

## Social network analysis and festival relationships: personal, organisational and strategic connections

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# Social network analysis and festival relationships: *personal, organisational and strategic connections*

DAVID S.R. JARMAN





# **Social network analysis and festival relationships: personal, organisational and strategic connections**

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan Tilburg University

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## Summary

In the world of festivals and creative communities, relationships matter. Festival managers and producers understand the overlapping links, both professional and private, amongst their colleagues. Freelancers and graduates developing their careers appreciate that opportunities can come by way of personal connections. The future success of entire festival organisations can depend on forging, maintaining and exploiting associations with collaborators, suppliers and allies. Academic literature in the field of festival studies has sought to better understand the interpersonal dimension of these events, from different conceptual standpoints, in a range of contexts. However, in this festival environment there remains an opportunity, if not a need, to establish the place of network-based research methods and perspectives in the development of academic and industry understandings of social relationships. Networks underpin these connections and communities, from simple ties between pairs of people, to complex webs spanning hundreds of individuals, venues, performing companies, supply chains and audience members. The body of published work in Chapter 4 of this book presents a variety of projects that support a network focused approach, using social network analysis (SNA) methodologies. The accompanying commentary has built upon these publications in the other chapters below, to explore the implications and opportunities of a network-orientated mindset.

This thesis contributes to the field of festival and event studies by applying SNA to a variety of case studies and environments, highlighting interpersonal relationships both within festival organisations, and as connections to their host communities of creative individuals. Much of the empirical work was located in Edinburgh, Scotland, with its thriving and well-established festival sector. A festivals strategy for the City of Edinburgh Council recognised, at the turn of the century, that “The impression is of an integrated culture (or industry) with people, ideas and skills moving between different festivals” (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001, p. 14). This chimes with an understanding of SNA that priorities its interest in “Relational data... [that] concern the contacts, ties and connections, and the group attachments and meetings that relate one agent to another and that cannot be reduced to the properties of the individual agents themselves” (Scott, 2017, p. 4). This appreciation of the primacy of networks is reflected in the reviews of existing academic festival and event literature below, in Chapter 2 and the various publications themselves. Though network themes are generally most prominent in these discussions, other considerations include the roles of stakeholder analysis, social capital theory, and the significance of place. On such foundations, previous research from a variety of authors has considered the management, experience, evaluation and sustainable development of festivals and events. However, these approaches can lack detail, often fail to

consider individual people as a vital unit of analysis, and achieve limited engagement with the dynamism of festivals and creative communities. In response, the overall aim of the current research (as set out in Chapter 1's Introduction) is *to critically analyse social relationships within festival and creative communities, and examine the potential contribution of social network analysis in supporting and developing understanding of these relationships, from a network-orientated perspective.*

Social network analysis methods underpin the overall research methodology set out in Chapter 3. This part of the book examines how and why different forms of SNA have been used: these include whole network, ego network, and two mode network analyses. Each approach offers its own research tools and insights, which has proved appropriate to the development of discrete projects, and a range of publications (listed in Table 1.1, and in Figure 3.1). A motivating factor in compiling this PhD has been showing the applicability of SNA in a range of festival and creative community contexts. In this way, the work has sometimes been exploratory in nature. This has proven rewarding to those involved in each project, but it has also contributed to a general narrative in support of SNA's value to festival studies. Chapter 3 also explores critical realism as the principal research philosophy to have informed the thesis, as expressed most clearly in the commentary below. Critical realism has encouraged the incorporation of fundamental themes in social research, such as the relationship between structure and agency, and the emergent properties of phenomena. The work in this book has raised the profile and the potential of both SNA and critical realism in festival, events and creative communities research.

In Chapter 5, the book's chief contributions to knowledge are set out. The twin foundations for these contributions are the adoption of a network-orientated perspective to the study of festival and creative communities, and the application of SNA in this context. This combination of outlook and empirical analysis has provided novel insights and interpretations, to the benefit of both this thesis and also future work. Interpersonal relationships have been shown as vitally important to the development and management of festivals, and the organisations that deliver them. Connections between such organisations, and other stakeholder groupings, are then presented here as being facilitated and maintained by ties between individuals. For these people, networks shape access to information, resources and opportunities, both in the immediate term and with reference to longer term career development. A "network theory of festivals" has been introduced below as a realistic and recommended ambition, building on the work here to inform the future description, analysis, management and sustainable delivery of festivals. The aforementioned contribution of critical realism is also examined in Chapter 5, as an under-utilised lens and philosophical framework through which new research themes can be identified and pursued in festival and event studies.

The concluding chapter to the book, Chapter 6, sets out important limitations in the production of both the empirical research projects and the overall narrative commentary. These limitations are framed around four categories: methods and methodologies; approaches and objectives; applications of the work; and exemplars of good practice. Across these categories, consideration is given to limitations that are potentially applicable to all SNA projects, such as how to manage incomplete data sets. Attention is also focused on themes more specific to festival and creative communities, including recognition that this book is not intended as a guide to successful social networking in such environments. Nor are the case studies examined necessarily exemplars of best practice in this regard. Limitations are present in all research, to some extent, and they often provide inspiration for future work. Key recommendations from this thesis include the need to incorporate a broad network approach to festivals and creative communities research, supplementing an otherwise rather limited outlook from event studies that is based on stakeholder groupings and single events. It is also noted in Chapter 6 that empirical SNA's emphasis on relational data can inform other perspectives on social relationships, such as actor network theory, the political market square, and communities of interest. Additional research is recommended to learn more about flows in festival networks, to better understand the meaning of networks alongside their structure, and ideally through longitudinal investigations. Finally, in relation to primary research, there are significant opportunities to expand the range of data sources used in the study of festival networks, including social media connections and other digital information. Recommendations are also made to producers, employees, freelancers, funders and policy makers in the festival and creative sectors, including the development of a formalised appreciation of the role of networks in the planning, delivery, management and experience of events. Further analysis will shine an increasingly revealing light on festival life in the network society.

In this book, festivals on the one hand are shown to be inextricably linked to the creative communities that support and nurture them on the other. Connections between the two take the form of personal ties, with the people involved fulfilling multiple roles, in both contexts, over a period of time. A network-orientated perspective recognises this recursiveness, and provides means of investigating and analysing it. Relationships that are forged, strengthened, forgotten and later resurrected in one context, can be relevant and influential in another. A festival can also incorporate pre-existing interpersonal networks, and will often outlive them. Communities are represented by their festivals, and those festivals are here shown to be networked communities in their own right, shaping and shaped by the individuals they connect.



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My enjoyment of Edinburgh's summer festivals led to me applying to study here in the 1990s. I stayed in the city to do a postgraduate Masters a few years later. Thank you, for helping me do this and much more, to my mum who first took me to Edinburgh, and my dad who drove me up to Scotland to start my studies. Also to Trevor, who supervised my MA (Hons) and MSc dissertation work, some of which appears in this book. My experiences of working for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, and other parts of Edinburgh's festival network, provided inspiration for many of the ideas that are explored in this book. Seeing and experiencing how people develop careers in such an ecosystem has been fascinating. Likewise appreciating how important a role suppliers and administrators play, in holding together the organisations and projects that make up a festival: the Fringe Box Office is the place to be if you want to know what's going on across the festival. So, to my festival friends of days past, thank you to Dave, Rachel, Paul, Liz and so many more.

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David Jarman  
Edinburgh, Scotland  
March 2022

This book was written in Scrivener on various Apple Macs, using Bookends for reference management. The text is in Helvetica. The cover image is from the 2014 Positivus Festival in Latvia (photograph credit: author).

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# Chapter 1 Introduction and overview

## 1.1 Introduction, research motivations and methods

This PhD thesis examines the importance of relationships and social networks within communities of festival contributors and creative industries professionals. It is presented through this opening commentary and a closing critical reflection, alongside a series of published papers. The initial inspiration and subsequent evolution of the work has been a critical reaction to existing analysis of festivals, specifically that which relies on broad stakeholder groupings to discuss their management, and the communities that host and produce them (Getz et al., 2007; Bostok, 2014). Such work tends to categorise and corral interested parties together as “co-producers”, “the impacted”, “facilitators”, and similar groups (Getz et al., 2007, p. 109). This paradigm has framed a great deal research into festivals, from both academic (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Getz & Page, 2016) and industry perspectives (BOP Consulting, 2016). A stakeholder-based appreciation of festivals and creative communities is susceptible to a reductionism that overlooks the importance of interpersonal connections. This became apparent during some of the earliest empirical research being presented here (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011), in a project to investigate the management of the Festival City Theatres Trust, responsible for two prominent theatres in Edinburgh, Scotland. Research participants representing internal and external stakeholders reflected on their experiences in relation to the Trust, and it became clear that personal connections (not departmental, organisational or institutional) were the foundation on which further relationships and collaborations were built. Subsequent research and publications (seen below in Chapter 4) was more aligned with an “ecosystem of cultural innovation” model (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010). The published papers and this commentary develop a PhD informed by a network focused vocabulary, and a social network analysis research methodology, to develop novel insights into the experience and management of festivals within their host communities.

The following chapters demonstrate that it is possible, and often desirable, to use networks to analyse the interpersonal connections that shape the individual experiences of people who are active in festivals, and the creative communities that host them. As recognised in Edinburgh’s 2001 festival strategy (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001, p. 79), professional administrators, volunteers and other contributors operate within and between networks. This activity, often accompanied by dynamic mobility as festivals and events are delivered, is framed by each person’s associations with organisations, projects, and other social functions. Despite this, the festival and event studies literature has tended to overlook this fundamental property of the communities it purports to depict: studies emphasise

social groupings instead of networks (Getz et al., 2007), failing to reflect the complex characteristics of those groups, even when network based stakeholder power is recognised (Tiew et al., 2015). The experiences of individual people can, and often should, be prioritised in such analysis. This would, at the very least, complement approaches that amalgamate independent social actors into broad, anonymous stakeholder categories and organisations. The discussion and empirical research in this submission advocate for the development of a new networked paradigm for the study of festivals and their supporting communities.

As Christakis & Fowler noted in relation to Broadway musicals (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 162-164), pursuing a network focused analysis of theatrical producer connections revealed a small world network “sweet spot”. They showed that successful shows benefited from production teams built on both past collaborators (for cohesive and familiar working relationships), and also fresh contributors (who extended the network into new areas, accessing innovative ideas). Inspired by such work a clearer understanding of networked lives within a festival social ecologies is presented here, emphasising networks and applying social network analysis (SNA) research methodologies. This understanding may also be clearer than is appreciated even by those being studied: individuals, generally, can perceive only a small proportion of the social networks of which they are a part, despite the multiple influences such networks have on their lives (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 20-21). There are also beneficial context-specific grounds for investigating social networks in relation to festivals and their related environments. As time-limited occasions, festivals involve the coordinated actions and investments of hundreds or thousands of people, either with or without top-down coordination from a centralised management or programme. The act of delivering festivals generates new connections and ties between people and organisations, as overlapping networks form and reform themselves over the social landscape. This is akin to a long tradition in “two-mode” SNA, which has considered the network effects of co-attendance at events (Davis et al., 1941; Prell, 2012, p. 31). In a contemporary context, as the author knows from direct experience, though festivals all end their networks endure in one form or another. Interpersonal ties between participants may be weak or strong (Granovetter, 1973), but they outlive many an organisation or project.

