordinary Doctoral Award by the University of Malaga.

Marcelo de Castro Haiachi holds a PhD in Human Movement Sciences from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (2017) and a Master's Degree in Human Molecular Science at the University of Castelo Branco (2007). Adjunct Professor of the Federal University of Sergipe. Experience in adapted physical activity, volleyball, and special topics in physical education and health. Coordinator of the ParaSports Project of Sergipe and of selections of the Brazilian Confederation of Volleyball for the Disabled (CBVD). Leader of the research group on Physical Education and Adapted Sports – GPEFEA/UFRRJ and the research group on Olympic and Paralympic Studies (GPEOP).

Silvestre Cirilo dos Santos Neto holds a PhD in Exercise and Sports Science from Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). His main research interests are sports management, multivariables of sports performance and results, and Olympic and Paralympic studies. Member of Brazilian Association of Sport Management (ABraGEsp). He obtained a fellowship (FP7 Carnival Project) at Coventry University and developed a study on Brazilian

Paralympic Results. He has volunteer experience at World Military, Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as in Slalom Canoeing competitions. Member of Olympic Studies research group at Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and the Research Group on Olympic and Paralympic Studies (GPEOP).

Teresa Crew is Lecturer in Social Policy and a HEA Fellow. Her PhD, which was funded by the ESRC, focused on graduate inequalities in relation to class, gender, and place. Prior to this, she co-ordinated the North Wales Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment. Her research interests centre around inequalities in the broad areas of gender, Gypsy Travellers, higher education, and diversity in academia.

Paula Danby is Lecturer in International Tourism Management at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. Her research focuses on human–animal relations and experiences within leisure and tourism environments, particularly equestrian tourism. Reflecting upon theoretical insights from human–animal interactional studies, her interests include animal tourism, ecotourism, human–animal relational leisure, and wellbeing. Paula's work explores human–animal interactions for mutual wellbeing.

Vinicius Denardin Cardoso is Professor at State University of Roraima (UERR). Holds a PhD in Human Movement Sciences from the School of Physical Education (UFRGS) and a Master's Degree in Physical Activity Adapted from the University of Porto, Portugal (FADEUP). Graduated in the Physical Education Course of the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM). He has experience in adapted physical activity with emphasis on adapted and Paralympic sports. Member of Projeto Esporte Brasil (PROESP-Br), Group of Studies and Research in Physical Education and Sports (GEPEFE/UERR) and of the Brazilian Paralympic Academy (APB).

Michelle Duffy is Associate Professor in Human Geography. Her research includes a critical examination of emotion and affect in creating notions of belonging; and the role of sound, performance, and the body as a means of embodied, emotional, and affective communication. She is joint Editor-in-Chief of *Tourist Studies*.

Asunción Fernández-Villarán Ara holds a BA in Economics and Business Administration and a PhD in Economics and Business Administration (Advanced Management) from the University of Deusto. She currently works as Lecturer at the University of Deusto, where she teaches at the Bilbao campus. She teaches BA courses in Tourism and MA courses in Leisure Project Management and Congress, Events, and Fairs Management. Specifically, she teaches the following subjects on BA courses: Basic Principles of Marketing, Accounting Analysis and Tourism Marketing Management; on MA courses, she teaches: Basic Business Principles of the Leisure Sector and Socio-economic Environmental Analysis. In recent years, she has been

working on business management and organisation and tourist destinations, tourism for all, and on innovation in tourism, always pursuing improvement in management. She leads the research group Tourism at Deusto University.

Ailton Fernando Santana de Oliveira holds a PhD in Education from the Federal University of Bahia (2013) and a Master's Degree in Physical Education, Gama Filho University (2007). Adjunct Professor of the Federal University of Sergipe. Experience in physical education, sport, leisure, public policies, diagnosis for sports and leisure, and adapted sports and Olympism. Member of the Research Steering Committee of the Center for the Development of Research in Sports and Leisure Policies of the State of Sergipe. Leader of the research group SCENARIOS – Research Center on Public Policies for Physical Education, Sports, Leisure, and Sport.

Rebecca Finkel is an urban cultural geographer and Reader in Events Management at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Main focus of research frames critical events studies within conceptualisations of social justice, equality and diversity, and identity. Main research interests include resistance to globalisation processes through cultural events, doing gender at festivals, and mapping human rights and international sporting events. New research explores the relational well-being dimensions of human–animal interactions in events, tourism, and leisure contexts.

Caroline Gausden is a writer, discursive curator, and visiting lecturer at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen. She holds a practice-based PhD on Social Art Practice as a Feminist Manifesto. Research interests include the poetics of performative practices at the intersection between radical education and contemporary art. Recent curatorial interventions include a two-year series of events on hospitality for sca-net.org and the reading group, Support Structures, curated in collaboration with Aberdeen-based artist Kirsty Russell. Caroline previously worked as a researcher and manager at CCA, Glasgow, and has published articles for online blogs and journals, including writing on the politics of recorded voice for the *Journal of Archives and Records*.

Emily F. Henderson is an Assistant Professor in the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick. She is author of *Gender Pedagogy: Teaching, Learning and Tracing Gender in Higher Education* (Palgrave, 2015), and co-editor of *Starting with Gender in International Higher Education Research* (Routledge, forthcoming). Emily is co-editor of the academic blog 'Conference Inference: Blogging the World of Conferences'. Emily's research lies in the areas of gender and higher education, particularly the production of knowledge about gender; the academic profession, academic mobility and conferences; poststructuralist and feminist theory and research methodology.

Marco Hernández-Escampa is Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the Autonomous University of Oaxaca, Mexico. He is delegate of ATLAS

(Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research) for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. With a PhD in Anthropology and in Engineering, his research interests focus on urban anthropology and heritage conservation and tourism in historic cities. He has participated in several projects about heritage conservation as well as in archaeological research in Mexico and abroad.

Layla-Roxanne Hill is a writer, curator, and researcher. Her areas of interest are found in (de)construction of cultural production, marginality, and Black Scottish lives. Recent contributions and exhibitions include: *Digitalisation of Diasporas: Subverting Misrepresentations* at OSCE, Vienna, and *(Re)imagining Self and Raising Consciousness of Existence through Alternative Space and (Re)imagined Place* at Glasgow International 2018. She is Head of Engagement at investigative journalism platform, The Ferret. In addition, Layla-Roxanne sits on the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) National and Scottish Executive Council(s) and Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) Black Workers' Committee.

Ian R. Lamond is Senior Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University. As well as teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, he has been active in developing critical event studies as an innovative way of approaching the study of events. His research focuses on the theoretical foundations of critical event studies as an emerging sub-field of events studies and exploring its potential scope beyond the traditional frames of reference commonly associated with it, and the aligned field of events management research. He has a specific research interest in events of dissent and the mediation of eventful protest.

Judith Mair is an Associate Professor in the University of Queensland Business School, Australia. Her research interests include pro-environmental behaviour and resilience both in tourism and events, the impacts of events on community and society, consumer behaviour in events and tourism, the relationship between events and climate change, and business and major events. She is joint Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*.

Naomi Alice Rodgers is a Berlin-based intersectional feminist activist. Her work is geared towards engaging with feminist movements both locally and internationally, with a focus on anti-pinkwashing activism. Having studied a Master's in Gender Studies at Linköping University, her academic work revolves around research into the occurrence of social segregation and discrimination in social spaces in Berlin.

Ainara Rodríguez-Zulaica has a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Studies, European Master's in Conference, Event and Exhibition Management, a Master's in International Tourism Management, and a PhD in International and European Studies by the University of Deusto (Bilbao, Spain). Presently, lecturer and researcher at the Tourism Department of the University of Deusto in

Bilbao, Spain. Expert in the following areas: travel agencies, tourism inter-mediation, event management, and industrial tourism. Teaching both on graduate and postgraduate programmes in Tourism and Leisure Studies. Guest lecturer at Haaga University (Helsinki, Finland) in 2002 and 2012, at University of Zealand (Denmark) in 2017, and Queen Margaret University (Scotland) in 2017 and 2018.