A network-orientated approach to social relationships focuses on the nature of interpersonal connections, while alternative methodologies might simply assume such connections exist between actors merely because of a shared interest, geographical proximity, or temporal co-presence. Ties and common purposes within such groups are not inevitable. In reality, how and why people connect to each other (or fail to) in particular situations can help researchers analyse how people act in particular situations, and the implications this can have for projects such as festivals and events. The intensity of festivals, and their temporary nature, has the potential to

forge, strengthen and then fragment connections very quickly. The pursuit of insights into such experiences has guided this PhD's various projects, which overall have contributed "insider" perspectives from research participants (Edwards, 2010). In the majority of the papers submitted here, interviews and surveys have revealed who the subjects see as their most valuable and important connections. These connections might exist within a defined population (such as colleagues within an organisation) (Jarman, 2016), or in more open and organic contexts (Jarman, 2017). In the most recent article included below, social connections are represented by performers' online applications to participate in a network of Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021), helping to show that relational data can be gleaned from various sources. Methodologically therefore the different publications have demonstrated SNA's versatility in presenting the experiences of life within networked communities.

The publications compiled for this book are primarily located within the festival and event studies field. This is also the audience for which the overall commentary may have greatest interest, with ambitions to discuss research methodologies and advancements in knowledge within the field. Most recently this has included the co-editorship of a journal special issue dedicated to "Events as Platforms, Networks, and Communities" (Richards & Jarman, 2021). Any expectations of contributions to the social network analysis community are more limited, and this is reflected in the choice of topics receiving attention in this commentary. References to themes within the SNA literature are primarily valuable in as much as they can enlighten the principal debates and advances in understanding from a festival and event perspective. As such, the publications presented in Chapter 4 have made frequent use of SNA methods (Jarman, 2016), statistical analyses (Jarman, 2018b), computer packages (Jarman, 2017), and graphical data presentations (Jarman, 2021). Detailed consideration has sometimes been given of the maths behind this work (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 125-131), though the overriding priority has been to use SNA as a tool to examine relational data in the chosen context. Scott asserts the "utmost importance that [SNA] researchers *understand* the concepts that they are using", in order to apply "the *informed judgement* of the practising researcher" (Scott, 2017, p. 3). It is hoped that the following sections will demonstrate this, drawing from SNA textbooks to bring validity to the ensuing empirical research (Prell, 2012; Borgatti et al., 2013; Crossley et al., 2015).

The work presented in Chapter 4 draws from a range of conceptual and theoretical framings, critically examining different perspectives on empirical relational data, contextualised within festivals and creative communities. These include Castells's conceptualisation of the "network society" (Castells, 2000), social capital (Jarman, 2018b), place and place-making (Jarman, 2018a). Critical realism (Bhaskar, 2008) provides the basis of this commentary's research philosophy, helping to shape the overall interpretation of the publications being presented, and the primary research

they encompass. Critical realism emphasises the relationship between actors and structure, recognising a stratified reality that includes both, and is subject to “mechanisms, powers, tendencies and so on” (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 125). From this perspective, members of a festival community are bounded by their involvement in the festival itself, while also being connected to a wider community (or communities) that support the festival (both within its host destination and beyond). Social actors and structure are both important in this environment, and should be studied together. Critical realism and SNA allow for this, accommodating networked communities that can still be analysed and understood at the level of the individual. In such scenarios it is the daily actions of individuals, making and breaking ties through their personal decisions and actions, that cumulatively transform the wider network structure, affecting everyone’s social environment. So, while a festival may bring people together over a relatively defined time period, there is frequently an enduring host community to be examined, from which the festival’s participants, attendees and other contributors are drawn.

The publications in Chapter 4 have explored various ways of presenting the nuanced complexity of these themes, using different methods to reflect multiple, sometimes overlapping, social networks. As suggested by the PhD’s overall title, and encouraged by critical realism’s emancipatory ambitions, this has implications at personal, organisational and strategic levels, affecting producers, employees, audiences, local resident communities, and others with an interest in festivals. To this end there are also industry implications for this work, such as noting the complex relationship between festivals, creative communities and public policy ambitions (Foley et al., 2012; Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 409-429). The granularity of detail, flexibility of interpretation, and variety of case study research projects in this book combine to demonstrate the importance of SNA methods, and a network-orientated approach, to the study of festivals and creative communities.

## **1.2 Structure of the PhD commentary**

The remainder of this chapter introduces the key publications being presented for the PhD, then concludes with the overall research question, research aim, and objectives. The main themes will be expanded further in the Conceptual Context (Chapter 2), with sections focusing on: festivals and festivalisation; social networks; creative communities; and the network society. Each of these topics is illustrated with reference to the papers included in the PhD, while also exploring the theme’s broader relevance to the festival and events field. In the Research Methodology (Chapter 3) the application of social network analysis in the study of festival networks is considered, analysing its capacity for a wide range of approaches, scales of

analysis, types of data, and means of presentation. This discussion is informed by critical realism as the underpinning research philosophy. Over the course of this research, projects have made use of whole networks, ego networks, and two mode networks, with data captured by surveys, interviews and online forms, often in combined and mixed methods. The publications resulting from these projects are included in Chapter 4. The Contribution to Knowledge (Chapter 5) considers how this body of work has advanced understanding in festival studies, and consideration is also given to the development of new theory in the field. In the Conclusion (Chapter 6), attention will be refocused on the research question, aim and objectives that frame this commentary, and how these have been met.

### **1.3 Summary overview of publications**

The following table (1.1) and discussion introduce the nine prior publications that underpin this thesis, as featured in Chapter 4 below. The papers demonstrate the versatility of social network analysis in the context of festival, event, and creative community research. This enables a better understanding of the social worlds under examination, both discretely paper by paper, and in aggregate through this book. The overall body of work is shaped by a network informed perspective on society, by reflections on the application of SNA methods, and within an overall philosophical rationality drawn from critical realism. As a result this work could help to enhance more general understandings of society and community, through a lens framed by festivals and their networks. Space and time help to define the festival form, and indeed represent important resources in economies that emphasise project-based work, co-working spaces, events and collaboration.

Paper number	Author(s)	Year	Title	Percentage authored by PhD candidate	Publication type	Research methods
1	David Jarman	2007	Mirror of the nation: The Edinburgh Festivals and Scottish national identity	100%	Book chapter	Desk and archival research
2	David Jarman and Eleni Theodoraki	2011	Strategic Analysis of the Edinburgh FCTT: A Framework for Research	50%	Journal article	Focus group; interviews
3	David Jarman, Eleni Theodoraki, Hazel Hall and Jane Ali-Knight	2014	Social network analysis and festival cities: An exploration of concepts, literature and methods	95%	Journal article	Desk research
4	David Jarman	2016	The strength of festival ties: Social network analysis and the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival	100%	Book chapter	SNA: whole network analysis – survey data collection
5	David Jarman	2017	Personal networks in festival, event and creative communities: Perceptions, connections and collaborations	100%	Book chapter	SNA: ego network analysis – interview data collection
6	David Jarman	2018	Social network analysis and the hunt for homophily: Diversity and equality within festival communities	100%	Journal article	SNA: whole network analysis – survey data collection; interviews
7	David Jarman	2018	Festival community networks and transformative place-making	100%	Journal article	SNA: whole network analysis – survey data collection; interviews
8	David Jarman	2021	Festival to Festival: Networked Relationships Between Fringe Festivals	100%	Journal article	SNA: two-mode analysis – festival application data
9	Greg Richards and David Jarman	2021	Events as Platforms, Networks, and Communities	30%	Journal article (SI editorial)	Desk research

Table 1.1 Publication details for papers presented for the PhD

A historical perspective on Edinburgh's summer festivals is provided by Paper 1 (Jarman, 2007), focusing on their relationship to Scottish national identity in the 1940s and 1970s. Each festival was created with reference to its host community, establishing a tone that has continued throughout to the present day. In Paper 2 (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011), Edinburgh's Festival City Theatres Trust was examined, using data gathered from representatives of both internal and external stakeholders. Analysis of these data helped to frame subsequent projects, as it demonstrated the limitations of stakeholder analysis: the chosen methodology paid insufficient attention to the specific views, contributions and experiences of the individuals involved. On this foundation, Paper 3 (Jarman et al., 2014) laid out a response to such concerns. It was a conceptual paper, establishing the importance of interpersonal connections to festival and events research, and proposing SNA as a potentially valuable basis for subsequent research. Paper 3 also saw the introduction of two bodies of literature that have informed all the empirical work carried out since: textbooks that chart the evolution of network analysis and SNA methods; and existing academic examples of this from festivals, events and tourism research.

Papers 4 to 8 all involved empirical SNA, developed over a number of projects for the purposes of this book. Paper 4 (Jarman, 2016) focused on the Edinburgh International Science Festival, and as the first piece of primary data collection involving SNA it acted as a proof of concept. The publication is rigidly structured around Prell's nine step methodology for SNA (Prell, 2012, pp. 59-91), as applied to the network of people employed by the Science Festival in 2014. A "whole network" approach was used, with around a third of the total population providing data via a survey. In Paper 5 attention turned to "ego network" analysis (Jarman, 2017), with two individuals providing all the empirical data for their respective case studies. Each study focused on the individual at hand (the "ego"), and the people they identified as connections from a series of interview questions (their "alters"). This demonstrated the importance of personal perception life within networked communities: how do people see the social world around themselves? Comparison between the two egos captured the relative densities of their networks, with implications for their roles as possible brokers or gatekeepers in connecting their various alters.

A single research project provided data for Papers 6 and 7, which focused on a volunteer-run multi-arts festival in Scotland. Paper 6 (Jarman, 2018b) considered "homophily" in a festival context: the social phenomenon where people tend to associate more closely with others who share similar characteristics. This might be because they are drawn to each other, or because they become more like each other, or some combination of the two. In Paper 7 (Jarman, 2018a), the festival's relationship to its host community was considered from a place-making perspective. Critical considerations were made over the extent to which a festival is dependent on

its location, and sense of place. Methodologically this project built upon the Science Festival research noted above, applying the same whole network approach based on survey returns, but with a much higher response rate of 83%. Interviews were also used in a combined methods approach, generating a richer overall data set from which to explore more conceptual themes.

Paper 8 delivered the final empirical research, and sought to present greater understanding of cross-national relationships between “Fringe” style festivals (Jarman, 2021). Such festivals are comparatively decentralised, open to re-interpretation by participants, and employ an “open access” approach to programming. Formalised Fringe festival networks now exist, with members hoping to benefit from mutual support. “Two-mode” social network analysis was used in this paper, to incorporate two units of analysis: (1) four festival members of a Fringe network; and (2) the hundreds of applications they received to participate in 2018. Conceptually, this paper and the overall thesis reflect Richards’s work on festivals and events in the network society (Richards, 2010; Richards, 2015b; Richards, 2017), which in turn draws from Castells (Castells, 2000). Richards has presented the clearest arguments yet for why the network society is an appropriate frame for festivals research: it offers an understanding of human interactions and relationships that informs the delivery, experience and analysis of festivals, events, and other dimensions of human social interaction. Yet neither Richards nor Castells have presented a systematic empirical grounding for the ideas they present, a point explored in greater depth in the Fringe network publication (Jarman, 2021), and over the course of this thesis. The final publication featured is Paper 9 (Richards & Jarman, 2021), which was the opening editorial to an *Event Management* journal special issue on “Events as Platforms, Network, and Communities”. The editorial reflects upon the importance and the progression of these themes within festival and event studies, and is itself a product of the 2018 ATLAS Conference in Copenhagen, which had the same focus.

This manuscript is therefore timely, contributing to one of the most important contemporary discussions in festival and event studies, by providing analysis of the applied use of SNA in a variety of forms, types and methodologies. As such this is also a platform from which to encourage further use of SNA within the critical event studies literature. In critical realist terms, there are emergent properties and tendencies to the overall submission, whereby the whole is hopefully greater than its parts. Though the majority of the empirical work has been derived from practitioners based in Scotland, it is certainly conceivable that the themes discussed will have broader relevance and the potential to influence and inspire further research. With Richards having recently identified “network-centric eventfulness” as an emerging model of the eventful city (Richards, 2017), rarely has there been a better moment in which to consider SNA as a necessary dimension of festival and event research. The

following section sets out the research question, aim and objectives that have emerged from this foundation, providing a framework for the rest of this manuscript.

#### **1.4 Research question, aim and objectives**

The central research question of this PhD is:

- What can social network analysis, and a network-orientated perspective, contribute to understanding the relationships within festival and creative communities?

From this an overall aim has been developed:

- To critically analyse social relationships within festival and creative communities, and examine the potential contribution of social network analysis in supporting and developing understanding of these relationships, from a network-orientated perspective.

The following objectives provide a structure to enable this commentary to achieve the research aim:

- To introduce a series of publications that support research into festival and creative communities, applied in different research environments.
- To develop a conceptual context, examining interpretations of communities and social relationships with reference to the accompanying publications.
- To critically examine the research methods used, with particular focus on applications of social network analysis.
- To present evidence of the contribution to knowledge of this body of work, reflecting on its relationship to other research in the field, the overall research philosophy, and the development of new theory.
- To draw conclusions in response to the central research question, supporting the value of this work to festivals and creative communities, and making recommendations for future network focused investigations.

Ultimately, a range of approaches are available to those seeking an understanding of festivals and creative communities, informing both academic and industry perspectives. However, these often lack detail in their fundamental recognition of

interpersonal relationships. Social network analysis provides a range of distinct yet complementary methods that can be adapted according to each situation and set of priorities. These methods and an accompanying network-orientated mindset are mutually reinforcing in research terms, shaping the ways communities, organisations and other social groupings are conceived and approached. To view a community as a network is to challenge centralising hierarchies as the dominant perception of how organisations and communities are organised. Relationships within festival and creative communities are complex, overlapping, subject to a range of forces, and capable of shaping both individual careers and whole industries. Much of this is instinctively understood, or at least suspected, by those involved in festival production. What this book will examine is that researchers can, and should, recognise the networked basis of these communities and organisations, particularly in this most fluid of social environments.

# Chapter 2 Conceptual context and literature review

## 2.1 Introduction to concepts and literature

The following sections introduce and discuss key conceptual themes around which this PhD has been developed: festivals and festivalisation; networks; creative communities; and finally, the network society. This discussion helps to demonstrate the continuity of the work, while also contextualising it in relation to relevant literature. The initial focus draws from Jordan’s five dimensions of festivalisation (Jordan, 2016). Considering each dimension in turn introduces important debates in the literature, and shows how effectively the PhD fits this particular context. The subsequent themes are networks, and creative communities, with reference to festivals. SNA textbooks inform the networks sections, as do three collections of work that were assembled to explore a network-orientated perspective on festivals. One of these collections is the publications presented in this book, while the others are contained in a journal special issue (Richards & Jarman, 2021), and a volume on event stakeholders (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 17-21). The sections on creative communities, meanwhile, aim to provide important contextualisation for both the delivery of festivals and their analysis. As such, creative communities are explored with reference to the social capital and place themes presented in this thesis.

In order to further develop the conceptual context for this commentary and its accompanying publications, a framework has been developed to present resonances and equivalences between key themes and topics (Table 2.1). The networks and creative communities sections make references to the value of seeking these connections.

	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Festivals</b>	Collaboration	Perspective, perception and meaning	Identity, both individual and collective	Social and temporal clustering	Leadership, management and influence
<b>Networks</b>	Connection and contagion	Network structure and tie strength	Attributes and homophily	Clusters and cohesive subgroups	Centrality
<b>Creative communities: social capital</b>	Community cooperation and participation	Communal values, norms and trust	Socialisation and subcultures	Clustering forces shaping processes of social capital formation	Access to resources, and potential for brokerage
<b>Creative communities: place</b>	Place defined as being inhabited	Place defined as a source of attachment	Places at risk of displacements and place breaking	Place defined at a small, neighbourhood scale	Place defined around a focal social centre

Table 2.1 PhD research themes: resonances and equivalences

Identifying where different topics resonate can bring additional validity to the PhD, by demonstrating that its principal areas of focus are being contextualised in established academic concepts. By way of an example, from column D of Table 2.1, it is suggested that instances of social and temporal clustering, as experienced during festival attendance, can be interpreted in networking terms as examples of clusters and cohesive subgroups. These themes can also be linked to clustering forces shaping the formation of social capital, and also the notion of place as being defined at a small, neighbourhood scale. Discussion around each of these topics presents an approach to understanding the formation and experience of social groupings. This is partly a heuristic process, to encourage broader and deeper analysis of festivals, networks, communities, and the overall body of work making up this thesis.

These efforts at contextualisation and insight are subsequently expanded through reflection on the network society (Castells, 2000), as a final source of conceptual scene-setting. Castells's work directly informed the most recent research now being submitted for this PhD (Jarman, 2021), which focused on Fringe festival networks to relate Castells's ideas and the use of empirical SNA. Scott claims that "Castells has rejected social network analysis as a tool of analysis, regarding it as a body of formal 'theory' that is too abstract to be useful in studying the global political economy" (Scott, 2017, pp. 7-8). Yet Scott sees potential to deploy SNA's "theoretically informed methods" (Scott, 2017, p. 8) in such research, just as some of these papers demonstrate. Indeed the development of a network theory of festivals is one of the key contributions to knowledge being made by this submission (see section 5.4).

The 21st century has brought substantial change and challenges for festivals and events, in many destinations around the world (Getz & Page, 2020). Their planning and management have become more professionalised (Newbold, 2019), and interested parties expect increasingly instrumental returns on their investments (Crowther, 2014, pp. 8-9). Papers presented in Chapter 4 focus on experiences and phenomena that are identified as festivals, and are widely recognised as such. They range from a festival of science (Jarman, 2016), to one that presents multiple art forms born of the local community (Jarman, 2018b; Jarman, 2018a), and most recently an international network of Fringe festivals where common cultural characteristics are apparent across borders (Jarman, 2021). Academia is now more concerned with understanding events and festivals, for a variety of reasons, as explored in the following sections.

## 2.2 Festivals and festivalisation

Identifying and describing the essence of “festivals” has become more challenging, as authors seek to balance the emotional appeal of these experiences with the corresponding management processes on which their delivery relies. The complementary introductions to two recent volumes on festivals engage with this dichotomy, seeking to avoid “creating a taken-for-granted notion of what a festival is or should be” (Newbold et al., 2015, p. xvi), while asserting that “festivals are an important part of the fabric of modern society” (Newbold, 2019, p. xvii). The flexibility of the festival form, in its creation, participation and celebration, allows for disparate phenomena to be considered collectively, while its personal and social importance motivates repeated attempts to define it (Derrett, 2004; Richards & Palmer, 2010, pp. 459-461; Quinn, 2013, pp. 46-51). For every interpretation and expression of contemporary life, there appears to be a festival to celebrate it (Andrews & Leopold, 2013).

The latter paragraphs of this section are structured around Jordan’s five-part characterisation of “festivalisation” (Jordan, 2016). This is a contested term born of processes “whereby cultural products as well as a wide variety of events were using the festival form as their favoured mode of delivery” (Newbold, 2019, p. xii). Festivalisation tends to be presented as a process with instrumental ambitions, in pursuit of policy driven benefits (Attala, 2012; Newbold, 2019, p. xii). This is now arguably the principal lens through which to view contemporary festivals and related experiences, indeed practitioners may now be resigned to prioritising instrumental motivations when seeking support for the creative industries. Such a situation was described by Belfiore in the midst of an extended period of austerity and strain for the UK cultural sector (Belfiore, 2012). Attala’s PhD thesis casts the Edinburgh International Festival in this instrumental light, as she notes the diverse implications of festivalisation: from a “more competitive” and “over crowded festival landscape”, to relatively positive opportunities associated with “re-generation and a popularization of the consumption of culture, bringing diversity, internationalism, sociability and entrepreneurial qualities” (Attala, 2012, pp. 5-6). Festivals seeking to thrive now face a range of challenges, yet there is great potential for them and their audiences.

Festivalisation encapsulates and labels a range of processes, that are being felt differently in different environments. Examples can demonstrate how instrumentalist tendencies in the festival sector, seeking to achieve strategic objectives, can drive the forces of festivalisation. There are often public policy aspects to this, encouraging and funding governmental interventions for better or worse (Foley et al., 2012). Edinburgh’s relatively mature festival ecology enjoys an intricate relationship with government, as its highest profile celebrations seek to “satisfy an increasingly complex array of agendas” (Attala, 2012, p. 210). In Auckland, the forces of

festivalisation have seen changes to the “management practices and production strategies” of the Indian diaspora’s Diwali celebrations, as instrumental demands edge out community engagement (Booth, 2015, p. 215). For Karttunen & Luonila, seeing Finland developing its first governmental festivals action plan in 2016, unprecedented attention on the “intrinsic and instrumental value” of the “festival form” is highlighting both its potential for dynamic creativity, and the limitations of “intermittent, precarious, even unpaid work” (Karttunen & Luonila, 2017, pp. 115-123). Festivals can be well suited to the pursuit of public policy objectives (Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 409-429), as stakeholders collaborate in creative projects that can increase artistic standards, raise international profiles for performers and host destinations, and increase collaboration (Attala, 2012, p. 19). Yet when collaboration is labelled as “partnership”, it can obscure inherent imbalances in power between stakeholders and stakeholder groupings. The priorities of political and commercial organisations are not always best served by supporting “the more esoteric and transgressive aspects of the arts” (Attala, 2012, p. 212), whose more creative urges can be pacified as a result.