Briony Sharp was awarded her PhD in Events Management from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and is currently a Lecturer in Events Management at the University of Huddersfield. Her research examines social impacts from an individual, community, and organisational perspective, and possible social legacy routes from these impacts. Specifically, this includes social engagement initiatives pursued in conjunction with the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, and the relationship between social capital, community engagement, and potential social legacies. New research investigates innovative methodologies in events with a focus on event volunteering and tourism motivations.

Zorica Siročić is a doctoral candidate and an external Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Graz. She earned a MA degree in political science (Central European University, 2010) and a diploma in political science (University of Zagreb, 2009). Her dissertation project is a study of contemporary feminist mobilisations in Southeastern Europe from a perspective of political sociology.

Francesca Sobande is a Lecturer in Marketing and Advertising at Edge Hill University, Lancashire. Her research addresses issues regarding identity, ideology, and intersecting inequalities in relation to media and marketplace activity. Francesca's doctoral thesis focuses on the media and online experiences of Black women in Britain, *Digital Diaspora and (Re)Mediating Black Women in Britain*. She is currently co-editing, *To Exist is to Resist: Black Feminism in Europe* (Pluto Press). Francesca has published work in the *European Journal of Cultural Studies* as well as edited collections, including HBO's *Original Voices: Race, Gender, Sexuality and Power* (Routledge).

Gordon Waitt is Professor in Geography at the University of Wollongong, Australia, and Head of the School of Geography and Sustainable Communities. He is an editor of *Annals of Tourism Research*, and former editor of *Tourist Studies*. His work explores the spatial, embodied, emotional, and affective dimensions of tourism.

Trudie Walters is Lecturer in the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Her research interests include media representations and individuals' experiences of leisure phenomena, with a particular focus on events and second homes. Trudie is on the World Leisure Organisation Board of Directors, and serves as the Member Engagement Officer on the Board of the Australia and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies. She

is also Associate Editor and Reviews Editor of the journal, *Annals of Leisure Research*.

Keisha Williams studies diversity and inclusion strategies in museums. She has Master Degrees in Art Gallery and Museum Studies from the University of Leeds (2015) and in Visual Arts Management and Curating from Richmond, International American University in London (2017). She has worked with the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich to produce *International Slavery Remembrance Day* and with Battersea Arts Centre as a Young Producer, examining the ways collaborative and co-produced projects can increase diversity, inclusion, and representation in the arts and cultural sector.

Caroline A. Wiscombe has worked in education for 20 years; first in further education, then in higher education, and now back in further education at Exeter College, where she teaches leadership, management, and finance on professional and vocational business programmes. She has embedded events management into the curriculum of the Business and IT Faculty, drawing on previous research, publications, and teaching undertaken at the University of Wolverhampton University, Leeds Beckett University, and the University of Cumbria. Caroline has previously published research about the economic impact as well as the funding, sponsorship, and financial management of events.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Rebecca Finkel, Briony Sharp, and Majella Sweeney

Special events are microcosms of society. Because they are temporary and usually bounded by geographic space, they can be considered reflections of or responses to societal norms at the time they take place. As critical events scholars, we can learn a lot about a society by the way people gather and celebrate. By investigating special events, we can learn who and what is important – and unimportant – and how this may manifest itself in everyday life. We can see values and beliefs on display and discern from them the social architecture of the community. Yet, we must also try to understand whose voices are not being heard, whose needs are not being catered for, whose stories are not being told. However, it is only recently that issues of under-representation, marginalisation, and intolerance have begun to emerge in the critical events discourse. Although there has been a recent swell of media attention and public interest in this area, research focusing on non-hegemonic populations as they relate to events environments is still in need of further exploration.

One of the reasons for the paucity of academic literature on these topics is critical events research has only been developing as a scholarly field for just over two decades. In that time, many scholars have analysed broader economic, social, and political issues by situating them in specific event landscapes and evaluating impacts on communities and places. Initially, these impact evaluation studies were mainly focused on the economics of events. Providing 'proof' of return on investment and justification of costs were the *raison d'être* for event researchers until there was a critical 'turn' drawing on geography, sociology and anthropology canons. With the general acceptance of more qualitative approaches, social impacts of planned events on culture, communities, and cities began to gain traction. Most early social research into planned events often had the effect of broadcasting narratives of dominant cultures and privileged groups. However, recent convergences of gender, sexualities, ethnicities, age, class, religion, and intersectional analyses and events, sport, leisure, and tourism studies have started to drive new critical understanding of the impacts of events on non-mainstream, non-majority communities around the globe. This book seeks to contribute to knowledge by addressing current gaps in the literature surrounding issues of accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in various event landscapes.

In developing this book, we took considerable time to contemplate what would be the 'right' themes on which to focus. Was social change too ambiguous? Was equality too abstract? Was including only women's perspectives too specialised? Was disability too limiting (on multiple levels)? We arrived at accessibility, inclusion, and diversity because these terms were deemed broad enough to encompass many of our initial interests as well as provide authors leeway to interpret how their research related to current issues, current events, and current power relationships. Accessibility can be understood in terms of the measures put in place to address participation by those with impairments, both permanent and temporary, as well as both physical and mental, including perceived class and cultural barriers. Inclusion is a ubiquitous term that, we argue, should be more contentious than it is currently considered. Inclusion differs from justice in that the former requires people to participate in society as it is constructed, and the latter requires intervention with a redistributive agenda to achieve equality. Given these nuances, both conceptualisations and applications of social inclusion and social justice can be found woven throughout the chapters of this book. Diversity can be taken to mean individual and community diversity, such as those relating to gender, sexualities, ethnicity, age, religion, and so forth. It also refers to the range of different events being studied. Distinctive events present distinctive issues to explore, and, although this book is by no means exhaustive, it attempts to provide a great deal of variety in order to highlight a myriad of approaches, lessons learned, and possible best-practice solutions.

Although there are some intersections with sport and tourism, critical event studies has been recognised as a subject with its own literatures and approaches, and it is, therefore, unique in its storytelling and experiential narratives. The demand for academic publications focusing on these topics became apparent when the call for chapter abstracts for this book yielded over 30 submissions. This illustrates three key points: 1) many scholars in multiple social science and humanities fields are engaging with critical event studies, not only those in specific 'events' disciplines; 2) there is international research being conducted in this area; and, 3) there are classes being taught in higher education institutions on almost every continent about issues related to accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in planned events contexts. This is very encouraging indeed. Therefore, this book seeks to advance the dialogue and illustrate the importance of evidence-based research for improving scholarship and practice in the events sectors.

As an under-researched area, the chapters not only present original work in terms of topics, but also in theoretical and methodological approaches. All of the chapters can be considered to be cross- or inter-disciplinary, drawing on gender, sexualities, cultural, race/ethnicity studies as well as multiple literatures feeding into critical event studies. Research informing the chapters has been undertaken in different places around the world, so the book is not geographically grounded in one particular country; thus, it explores a myriad of interesting global examples. Intersectional approaches feature in many of the chapters, which is important to improve understanding from multiple perspectives and with multiple voices. Also,

auto-ethnography is a technique used in a range of chapters, providing reflective accounts and personal impressions of case study events. As events are temporary, these authors are using scholarly avenues, such as this book, to document and record their experiences in an attempt to give the messages and memories of the events a longer and more impactful existence. In this way, such accounts can help to guide future practice and provide lessons learned for reaching broader audiences and opening up dialogues to obtain greater accessibility, inclusion, and diversity. This also helps to keep the momentum from their events with the goal of driving positive social change.

The sections are structured by the main types of events, such as festivals and fairs, cultural and political events, sporting events, and conferences, which allows for an exploration of a breadth of differing sizes, scopes, locations, and stakeholders. Each chapter employs a case study to illustrate the key intertwining issues in these various experiential realms. Main themes of access, inclusion (keeping in mind its opposite, exclusion), and diversity flow throughout the text, which provides an overall coherence and allows for stronger narratives to be present as well.