In the 21st century, as their meaning, values, and potential worth are appraised and debated, festivals are culturally important, high profile, hold greater popular appeal, and support thousands of jobs and organisations. Edinburgh’s highest profile festivals supported 5,600 new Full Time Equivalent jobs in the city in 2015 (BOP Consulting, 2016, p. 20). Festivalisation, meanwhile, has both academic and public resonance as an umbrella term for critiques of how festivals and events can affect the everyday lived experience: commodifying and enclosing public space; ushering in permanent CCTV surveillance; and privatising the management of the urban environment (McGillivray, 2020b). With or without instrumental ambitions, festivalisation is also understood as the vibrant “crystallisation of changes” to have affected the festivals sector in recent years (Négrier, 2015, p. 19), inspiring an approach that frames them in dynamic terms in preference to any staid or clinical dissection. Such is the context in which this PhD has been developed over the past decade. The following paragraphs use the collected works to explore festivalisation as a helpful heuristic concept, through which to discuss festivals more generally. There is also a degree of validation here, in order to substantiate the value of the work being presented.

*Festivity* is the first element of Jordan’s definition of festivalisation, the opening up of “a time and space for celebration and play that is distinct from everyday life” (Jordan, 2016, p. 6). The majority of papers presented for the PhD draw from the wealth of festival activities in Edinburgh, Scotland – home to an annual celebration since 1947, curtailed only in 2020 by responses to the Covid-19 pandemic (Festivals Edinburgh, 2020). Inaugurating the first Edinburgh International Festival amidst post-war rationing laid the foundations for later experimentation and novelty, a heady

midsummer festival period that stood in marked contrast to an otherwise culturally conservative social context (Jarman, 2007). Subsequent expansion into spring and early summer has seen science (Jarman, 2016) and explicitly community-driven arts (Jarman, 2018a) establish their own festival models within the city. These are indeed celebratory phenomena, valued as such by those contributors and participants who revel in the alternative reality that they experience and enjoy. In applying a social network analysis methodology, the research captured various attributes of individual festival workers and volunteers (Jarman, 2018b). These contributors embodied the boundary and the abstraction highlighted by Jordan (Jordan, 2016): their individual “everyday” identities, were in part shaped by their collective “festive” allegiances. From a networked perspective at least, festivity and festivalisation are personal in their negotiation, and social in their impact.

*Experimentation* is the next dimension to be highlighted as a feature of festivalisation, allowing “audiences, producers and artists to try out new personas or artistic approaches” (Jordan, 2016, p. 6). This is a modern application of “carnavalesque” themes that can be identified throughout the academic study of events and festivals (Smith, 1993; Quinn, 2005; Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). The most recent of the papers presented highlighted the novel and experimental nature of “fringe” festivals, and demonstrated how networks played a dual part in their introduction to new host destinations (Jarman, 2021). Not only does the decentralised nature of a fringe festival network enable original cultural expression to find an audience, it was also shown that networked collaboration between such festivals afforded them knowledge, resources and legitimacy that underpinned their ability to provide such a platform. These conclusions can be interpreted as developing an earlier paper (Jarman et al., 2014), one that established conceptual and applied foundations for publications that have followed. Among the themes to carry over is that of “small world” networks, seen where relatively dense clusters of activity are connected by key individuals or organisations (Jarman et al., 2014, pp. 313-315). Experimentation and free expression are not guaranteed under small world conditions, though in the right circumstances (such as the Edinburgh Festival Fringe’s eclipsing of the city’s International Festival in terms of tickets sold) they can become dominant attributes of a festival. This in turn drives festivalisation, as experimentation attracts audiences and media, who duly report on it, and encourage the next round of exciting innovation, feeding the annual festival cycle.

*Spectacularisation* features next for Jordan, in “highly visual or sensual, surprising and often large-scale art works and performances” (Jordan, 2016, p. 6). Of the festivals studied here, the most dramatic and spectacular proved to be the community-based arts festival that transformed its temporary home with the help of voluntary labour (Jarman, 2018b; Jarman, 2018a). This is a festival that lends credence to Négrier’s suggestion that “festivalisation is not a source of new

practices, but of hybridisation between permanence and transience, between hedonism and asceticism” (Négrier, 2015, p. 24). For a festival to successfully balance these contrasting forces it must establish an appreciation of its stakeholders’ objectives (Bostok, 2014), to help them forge longer term benefits from a temporary (albeit spectacular) phenomenon. Yet this commentary argues that stakeholder-group classifications can be too blunt an approach, and that important detail is lost in the processes of categorising and grouping individuals in this way. SNA based methodologies allow the attributes of individuals to be recognised, leading to appreciation of inter-personal bases of social categorisation (Jarman, 2018b). What made the researched festival spectacular was firstly the scale of the overall endeavour after a generation of disuse for the venue, secondly the peak experiences of atmosphere and engagement felt by those present at the festival, and finally the impacts and legacies generated for the host community. In each of these three categories volunteers and other contributors were participating as individuals, bringing their expertise and creativity, as well as attributes linked to their backgrounds, perspectives and opinions. This particular festival was a platform on which individuals contributed to a phenomenon that was determinedly greater than the sum of its parts (Richards & Jarman, 2021).

*Theming* contributes to festivalisation as “a method for establishing an intelligible identity for disparate activities” (Jordan, 2016, p. 6). To this end the clearest example of theming amongst the festivals studied is the Edinburgh International Science Festival, whose team were studied in 2014 (Jarman, 2016). Adopting the form and vocabulary of a festival was not a guarantee of success in 1989, when the Science Festival organisation was established, yet it has continued to thrive and to diversify its activities (Festival, 2020). In reflections on the earliest years of the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), it has been suggested that a “clean slate” was provided by setting the event in Scotland’s capital (Jarman, 2007, p. 3). There was no dominant cultural pole star around which to establish and theme a festival, as was the case in Wagner’s Bayreuth and Mozart’s Salzburg. This provided the EIF with licence to establish their own model, but it also set the scene for other voices to seize the stage, determined to promote their own contributions through documentary film, student revue, and other performance arts. The plurality of festivals now found in Edinburgh can trace its origins to this immediate post-war era, years that demonstrated the paternalistic status and power of the International Festival (Richards & Palmer, 2010, pp. 8-9), yet left room for others to find their feet under its wing and later assume strategic prominence for the city (Jarman et al., 2014, pp. 317-320). To explore the largest of these festivals, if there is a theme of sorts for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, then it is one rooted in values, practices and norms. This is manifested in the cherished equality of opportunity (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019) for those who wish to present their work, their perspectives and their ideas in ways that are relevant to them and their audiences (Jarman, 2021). A

festival's theme may shape its content and its public appeal, or it may exert a more subtle and concealed force on its nature, but either way festival identities are thematically dependent.

*Participation* is Jordan's final dimension to festivalisation, "experiences that are immersive or co-created by audiences" (Jordan, 2016, p. 6). Audience participation and active community engagement run through many of the case studies and examples featured in the papers included in this book, from the family focused programming of the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016), to the concerted efforts at place-making pursued by the volunteer-led arts festival (Jarman, 2018a). This theme makes its way into other analyses of festivalisation, including aspects of Négrier's "cultural democratisation" (Négrier, 2015, p. 24). Richards reviewed the interplay of non-participatory spectacles against potentially transformative rituals, in his earlier work on the nature of festivals (Richards, 2007). Reviews of the literature often highlight celebratory and communal elements of festivals and festival production (Quinn, 2013, pp. 46-51), factors that also find their way into festival planning and marketing (FestivalUK\*2022, 2020). Two papers presented in this book symbolise the efforts made to reflect and understand the importance of personal participation in festivals, and creative communities more generally. Firstly, work carried out with Edinburgh's Festival City Theatres Trust followed a methodology that successfully engaged with representatives of both internal and external stakeholders (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011); limitations of this model initiated an approach that has since prioritised the perspectives and connections of individuals representing only themselves, unimpeded by their formal professional or social affiliations. Secondly, this emphasis on personal relationships saw its apotheosis in a paper using ego network SNA (Jarman, 2017), where an individual's appreciation of their own social environment is prioritised above all others. Participation in festivals and creative communities is, ultimately, just one dimension of a wider engagement in professional and social life.

Breaking festivalisation into five key dimensions has facilitated a structured approach to consideration of the festival form: festivity, experimentation, spectacularisation, theming, and participation (Jordan, 2016). In the process, the publications being presented for this thesis have been drawn into the narrative, and their empirical case studies contextualised. However, the complex nature of festivalisation continues to inform this discussion, such that for every step towards a more accessible and democratic cultural form, is a risk that the focal point of cultural policy will "shift from citizen to consumer" (McGillivray, 2020b). This section opened with an assertion that festivals be recognised for their importance to contemporary society, which hopefully will not be reduced by their apparent ubiquity. Such festivities carry meaning for individuals, groups and society in general, and the flexibility of the festival form encourages its use, re-use and reinterpretation across time and space. The research

being presented spans work from across several dimensions: from centrally programmed festivals to those with an open access model; some heavily invested in the strategic planning of their host destination, others more independent and dynamic. Between them they encapsulate Jordan's five dimensions of festivalisation, and in doing so demonstrate the personal and social importance of festivals. Festivals are intrinsic to place-making, the development of social capital, efforts at cultural integration, and can forge new ties between cities and countries. Not for nothing have they been framed as the "Swiss Army knife" of cultural policy interventions (Karttunen & Luonila, 2017, p. 119). Jordan framed festivalisation as an exercise in instrumentalism, yet it is apparent from the preceding analysis that a festival's motivations and objectives need not be restricted to state-led policy driven efforts. After all, strategic "event creators" must be aware of trends towards more "instrumental event investment" and "heightened attendee expectations" (Crowther, 2014, pp. 4-10).

This discussion of festivals and festivalisation has drawn out the theme of networks from the papers presented for this PhD. In the following section networks themselves are prioritised, with relevant festivals-based research being used to illustrate important concepts and considerations.

### **2.3 Networks and a reinterpretation of festivals**

This research seeks to highlight the limitations of conventional, established festival and event stakeholder analyses (Bowdin et al., 2011, pp. 229-243; Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 269-275), while suggesting that these limitations might be overcome through complementary approaches based on social networks. This dialogue between stakeholder- and network-based analyses is represented within the collected papers of the manuscript, initially through Jarman & Theodoraki's (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011) stakeholder-group orientated analysis of two publicly owned and managed theatres in Edinburgh. More latterly a range of papers all based on varying forms of social network data have been published, which respond to a need for finer grained units of analysis than was possible in the Jarman & Theodoraki research. As stated above, this is the key force driving this PhD: the application of network approaches to the study of festivals and creative communities because they emphasise the roles and experiences of individuals, and thus can avoid subsuming personal identities and contributions within a social group based taxonomy. In truth, this interest in individual connections is perhaps analogous to the holding of a stake in a festival or creative community (whether financial, emotional or otherwise), thus recognising personal investment in such projects as a stakeholder attribute (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, p. 3). However, a far more common interpretation of

stakeholders in the events literature has accentuated their collective importance to the success or survival of an organisation (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, p. 3), with individual actors left in comparative obscurity. It is the latter application of the term that this book provides a response to.