Multiculturalism is a key theme of Part I about festivals and fairs. The first chapter by Duffy, Mair, and Waitt examine how the notion of 'encounter' helps to engage with the complex and dynamic processes of community-making at Australian cultural festivals. And although festivals are often supported by authorities to increase tolerance of ethnic diversity, the authors argue that it depends on whose culture is on display, as such festivals may actually be contributing to disharmony and 'othering'. Moving to Mexico in Chapter 2, Barrera-Fernández and Hernández-Escampa analyse the existing accessibility measures at the Guelaguetza Festival in culturally diverse Oaxaca and the perceptions of inclusion of people with reduced mobility. Chapter 3 by Siročić focuses on feminist activist festivals in post-Yugoslav territories in order to contextualise festivals as political tools for women's movements across generations. Turning attention to fairs in Chapter 4, Crew questions whether media accounts of the Appleby Horse Fair in the UK are marginalising for Travellers, who celebrate their traditions at this historic event. The final chapter in this section by Wiscombe discusses the challenges of accessibility at UK agricultural shows in terms of location, logistics, and societal considerations. She found that event organisers prioritise accessibility for human and non-human participation whilst evolving, adapting, and changing to capture the diversity and range of contemporary rural enterprises.

Part II of this book delves into the intertwined cultural and political spheres. Although we originally envisioned this section as addressing solely cultural issues in critical event studies, the authors have used cultural events as a backdrop in order to draw out deeper meanings related to current political issues, including power structures. Chapter 6 by Rodgers explores how electronic dance music (EDM) in Berlin, Germany, became more than just nightclub party events and turned into a political 'movement'. Through an intersectional lens, she deconstructs, and situates within a wider political context, how Berlin's EDM

nightclubs promote themselves as safe spaces for people of diverse sexual identities, temporarily suspending social hierarchies and uniting people under one roof; however, the reality often results in segregated ethnic stereotypes informing diversity discourses. From nightclubs to museums in Chapter 7, Williams critically examines current museum events in London, UK, to highlight the presence and experiences of BAME audiences and their dialogues with the arts and cultural sector through co-production and radical trust in order to co-create a more ethnically diverse museum by occupying space and engaging in social activism. Along similar lines, Hill and Sobande showcase in Chapter 8 how people of colour in Scotland remain frequently excluded from institutional creative contexts. This chapter is based on the authors' experiences co-ordinating and participating in an arts and cultural exhibition in Glasgow, Scotland, which highlights the power of words in starting conversations about issues regarding inclusion, exclusion, and resisting marginalisation. Chapter 9 by Ali explores the reticence or receptiveness that both presenter and audience experience in events incorporating the subject of Muslim identity in the UK at three British cultural events. Issues surrounding intercultural exchange, representation, performance, cultural sensitivity, and tolerance are documented in order to define a model of best practice for the delivery of often challenging culturally diverse events. Gausden, in Chapter 10, considers advocacy as performance through an event highlighting the treatment of marginalised Roma communities and the discriminatory practices faced as a result of globalisation processes. Lamond conceptualises events of dissent in Chapter 11 with research on an anti-corruption rally in São Paulo, Brazil. By shedding light on populist movements and protest as event and activism as leisure, the author seeks to provide greater insight into such events of dissent and the political and cultural complexity of participation in such events.

Part III provides a snapshot of sporting events and some accessibility, inclusion, and diversity issues at mega, major, and regional levels. We decided from the outset of this book that sporting events would not be a priority, as there is an already robust body of literature on sport and these topics. Therefore, we aim to emphasise the relevant issues as they relate to events that happen to include sporting aspects. For example, urban mobility issues take centre stage in Chapter 12 by Cirilo dos Santos Neto, Fernando Santana de Oliveira, Denardin Cardoso, and de Castro Haiachi. Their investigation uses the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as a backdrop. They explain the impacts mega event-led urban regeneration has had on mobility-diverse communities. In Chapter 13, Sharp explores whether engaging in major event volunteering leads to increased wellbeing in a case study of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in Scotland. The research evaluates the potential for social legacies through volunteer programmes and to what extent this influences wellbeing. On a smaller scale, the next chapter presents research undertaken by Danby and Finkel at the Austin Rodeo in Texas, USA. Framed in post-humanist theory, this chapter seeks to challenge the singular focus around human subjects and prioritises the inclusion of non-humans in co-creating the event landscape,
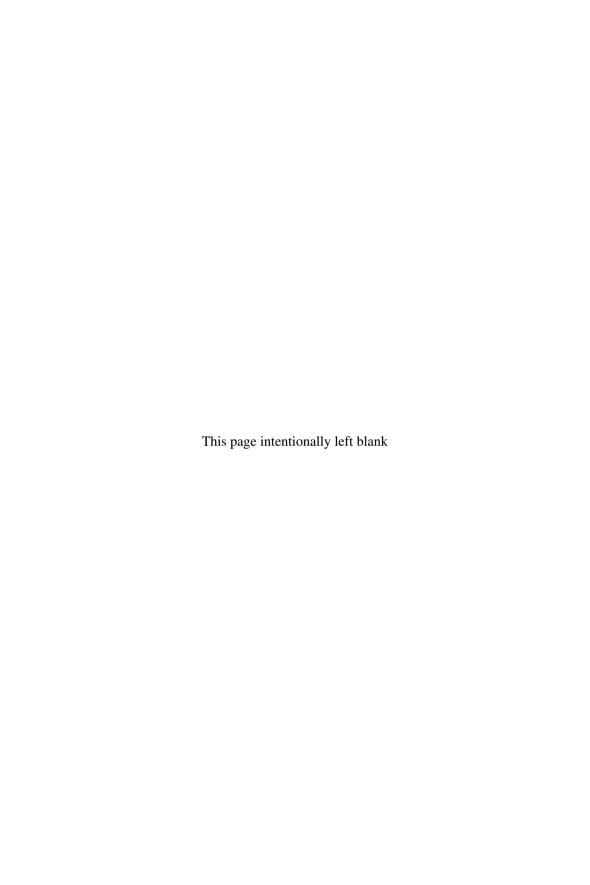
looking beyond human agency and exploring the 'more-than-human' within the human–equine sporting relationship.

Finally, Part IV is framed around research relating to conferences, which is an important but often overlooked research subject. In Chapter 15, Rodríguez-Zulaica and Fernández-Villarán Ara analyse the accessibility of conference centres, in particular the case of the Euskalduna Palace in Bilbao, Spain. They also provide advice in order to adapt conference venues to improve inclusion mechanisms. Chapter 16 features Henderson interrogating the impacts of caring responsibilities on academics' access to and participation at international conferences. Importantly, access in this chapter is conceived of as both the ability to attend conferences and the ability to participate in conferences once there. In keeping with this topic of academic conferences, Walters adopts a case study approach in Chapter 17 based upon personal experiences as co-convenor of an academic association conference in New Zealand. She found that adopting tripartite approaches with regard to physical accessibility, financial accessibility, and cognitive accessibility can facilitate an environment which embraces diversity and fosters inclusion, which has flow-on benefits for all conference delegates. Overall, there is a call for more inclusive interpretations for participation in international conferences, which sit more comfortably at the intersection of accessibility and diversity.

Although there are now more conversations about these topics happening on a multitude of platforms, there is still a need to develop conceptual and empirical research to establish reliable information and capture multifarious accounts about accessibility, inclusion, and diversity in numerous events environments worldwide. This book goes some way to inform these discussions in an effort to improve future scholarship and practice in this exciting, emerging field.

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Part I

Festivals and fairs

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1 Addressing community diversity

The role of the festival encounter

Michelle Duffy, Judith Mair, and Gordon Waitt

Introduction

We live in a world in which the movement of people is unprecedented; yet, there are significant discrepancies in this mobility. Majority world individuals and communities often need to move in response to local and global challenges, such as political upheaval, human rights abuses, concerns around water and food security, the impacts of climate change, and the desire to seek better outcomes for themselves and their families. In contrast, the mobility of members of the minority world – with the increased wealth, health and life expectancies of its members – is most often tied to lifestyle choices. And while technology has enabled greater connectivity across the globe, this is not without concern. As Fincher, et al. (2014: 3) remind us, in the 'age of migration' (Castles and Miller 2009), the question of whether some urban inhabitants' ethnic and racialised identities are stigmatised, trivialised, valued, or recognised in relation to others, is a crucial element of social justice in the city.