From the broader literature, one of the most frequently cited stakeholder based explorations of festival research is from Getz, Andersson & Larson (Getz et al., 2007), which introduced stakeholder categories that have since reappeared a number of times (Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 356-357). Those original categories were: the festival organisation itself; co-producers; facilitators; suppliers and venues; the audience and the impacted; regulators; and allies and contributors (Getz et al., 2007). Getz's consideration of stakeholders has continued, leading to his recent volume dedicated to event stakeholders, co-authored with Van Niekerk (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 17-21). This book in turn includes a research note focused on Jarman *et al.*'s exploration of SNA in festival cities (Jarman et al., 2014). As such there is an ongoing discussion on the importance of social and organisational relationships to the academic study of festivals, and broader creative communities. There is undoubtedly great value in studying relationships between people at and around festivals, and while stakeholder categorisations will continue to serve researchers well, networks can recognise and value greater complexity and nuance.

The following discussions on social networks are organised in five sections, focusing on different SNA concepts: connection and contagion; network structure and tie strength; attributes and homophily; clusters and cohesive subgroups; and centrality. In SNA's established nomenclature these terms can have precise definitions, though many are also generally familiar in less strict terms. This potential flexibility has helped facilitate the resonances and equivalences presented above in Table 2.1, such as the linking of SNA clusters and subgroups to the social and temporal clustering effects of festivals. The specific choice of concepts has been informed partly by SNA textbooks that have guided much of the empirical work here (Christakis & Fowler, 2010; Prell, 2012; Borgatti et al., 2013; Crossley et al., 2015; Scott, 2017). In the sections that follow, these books have been supplemented by three collections of papers that consider relationships between networks, festivals and events:

- The first collection was published in 2021 as a special issue of the *Event Management* journal, focused on events as “platforms, networks and communities”, co-edited by Richards & Jarman (Richards & Jarman, 2021). The seven papers from this special issue, plus the introductory editorial, represent contemporary perspectives on festival and event networks, in relevant social, cultural and economic contexts.
- The second collection of publications comes from Van Niekerk & Getz (Van

Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 17-21), representing SNA and network theory in the field of events. The six papers included in this collection were published between 2010 and 2016. They represent a concentrated anthology of foundational texts on the subject, in the context of a wider volume on event stakeholders.

- The third grouping of papers is those being presented in this thesis. These nine publications overlap both of the collections noted above, featuring papers also seen in the *Event Management* special issue, and the Van Niekerk & Getz research notes.

The five sections below aggregate and extend the publications from this book, offering a framework and a language by which to engage with social networks, in the context of festivals and their environments. Taken with the five elements of festivalisation discussed already, they lay a foundation for the later discussions on creative communities and the network society that are to follow.

### *2.3.1 Connection, contagion and collaboration*

In *Connected* Christakis & Fowler (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 16-26) set out five “rules of life in the network”, introducing considerations of how individuals shape their networks, just as their networks shape them. Before setting out these rules, they identify two fundamental aspects of social networks: connection and contagion (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, p. 16). These both inform and shape the relational data on which social network analysis as a research methodology is founded. A connection between two nodes (or the lack thereof) could take one or more forms, from an inexhaustible list: kinship, friendship, co-membership of associations and organisations, attendance at events, employment and more (Scott, 2017, p. 4). Consideration of contagion, meanwhile, embraces whatever might (or might not) flow across such connections: information, money, disease or gossip, for example (Crossley et al., 2015, p. 3). Taken together these aspects of network analysis lead naturally to a series of questions that underpin research into social life: who or what is connected to whom; what is the nature and strength of that connection; how might the network at hand be described, represented and analysed, either in its totality or from the perspective of an individual experiencing it; and how do these connections directly or indirectly affect the members of the network? Such considerations inform sections throughout this chapter. Of immediate concern are the roles of connection and contagion in social relationships, to help illustrate and analyse the networks that create festivals.

Across the work being presented for this thesis, different projects have focused on different forms of connection. When considered together they help to reflect the complexities of festival production, and the social world more generally. Within these projects a variety of approaches to SNA were deployed, helping to identify and define those connections, as explored in Chapter 3. These connections include answers to surveys requesting a respondent's "most important" colleagues within their festival organisation (Jarman, 2016; Jarman, 2018b; Jarman, 2018a). Through ego-network research (Jarman, 2017), participants were asked to name connections against a range of criteria, unbounded by anything other than their memories and an approximate two-year time frame. These approaches emphasise the participants' perceptions, with research subjects being asked to identify and rank their colleagues, against criteria that were deliberately left open to interpretation. The final publication being presented worked with existing data, having been supplied by an industry key informant, and represents the accumulated applications of hundreds of performers to a formalised network of Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021). These Fringe application data could be judged as more significant than the previous examples, as they represent tangible (intended) actions on behalf of the participants. Whatever the basis for the connections as identified, SNA using graphs and sociograms can appear to represent an objective reality, based on statistics and algorithms. The examples noted above are reminders that connections can be subjective, and that social network structure and activity is sometimes open to interpretation.

Analysis of the wider literature highlights a range of connections between social actors in festivals and events, which have implications for stakeholder collaborations, host community experiences, and the overall outcomes of their focal events. For some the units of analysis are organisations, such as local authority departments, with connections based upon the sharing and receiving of information, resources and help (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 139), or on the basis of "political, cultural, commercial, social and family" relationships (Booth, 2016, p. 106). In other instances, the key distinction is between a "dyadic approach" that focused on relationships between just two organisations, and a more complex "network approach" that involves multiple stakeholders and is better able to consider trust, coordination costs and informal connections (Van Niekerk, 2014, p. 703). The network approach can also determine the importance of prior personal relationships when establishing new projects, affecting "their design, their evolutionary paths, and their ultimate success" (Izzo et al., 2012, p. 226). Edinburgh's 2001 "Festivals Strategy", which helped inspire the current research, identified "an integrated culture (or industry) with people, ideas and skills moving between different festivals" (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001, p. 14). Strategic consideration of Edinburgh's festivals subsequently led to the *Thundering Hooves* collective planning documents (Consulting, 2006; BOP Consulting & Festivals and Events International, 2015), and analysis of the festivals' contribution to the wider cultural sector in *The Network*

*Effect* (BOP Consulting, 2018). Organisational links are vital to festivals and events (Ziakas & Costa, 2010), yet there is a need to recognise that such links are frequently based upon personal relationships.

Papers from the *Event Management* special issue on events as networks, platforms and communities explore a wide range of inter-personal relationships (Richards & Jarman, 2021). Social media based networks are presented as a facet of a Chinese music festival's community, complementing the effects of physical co-presence experienced by attendees: the connections are person to person; the settings are a combination of online and offline; the network is further bounded by its members' voluntary attachment to the festival (Lei & Li, 2021). At the Royal Welsh Show the event serves as a platform, a facilitator of network formation through the actions of tens of thousands of attendees, which has particular implications for rural agricultural communities throughout the year (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021). From data gathered in Brazil, an "Event Social Interaction Scale" has been introduced, providing a better understanding of attendees' social experiences, including factors that might affect their receptiveness to forming new connections within the event environment (Marques et al., 2021). These papers demonstrate that a focus on personal connections is a starting point for multiple forms of research into festivals, events and associated communities. Each recognises the importance of imposing some form of boundary on the resulting network (Prell, 2012, pp. 65-67), though the inherent flexibility of SNA allows connections, boundaries and settings to be adjusted to fit different research objectives.

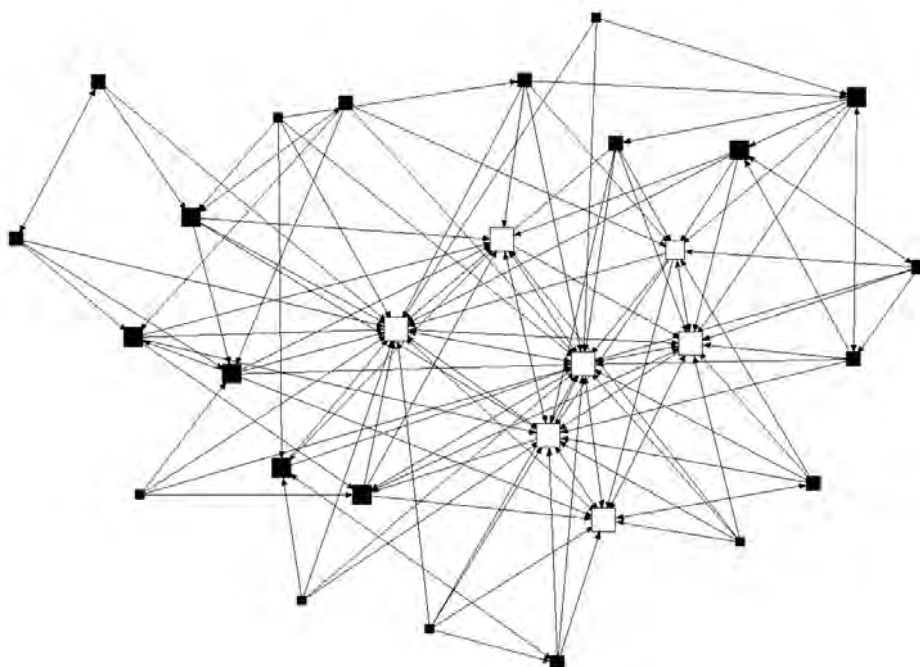
As noted above (Christakis & Fowler, 2010), the nature of personal interactions is not determined by connections alone, but also by the degree of contagion: the resources, information, attributes and other items that may (or may not) flow across such connections. For the purposes of this discussion, analysis of contagion within and across social networks will be considered through its contribution to *collaboration* in the context of festivals, events and creative communities. This PhD's application of two mode SNA examined hundreds of online applications to a network of Fringe festivals: each application representing a performer or a group, having selected the Fringe festival(s) at which they were interested in performing (Jarman, 2021). The contagion here is initially a flow of information, through application forms containing contact details, show information, and performance requirements. All parties enter into this relationship with the understanding that a successful application could lead to a much deeper professional collaboration. The potential links created through these festivals also provide a basis on which richer relationships might develop, or at the very least establishes an association that can be rekindled later. Indeed, the learning from this appraisal of the primary data collected for the PhD, is that network ties lay the groundwork for both contagion and collaboration. Identifying one's most important connections within a bounded group

(Jarman, 2016), or applying to a series of networked festivals, are acts that affirm an existing situation: strength of feeling towards someone, or a desire to perform at different festivals. It is confirmation of a strongly held belief, but it is also an investment in that connection: assurance that given the opportunity, further effort and resources will be invested in that relationship in the future.

Contagion and collaboration are not synonymous, yet by recognising their interconnected nature it becomes possible to integrate additional sources of research and analysis. Ziakas & Costa, for example, imply causation between the sharing of “perspectives, resources, and skills of local people and organizations” in an events network, with relationships based on “balance, harmony, equity and mutual support rather than by coercion, conflict and domination” (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 143). These authors are not using the terminology of contagion, yet this can be inferred from what they have identified as flowing through their focal networks. Instead, they talk of collaboration, both event-centred and more generally. Collaboration is prioritised by Booth as well, asserting that all “events engage collaborative networks in the production process”, and that collaborations “build power” (Booth, 2016, p. 101). Collaboration is also a term familiar from an industry perspective, with many festivals under strategic pressures from key stakeholders to collaborate with partners, in pursuit of greater returns on their investment (BOP Consulting & Festivals and Events International, 2015). In Edinburgh this contributed to the formation of Festivals Edinburgh (Consulting, 2006), in a model that has been replicated in other eventful cities. Festivals may in turn realise artistic advantages through shared projects (BOP Consulting, 2018, pp. 11-18), without which a high proportion of creative work would not be viable (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011). This perspective implies that the structures and processes of contagion are thus the opportunities and means of collaboration, often operating at an interpersonal scale, and deserving of further study.

In an appraisal of the “flow of information and resources” through a network, Scott focuses on considerations of the direction in which such flows are possible (Scott, 2017, pp. 79-80), which has implications for the current analysis of festival and creative community networks. In SNA terms this can be accounted for in terms of “directed” graphs, leading to sociogram models where the ties between nodes might end in arrowheads to show the course of diffusion, or contagion, through a network (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 11-14). For example, one person may nominate another as one of their most important contacts within a festival organisation, as shown in Figure 2.1 from this book’s empirical research with the volunteer arts festival (Jarman, 2018a, p. 342). Such ties would have arrowheads at both ends if both actors nominated each other. Graphs may also be undirected, where the direction is not important, such as might be the case with two-mode networks (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 233; Jarman, 2021). Ziakas & Costa included directed graph considerations

in their data collection through the questions they asked of each organisation's representative: "Help sent" and "Help received" were both included (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 137). If both parties recognised the act of help, it suggests a stronger connection (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 140). Reciprocated ties of this kind can also reflect prior ties, which in turn can improve future project coordination, and aid the formation of new social connections (Izzo et al., 2012, p. 226).



*Figure 2.1 Directed ties in a whole network*

Festival collaboration, whether with another festival or other categories of stakeholder, is generally conducted at an organisational level. This is demonstrated in network diagrams produced across a number of different studies (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 139; Izzo et al., 2012, p. 230; Van Niekerk, 2014, p. 704; Booth, 2016, p. 105). However, organisations are also collections of people, albeit acting on behalf of their employers. This presents a complex picture of organisational connections intersecting with personal ties. Such is the basis of relationships between a festival and its stakeholders, which have been identified as increasingly strategic (Bostok, 2014). Relationships are necessary for the festival to reach its objectives, provide an important source of legitimacy, and can generate moral obligations to embrace underrepresented communities and viewpoints. This latter point is explored further in

section 5.4.4, with reference to development of a normative network theory of festivals. As the demands on festival producers increase, there are pragmatic reasons for addressing organisations and communities as collective stakeholders, without reflecting too deeply on how each grouping is comprised of individuals. Such a choice should not be taken lightly or uncritically, and underlines that network based research is complementary to other approaches, and not always a replacement for them (Jarman et al., 2014). There may be limits to how far an approach focused on individuals is able to account for their roles in representing organisations and other entities, even where it is apparent that personal networked relationships are the foundation on which organisational partnerships are built.

Recognising the importance of personal networks has practical implications for those working on and with festivals. It can encourage and influence an active approach to managing relationships, beyond passively describing and illustrating a series of connections. A 2018 report into “The Network Effect” of Edinburgh’s festivals suggests that this mindset sits comfortably within the city’s events management workforce (BOP Consulting, 2018). The report highlights the importance of Edinburgh’s festivals in supporting a wider creative economy “as the need to share services and work collaboratively becomes more apparent” (BOP Consulting, 2018, p. 21). This reflects similar findings from the Science Festival research, where central positions in the social network were held by events careerists, who had experience working with other festivals in the city (Jarman, 2016, pp. 301-302). The annual cycle of festivals facilitates an “events ecosystem [of freelancers that] functions at three levels: across Edinburgh; UK-wide; and globally” (BOP Consulting, 2018, p. 21). Within such an ecosystem, for those able to penetrate its networks and benefit from its advantages, are opportunities to develop careers, move between projects, and capitalise on the network effects that have developed over the past 75 years or more in Edinburgh. This is an environment where adopting a networked mindset may be a necessity, rather than a choice, for those who wish to progress their projects and careers.

Festivals and creative communities are therefore capable of producing networked ecosystems that are resilient when functioning well (BOP Consulting, 2018, pp. 19-22). Connection and contagion, as “the structure and function” of networks (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, p. 16), can be supported to enable a social network to operate effectively in both favourable environments. However, this has undoubtedly been difficult through the Covid-19 pandemic, and long-established resilience has appeared more precarious when faced with crippling restrictions necessitated by Government policy (Edinburgh, 2020). During a period when collaborative projects were discontinued and no longer viable for festivals to pursue, many connections, and motivations for contagion, were also curtailed. Projects featured in this manuscript have demonstrated the importance of festivals themselves in generating

social connections (Jarman, 2017; Jarman, 2021), and without the festivals there are fewer people and fewer opportunities to connect. This degradation of network formation and capacity has been highlighted in appeals for Governmental special support during the Covid-19 pandemic, for although there may have been a sense of common experience and common purpose amongst those involved in the festival industry, such solidarity has a finite lifespan (Snapes, 2021). Networks that underpin the project-based, temporary nature of festival employment are all the more endangered because of their “non-institutionalized” nature, operating “with an invisible structure and not specific objectives” (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 134). “We’re all individuals” (Chapman et al., 1979), with personal priorities and requirements, as has been noted elsewhere in this thesis (Jarman, 2017, p. 65). Even in a mature festival ecology, short term projects and independent freelancers are vital to its creativity and flexibility, and both were heavily impacted by Covid-19. Their dynamism is apparent when adopting a network perspective of such an environment, both when it operates effectively, and when its functions are curtailed (as seen in the “We Make Events” campaign launched in the UK to promote the value of events during the pandemic (Fairbarin, 2020)). In good times and bad, the festival and events sector has to forge its networks and relationships without many of the permanent underpinning structures, hierarchies and processes that are the bedrock of many other industries.

In this consideration of networks, connections, contagion and collaboration, the concept of social capital has become increasingly conspicuous by its absence from the discussion. As a well-established component of sociological enquiry (Putnam, 1995), social capital has been aligned with social network research to good effect (Scott, 2017, p. 7; Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014). This combination of factors has also contributed to papers that inform this PhD’s interest in connection, contagion and collaboration (Richards & Jarman, 2021), exploring different elements of social capital (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). For Marques, Borba & Michael, a focus on socialisation highlighted the sharing of food, cultural practices and rituals, to energise active engagement in their focal Brazilian festivities; contagion of these varieties is noted between strangers and between familiars (Marques et al., 2021). Lei & Li looked at both online and offline connections, and also highlighted socialisation processes; they went on to examine collective memories and trust building, centred on a Chinese music festival (Lei & Li, 2021). From Catalunya, complex and dynamic attachments to both local groups and a wider network are brought the fore by Colombo, Altuna & Oliver-Grasiot; the wider network is fundamental to the coordination of the *Correfoc* event as a whole, yet individual participants are predominantly loyal to the local groups through which they take part (Colombo et al., 2021). These examples underline the importance of community, trust, familiarity, shared endeavours, and celebrations (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). The tone of the papers is generally upbeat, though not uncritical: festival networks are shown

facilitating positive social and community engagement, with beneficial outcomes for those involved.

Papers presented here employ social capital theory in various ways, using it to frame the nature and characteristics of interpersonal relationships: access to resources and power; bonding groups together across shared interests and attributes; bridging between groups across such divides (Jarman, 2016, p. 344; Jarman, 2018b). Social capital manifested itself in a variety of forms in these projects, which can be seen as a consequence of methodological decisions taken during primary data collection and analysis. Choices regarding the nature of which connections to focus on, and which forms of contagion to pursue, have had qualitative impacts on the ways participant experiences were recorded and reported. This in turn informs how this work relates to social capital. Three publications made use of “whole network” data, where participants were asked to identify their “most important” contacts with their respective organisation (Jarman, 2016; Jarman, 2018b; Jarman, 2018a). This approach exemplified the individual nature of social capital, highlighting how some people were more tightly embedded “in a range of networks, structures or groups that allow them to develop and gain this capital” (Foley et al., 2012, p. 92). The directed nature of the connections identified (one person stating that another is “most important”) confers status on the people most frequently identified in this manner: if they are aware of receiving such attention, they may have opportunities to display and discharge their social standing.

The shared, communal nature of social capital is also discernible in the primary research, drawing from evidence of potential contagion as much as stated connections. The collective value of “connectedness... sense of belonging; reciprocity; participation; citizen power and proactivity” (Foley et al., 2012, p. 92) can be identified in the attribute data gathered. For example, those Science Festival employees who reported having worked for other festivals in Edinburgh (Jarman, 2016) tended to do so from relatively central positions in the network. They represented plentiful opportunities for information sharing, engagement with a community support structure, and the establishment of shared values, norms and outlooks across the wider festival ecology (Foley et al., 2012, p. 92). Elsewhere, in the use of ego network SNA (Jarman, 2017), the connections identified tended to be project-based in their origin and thus resulted from formal collaborations. This could have led to more transactional forms of contagion between social actors. Yet both respondents reported complex relationships with many of the contacts they had identified, and they perceived their networks to be both nurturing and enriching. These shared experiences, within a wider context of ongoing inter-project relationships between individuals, proved a fertile environment for support commensurate with social capital.

This section has demonstrated that connection and contagion have the potential to encapsulate a wide range of relationships, situations and environments, all within the context of festivals and creative communities. Social capital has emerged as a complementary articulation of the evidence available in some situations, or as one of its outcomes. A later section develops this further (2.4.2), examining social capital as a feature of the creative communities that host and support festivals. Other interpretations of interpersonal relationships might be more attuned to strategic and transactional relationships. Either way, combining SNA and a networks-based perspective provides a means to better understand both discrete case studies and the more general networked context of event connections, contagion, and collaboration.

### *2.3.2 Network structure, tie strength and perspective*

Structure is often seen as integral to the consideration of networks, conveying meaning in the data being analysed, while illustrating the relationships between a network's nodes and ties. SNA textbooks comment on the various structural elements that underpin network science, and this section will later do likewise with respect to "core-periphery" characteristics (Prell, 2012, p. 189; Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 229-229), and tie strength (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 68-71; Scott, 2017, pp. 35-37). Such textbooks also explore the drawing of network structures through graphs and "sociograms", something that "is now so well established and taken for granted that its novelty in the 1930s is difficult to appreciate" (Scott, 2017, p. 14). A historical approach is also taken by Prell, who notes that the use of graph theory for "developing formal definitions for concepts such as cliques, centrality and balance" is a debt that SNA owes to social psychology (Prell, 2012, p. 27). This section of the PhD commentary will first expand upon the relevance of considering network structure as a whole, then turn to the strength of social ties. Taken together, these contributions to the discussion will be tendered as a consideration of perspective, and then of meaning.