Questions are again being raised about the strength of social cohesion in western nations, such as contemporary Australia (e.g. Forrest and Dunn 2010), particularly with regard to so-called radicalisation of disaffected youth (Grossman and Tahiri 2015). However, diversity has broader meaning than simply that of ethnic, cultural, or national identity. Identity and notions of belonging are also constituted through particular ideas within a society about gender, class, sexuality, age, and able-bodiedness, which in turn construct an individual's and community's feelings of inclusion and connectedness or exclusion and alienation. In terms of social justice, 'managing' diversity raises issues about social cohesion and belonging because we need to consider group and community rights and how these relate to individual rights and freedoms. This can be problematic in liberal democratic societies because of an emphasis on individual rights rather than community rights (Capeheart and Milovanovic 2007). Thus, when considering belonging, we are also concerned with the ways in which power is embedded within the relations between people as well as with place.

One popular strategy for creating and/or re-affirming a sense of community has been to generate festival events that serve to create a sense of shared identity and belonging in ways that can encompass difference. What underpins such

festivals is the desire to promote social cohesion through discourses of an official 'imagined' community; yet, some scholars argue that tension and debate – perhaps better conceptualised as agonism (Mouffe 1994) – play an important role in acknowledging the heterogeneity of contemporary life and thus retain the potential to transform democratic politics. Nonetheless, questions as to who has a right to be a part of 'the community' continue.

The starting point for the ideas presented in this chapter is the work of Fincher and Iveson (2008: 146, 175), who argue that the encounter facilitates a "social differentiation without exclusion" where "unscripted encounters" offer opportunities to experience the diversity of communities. Many local governments seek to lessen potentially divisive responses to difference and demonstrate a commitment to creating a welcoming, inclusive and accessible community, often through the creation and staging of community festivals. However, Fincher and Iveson (2008: 146) suggest that the festival offers a means to facilitate exploration and experimentation in the design of our communities, which requires "planning for disorder". They argue we need to pay attention to the "importance of small-scale, casual and unpredictable encounters" (Fincher and Iveson 2008: 146) because it is through fostering encounters with difference and diversity that we can start to address injustice and inequality.

This chapter draws on data from a range of case study communities and festivals. Each case study employed mixed-qualitative research methods that help uncover how the festival may provide opportunities for such unpredictable encounters. The key methods included semi-structured interviews with key organisers and event participants alongside participant observation. Semi-structured interviews offered possibilities to access the sets of ideas that informed the events through the sharing of stories; whereas, participant observation allowed the researchers to access the experiential dimensions of events that are often beyond words. A combination of discourse, narrative, and affective analysis was employed to interpret what these may mean for thinking about ways to enhance social connectedness and inclusion.

'Managing' diversity

Inherent in the development of policy discourse around diversity are questions as to who has the right to the place of the city (Lefebvre 1991; Purcell 2002). Lefebvre (1991) argues that social justice requires a radical rethinking of the city: that the right to the city is embedded within occupying and participating in the life of the city, and is not an intrinsic right associated only with the ownership of property and capital. As Purcell (2002: 102) points out,

> under the right to the city, membership in the community of enfranchised people is not an accident of nationality or ethnicity or birth; rather it is earned by living out the routines of everyday life in the space of the city.

Therefore, the city is not simply a passive stage on which social life unfolds; rather, the city is constituted through civic, material, cultural, and social

processes. Underpinning much of the literature examining social relations in public space is a focus on how a proximity to strangers in this shared space may facilitate some understanding and acceptance of otherness (as observed in work on cosmopolitanism, hospitality, new urban citizenship, and urban planning; see for example, Amin 2002; Bell 2007; Iveson 2007; Laurier and Philo 2006; Wilson 2011). Policies that seek to manage diversity have approached this by attempting to "manage public space in ways that build sociality and civic engagement out of the encounter between strangers" (Amin 2008: 6). Managing difference through processes that seek to construct a sense of community has in some instances reframed social cohesion and connectedness as "as a logical 'solution' to a growing number of social ills and/or the 'target' of urban policy interventions" (MacLeavy 2008: 541). However, critiques of such a formulation of policy argue that this approach pathologises difference, and, rather than enabling or encouraging diversity, this framework actually reproduces and disguises relationships of power.