Presenting social life through a networked lens offers a dichotomy, between what the individual actor sees, and what the wider network reveals to observers with sufficient data (including researchers). Seeking to reveal this distinction has been characterised as exploring "the structure (or form) of networks from an 'outsider's' view, and the content and processes of networks from an 'insider's' view" (Edwards, 2010, p. 2). Edwards offers this interpretation as a justification for promoting mixed methods approaches in SNA, stating that networks are "*both* structure and process *at the same time*" (Edwards, 2010, p. 2) (emphasis in the original). This PhD used mixed methods approaches to consider the implications of network structures, firstly

to research the volunteer team behind an arts festival (Jarman, 2018a), and then in preparation for two mode SNA amongst Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021). In a creative planned events environment, investigating network structure is a means of unifying both the rich immersed view of the participant, and also the broad expansive perspective of the producer. The ego network of the participant can be considered alongside, or indeed abstracted from, the whole network that represents the overall festival (Scott, 2017, p. 74). Indeed an ego network might present a truer reflection of the experience being sought, when unconstrained by adherence to specific types of connections (Jarman, 2017). Perspective matters: the festival producer who is interested in social connections between members of staff, or perhaps transport links between venues, is not trying to capture the interplay of social connections between colleagues, friends and audience members, nor the relevance of shops, public spaces and cafes. Yet to the individual employee these are inherent to the festival experience: social circles that may or may not intersect, premises that are landmarks in the festival terrain (Crossley et al., 2015, p. 21). In network analysis terms perspective shapes interpretation, be it the complexity of the insider view, the outsider's desire to see beyond a single person's social horizon, or some combination of outlooks.

Turning to the papers highlighted by Van Niekerk & Getz as representative of viewing festivals and events using "social network theory" (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 17-21), there are frequent attempts to represent network structure in graphical forms. Sociograms are deployed to illustrate relevant nodes and their ties, primarily between organisations in whole network type figures (Ziakas & Costa, 2010; Izzo et al., 2012; Van Niekerk, 2014; Booth, 2016). These papers demonstrate the potential of SNA to generate an outsider's perspective on a network through gathering and presenting relational data, and doing so in ways that are intelligible to festival administrators and academics. Such diagrams can show the roles fulfilled by different organisations in relation to a given festival (Booth, 2016, p. 105), and distinctions between "basic dyadic" and "network relationship" approaches to destination management governance (Van Niekerk, 2014, p. 704). Some work goes further, such as showing how both institutionalised and non-institutionalised connections between organisations can be represented in a single diagram (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 139). There is also recognition that as destination management becomes more complex, actors must adapt and the conceptual models on which they base their decisions should be revised (Van Niekerk, 2014). This perspective is valuable for event producers and their industry stakeholders, but likewise for host communities who must "understand and leverage the patterns of relationships that facilitate collaboration", relationships that are hard to see if no one seeks them out (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 133).

The papers being presented in this thesis used sociograms and graphs to represent

networks in a variety of ways, from whole networks (Jarman, 2016) to ego networks (Jarman, 2017), in a bid to bring understanding, variety and creativity to the study of festivals and creative communities. See Figures 2.2 and 2.3 for illustrative examples. SNA software generated the graphs, ensuring a direct connection between the data gathered and the resulting sociograms, and setting the work apart from publications that used bespoke diagrams (Booth, 2016, p. 105). Two projects are of particular note in consideration of network structure: firstly research into a volunteer run multi-arts festival that led to two publications (Jarman, 2018b; Jarman, 2018a); and secondly ego network analysis of two prominent creative industry professionals (Jarman, 2017). These projects exemplified outsider and insider perspectives on networks. The multi-arts festival research revealed details of the organisation's social network structure that would likely have remained hidden without the research, such as the limited coherence between the organisation's functional departments on the one hand (Content, Promotion, etc.), and its social network when framed as each contributor's "most important connections" (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 125-128). Only the Finance team was revealed as a meaningful subgroup within the wider network, just a month before the festival took place. An overall core-periphery network structure was also revealed, perhaps confirming expectations of those being surveyed. From the ego network research structural information is based on the ego's perceptions (Jarman, 2017). Findings here pertained to overall network density, opportunities for the ego act as a broker between contacts, and the relative "efficiency" of more or less densely connected networks. An ego's perception of their own network, informed by SNA sociograms, frames their activity and engagement in different social settings, affecting how they interpret the opportunities and limitations that they feel life has dealt them. We shape our network, and (our perceptions of) our network shapes us (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 17-21).

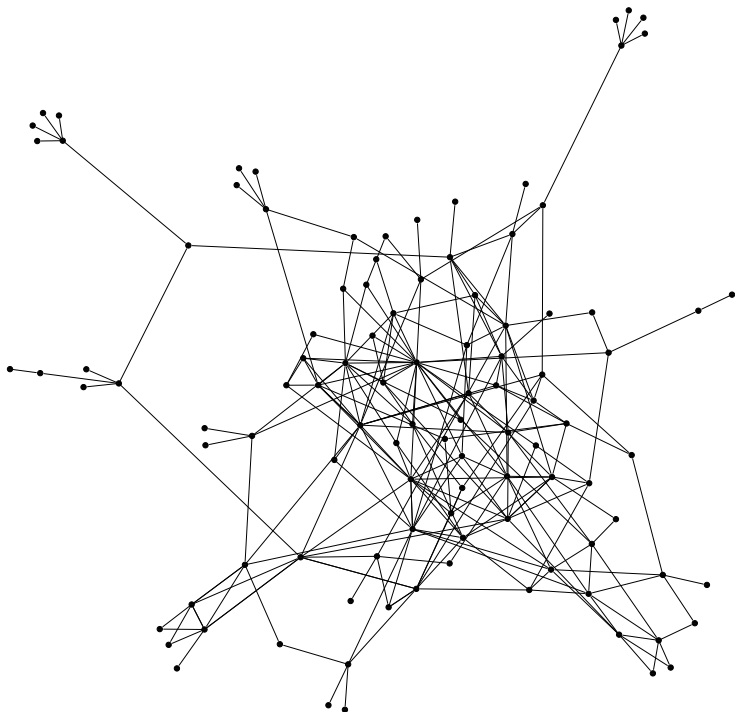


Figure 2.2 "Whole network" sociogram, from the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival

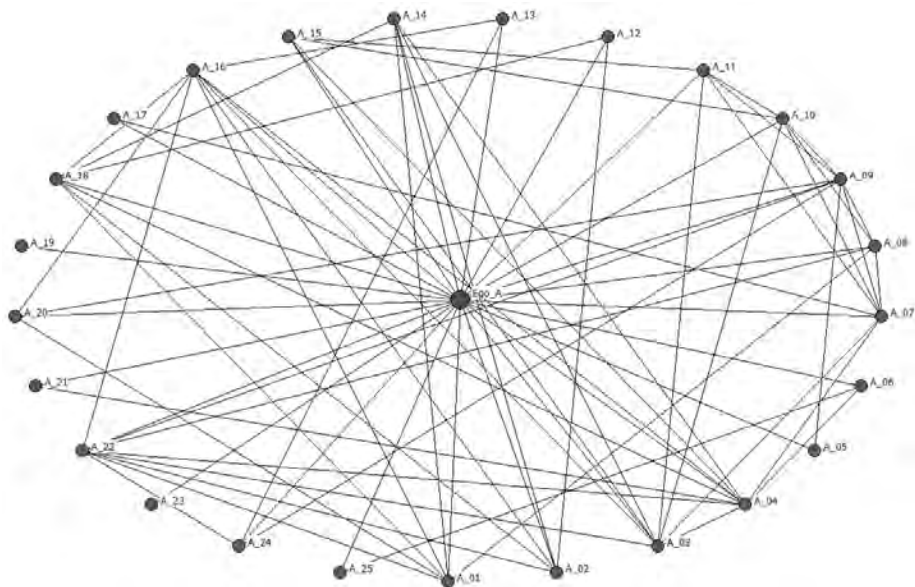


Figure 2.3 "Ego network" sociogram, from data collected with a creative industries professional

Investigating network structure from the perspectives of individuals provides insights into the meanings and possibilities of network connections to those involved. Papers from the *Event Management* special issue convey this message in a variety of ways (Richards & Jarman, 2021). Diagrams, figures and sociograms have not been used, though personal insights and anecdotes are common refrains. These include showing how attendance at a Welsh agricultural event increased attendees' access to politicians, industry leaders and the media (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021). Social media allowed others to derive personal benefits from the sense of community forged online around a Chinese music festival (Lei & Li, 2021). Meanwhile the methodology used to research UK towns prioritised the experiences of key public sector representatives, who in turn saw the need for their organisations to act as hubs within networks of partners, activities and communities (Norman & Nyarko, 2021). Through a network-centric approach the perspectives of individuals were here knowingly contextualised within a larger web of connections. There is a self-conscious recognition across these papers that individual people, sometimes representing independent organisations, contribute to the overall value of their networks. There is evidence here of “network value” as an objective of a network-centric form of eventfulness (Richards, 2017, p. 541).

Social networks sometimes exhibit “core-periphery” characteristics, where the people represented (the nodes) fall into two categories: core nodes, connected to other core nodes; and peripheral nodes, generally *not* connected to other peripheral nodes (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 225). The clearest example of this in the PhD is from the multi-arts festival data, where the chosen SNA computer application (UCINET) presented a range of calculations that suggested a core group of seven individuals (Jarman, 2018b, p. 127). These seven had a high network density of connections between them (73.8%), with a low density of connections between peripheral nodes (6.7%). Those in the core group had a fundamentally different perception of the network, and therefore the team of individuals, and thus the process of putting on the festival itself. Izzo *et al.* also explored core-periphery network structures, proposing that such characteristics are fundamental to “the main structural features of a successful event network” (Izzo et al., 2012, p. 232). Such an event would reflect a “dual network” structure: a “core network” of few nodes, with high levels of engagement, strong ties, and prior connections on which to build; and an “extended network”, with inverse characteristics of several stakeholder nodes, weak ties, and infrequent interactions (Izzo et al., 2012, pp. 232-235). This is presented as an ideal type because both parts are necessary: the stable core carries the “folk memory” of the festival, amongst those most trusted and committed to its survival; the flexible extended network is the means by which the core reaches the wider environment, most importantly for creative artistic innovation (Izzo et al., 2012, pp. 234-235). It would be understandable for relatively peripheral members of a festival team to contemplate whether their interests and views were reflected in the composition and

decisions of the core group, and a matter of leadership to see such concerns given due consideration.