A "geographies of encounter" has focused on documenting how individuals negotiate social diversity, urban difference, and prejudice in everyday life (Wilson 2016). However, as Wilson (2016) points out, there has been little critical examination as to how the concept of *encounter* is mobilised in policy and practice, apart from the notion that "low-level sociality and banal everyday civilities have enduring effects" (Valentine and Sadgrove 2012: 2050; see also Laurier and Philo 2006). In this framework,

> [t]he freedom to associate and mingle in cafés, parks, streets, shopping malls, and squares is linked to the development of an urban civic culture based on the freedom and pleasure to linger, the serendipity of casual encounter and mixture, the public awareness that these are shared spaces.
>
> (Amin 2002: 967)

Yet, as Amin goes on to discuss, this framing of chance encounters in the public sphere is problematic. Visibility and proximity may encourage interaction because of a pragmatic need to accommodate difference, but this does not then translate into respect for others (Valentine 2008). While unscripted encounters may encourage certain forms of civil behaviour (Buonfino and Mulgan 2007), this is not the same as generating respect for difference or for greater openness to diversity (Gawlewicz 2015). Hence, simply being co-present in public space fails to lead on to challenging individual and community assumptions about certain individuals and groups, and thus enable communities to reconcile various notions of difference (Amin 2002; Duffy and Mair 2018).

Nevertheless, a common approach to addressing such ideas about diversity in public space has been through the hosting of community festivals, where it is hoped that opportunities to engage with difference within the relatively 'safe' framework of a festive event may lessen potentially divisive responses to difference and demonstrate a commitment to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible community. Thus, festivals are significant to a politics of

belonging because of the ways in which they are utilised as a common frame-work for community celebration and for reinvigorating notions of a shared community (Duffy and Mair 2018; Jepson and Clarke 2015). Part of the challenges of incorporating festivals into policy is that within this framework, the term 'community' is popularly understood as being those people, usually of a specific locale, who share a set of values and social relations characterised by personal connections. The community festival is a common framework for reinvigorating notions of a shared community, wherein difference may be celebrated but the focus is on commonality (Jepson and Clarke 2015). The official discourse of those groups controlling the festival operate to produce an 'imagined' community, which the festival is then planned to encapsulate and promote. In this framework, the imperative of community-oriented festival is localism – that is, a celebration of the unique qualities of people and place forged by histories and geographies (del Barrio, et al. 2012; Duffy and Mair 2018; Jaeger and Mykletun 2013; van Winkle, et al. 2014) or in generating new place-based forms of identification (Lewis and Dowsey-Magog 1993; Picard 2015).

Yet, while the concept of community is central to policy and planning approaches, such frameworks in practice need to contend with often markedly high social difference that produce sites of "throwntogetherness" (Massey 2005: 11). What is meant by *belonging* or *social connectedness*, therefore, raises important questions about how we understand community. As Massey (1994: 121) explains, the identity of a community or a place is about "the specificity of interaction with other places." However, feelings of attachment to a community is not simply about being and remaining in place. Rather, belonging creates a sense of connection in particular ways or to particular collective identities, and these attachments and identities are embedded within the narratives that people tell about themselves as a community (Yuval-Davis 2006). That said, such notions of belonging can also be problematic because of the sorts of identities or social relations invoked by a festival theme (Cornish 2015; Jodie 2015). Festivals are, therefore, complex sites of community building. In considering the role festivals may play in the process of individual and collective belong-ing, we need to acknowledge that communities are not homogenous. Possibi-lities for conflict arise from competing narratives that inform who (and what) constitutes a place or a community. In addition, as Young (2008: 4–5) argues, we need to critically explore the relationships between planning practice and the dimensions of culture that inhere in communities and their ways of life, in history and intangible heritage, and in environments. In the absence of this, planning may continue to languish in political, ethical, and strategic terms, while culture continues to exhibit heightened diversity and dynamism and a rising potential tapped by the cultural economy and exploited in the processes of cultural commodification.

Young (2008) cautions us as to the increasing commodification of culture and its incorporation into planning practice, particularly as this often fails to capture the complex, dynamic, and subtle nature of what culture is. He also points to disparities in terms of whose culture is valued, noting a "global pattern" that