An effective and functioning dual network approach might find favour with Foley, McGillivray and McPherson, who consider the shortcomings of cities that “use local coalitions or networks to fund and initiate” events, in their case primarily sporting mega events (Foley et al., 2012, p. 72). They describe patterns of behaviour where a limited range of stakeholders leads on projects that reflect their own interests ahead of either residents’ or their elected representatives’ priorities. Perception is once again key, for if others in a tightly bound and aligned network see their opinions reflected by those around them, there may be limited motivation to modify their opinions and behaviours. Bostok counsels event producers to be wary of such temptations, and to adopt a stakeholder centric approach that places the locality of the event at the heart of such engagement (Bostok, 2014). Work for this thesis has demonstrated that this can be problematic, to the extent that contributors in the core and periphery of a network may have diverging ambitions regarding the obligation of a festival to best integrate itself with the host community (Jarman, 2018a, pp. 345-346). Whether the language used is that of networks or stakeholders, the impulse to be inclusive is often present in the sources highlighted here. Izzo *et al.* took their dual network model a step further, presenting comparative archetypes of “Community-driven events” and “Market-driven events” (Izzo et al., 2012, p. 238). These models differ in terms of their main outcomes, principally economic for the former, and socio-cultural for the latter. They are also said to have markedly different network characteristics in some key areas, not the least of which are the nature and the strength of their ties.

Social networks have “complexities” (Prell, 2012, p. 1), each has “a life of its own” (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, p. 24), and it is not straightforward to analyse and understand them (Scott, 2017, p. 3), but they all have meaning. The remainder of this section will continue the focus on insider and outsider perspectives, with a new emphasis on “tie strength” as an important factor for interpreting a network’s meaning. An intrinsic interest in tie strength was noted during the ego network research for this thesis, when each respondent independently requested that they be permitted to classify the strength of the personal connections they were identifying (Jarman, 2017, p. 80). It made logical sense to both participants that they should convey a sense of meaning when identifying their alters, perhaps out of loyalty to their closest contacts. In the multi-arts festival research, the longevity of involvement with the festival could potentially act as a proxy for tie strength: those who had been with the festival longest were to be found in the core group of seven, suggesting bonding social capital traits (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 129, 131). The identification of a core-periphery structure resulted from the combined contributions of all the respondents, yet it is reasonable to expect ties within the core group to be

particularly strong.

To the outsider, framing their perspective and their research against carefully selected criteria (Prell, 2012, pp. 59-91), consideration of tie strength provides insights that may not be apparent to insiders. Conversely, to the insider, tie strength is a barometer of opportunity, a judgement of how likely a particular connection may deliver on its potential to offer support, information or resources. The outsider may not have the rich data to help inform their own judgements on whether a connection will “deliver” in this way, but then they may be better able to see alternative sources that are not discernible from the inside. The volunteer who reports on their own most important connections within a bounded community is unlikely to know the full lie of the land, the topography of social connections that lie beyond the horizon of their own experience and intuition. Nevertheless, that same volunteer will be aware that such a network of connections exists, they will see it manifested in team meetings, social events, online communications and anecdotal knowledge they pick up about past festivals and other happenings. It is part of the modern human condition to operate in a social environment, taking cues from friends, family and colleagues, through planned events, social obligations and online media. In Castells’s 21st century network society (Castells, 2000), social actors are more aware than their predecessors of the strength, and the perseverance, of their connections. They are better positioned to appreciate, and potentially benefit from, Granovetter’s assertion of the strength of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973; Granovetter, 1983). The role of the outsider is to consider how such ties might be reported by research subjects, and then represented through analysis and discussion. In doing so, the insider’s intuitions about their network can be supported and perhaps challenged, and the outsider’s observations defined and refined.

This appraisal of network structure and tie strength has been presented as a consideration of perspective and meaning, viewed from the complementary vantage points of those within and those outside the network. Comparisons with material festival environments can provide useful analogies. To stand on a busy street corner during Edinburgh’s festival provides opportunities to see how “the decorum that usually characterizes this city dissolves and Edinburgh self-consciously adopts the identity of ‘The Festival City’” (Jamieson, 2004, pp. 64-65). Yet this is not left to chance, as pockets of “unbounded creative expression” are ultimately “bounded by the topography of festivalized spaces” (Jamieson, 2004, p. 65). The strategic intention of event producers, local authorities and other stakeholders is to generate such festival spaces for mutual benefit, within a wider cityscape of shops, offices, businesses and residences that perseveres with its day to day rhythms. From the immediate perspective of the festival attendee, just as they are integrated into social networks so they are subsumed in the festivity and the jostling for space. The rest of the city and the further reaches of a social network are largely unknown contexts, for

all their subtle influences on the individual's lived experience.

In SNA terms, the structure of a network is all-encompassing to the insider, and it is complex with overlapping social circles and ties of varying types and strengths. To the outsider, a social network is intelligible in terms of connection and contagion, core and periphery, and structural characteristics that may contrast with the generally accepted nature of the relationships at hand. The insider experience can be rich in detail and nuance, the outsider perspective might be seen as comparatively "objective" and capable of providing a more complete picture. Different approaches and SNA methodologies are available to researchers, depending on what they hope to discover about a network and its topographical characteristics. Network structure can be thought of as an exploration of potential, with tie strength as that potential put into action: the strong sustainable ties that enable management to function and individuals to bond; the weaker ties that deliver fresh innovations and connect festival workers to multiple projects over many years. Finding perspective and meaning in such an environment can be the greatest reward for anyone involved in delivering and experiencing such festivals.

### *2.3.3 Attributes, homophily and identity*

The study of networks is as much about the qualities of who or what is being connected, as it is a study of the relationships involved. Consideration of a person's attributes relates to their "attitudes, opinions and behaviour", pertaining to the "properties, qualities or characteristics that belong to them as individuals or groups" (Scott, 2017, p. 4). Social network data are therefore richer when attribute information is included, such as the employment history of those located in different parts of the network (Jarman, 2016, pp. 299-302). Not only can this reveal which attributes are valued by members of the network, it also sets a path for subsequent research into how and why such qualities gained their respective status. In ego network analysis, the ego can assign attributes to their alters, in response to "name interpreter" questions drawn up as part of the research methodology (Jarman, 2017, pp. 72-73): this process is integral to the analysis of perspective and meaning discussed above, a reflection of one person's perceptions of their network and the people within it. Yet social networks are often dynamic, a reflection of changing social relationships as ties are created and broken, strengthened and neglected (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 210-213). Part of this dynamism is an embodiment of, or a reaction to, the forces of homophily. Homophily is the process by which social actors associate with others who have similar attributes (Crossley et al., 2015, pp. 80-82): birds of a feather, flocking together. Many such attributes tend to be fixed and unchanging, particularly over the limited span of a festival period: gender for

example, and the organisational department someone is associated with (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 128-131). The same is not necessarily true for the attitudes, opinions and behaviour noted above, where each individual is potentially open to influence from their peers. How that influence plays out is a function of many factors though it could have far reaching consequences, such as how a festival organisation relates to its host community (Jarman, 2018a, pp. 345-346). This section reviews the contribution of attributes and homophily to festival and creative community networks, initially through a critical examination of four papers drawn from Van Niekerk & Getz's research notes on social network analysis (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 18-21). This is a consideration of identity, both individual and collective.

Booth's article on Indian diaspora(s) in New Zealand (Booth, 2016) was selected by Van Niekerk & Getz as an exemplar of network analysis in the field of events, yet despite its focus it does not use the language of attributes and homophily. The article's opening line notes that "cultural festivals play a vital role in the local representation of diasporic cultures" (Booth, 2016, p. 100), manifesting host communities and providing a focus for their individual and collective identities. The paper notes distinctions between North Indian and South Indian communities in Auckland, differences between their cultural celebrations, and the role of festivals in helping newcomers to engage with novel cultural environments (Booth, 2016, pp. 112-114). Most participants are involved with their respective festivals (such as Diwali) because of personal attributes such as race and religion, which have shaped their cultural affiliations and their social networks. This consideration of minority cultures complements this PhD's early analysis of host community identities, with reference to Scottish national identity (Jarman, 2007). Homophily underpins the cohesion of these national and cultural groupings, in both of its forms: individuals and families are drawn to others with similar backgrounds; while Auckland's Diwali has been part of an international evolution in the nature of the event, from localised small scale gatherings to public festivities celebrated by diverse audiences from across the city (Booth, 2016, pp. 107-108). For such transformations to gain and retain popular support at a grassroots level, there is an implication that adjustments in opinions and practices have been diffused through both local and global social networks. Cultural identity is both personal and collective, and network analysis is again capable of reflecting this in the same research.

Izzo *et al.* concentrated their network analysis on the structural dimensions of three Italian cultural festivals, principally the relationships between a "stable nucleus" found in each festival's core, and the accompanying periphery (Izzo *et al.*, 2012, p. 233). They too recognised the importance of identity to the people involved in these festivals, and like Booth implicitly discussed homophily. For Izzo *et al.*, core networks have strong ties between members, considerable levels of mutual trust, and are often populated by the festivals' founders, with "high degrees of intimacy,

familiarity... longtime friendships ...even family relations” (Izzo et al., 2012, p. 233). There are echoes of these findings in the analysis of the volunteer arts festival in Scotland, with its core of seven long-serving and relatively homogenous contributors (Jarman, 2018b). In the Scottish example, the considerable importance of the core group laid a responsibility at their feet, to “represent the characteristics, interests and views of the wider network” (Jarman, 2018b, p. 127). Regardless of other personal attributes, it is apparent that members of these core networks have found in each other a shared commitment to the festival project. They see in each other kindred spirits, friendships reaffirmed over prolonged periods of involvement. They identify with each other, and with the festival, working long hours to produce something that all will be proud of, and that in turn others in their community can also associate themselves with.

Shifting the focus from personal networks to organisational ones can reveal similar evidence of engagement and familiarity, as demonstrated Ziakas & Costa’s analysis of an inter-organisational events network in Fort Stockton, Texas, USA (population 7,800) (Ziakas & Costa, 2010). Relatively strong, often reciprocated, connections are reported between agencies serving the community, drawn together from a typical need to share resources and information in rural communities. The paper refers to homophily by name, with particular focus on “domain and organizational similarity” as key attributes by which to ascertain its presence between organisations (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, pp. 142-143). A less organic version of this organisational homophily might be seen in the Fringe festival network research presented in 4.1.8, where new festival organisations are seen as having been created in the mould of their pre-existing partner festivals: “the network being studied is effectively older than its members” (Jarman, 2021, p. 105). Yet within Fort Stockton’s seemingly harmonious state of affairs, two agencies are identified as being relatively isolated: the High School’s Athletic Department (attributed to its serving a different “domain” to other agencies), and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (attributed to “ethnic relations dissimilarities”) (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, pp. 142-143). Network analysis revealed to the researchers certain characteristics of these inter-organisational relationships, and they encourage the use of such information as a basis for policy, coordination and management decisions. Yet a core factor remains largely unexplored: Fort Stockton is reported to have a 70% Hispanic population, who might be expected to identify with the agency that is most isolated within the community. If nothing else, this research acts as a foundation for further consideration of what these networks mean to the residents, of how the networked organisations choose to identify themselves, and how others see them. The aforementioned Fringe festivals are potentially in a similar position as they seek accommodation within their host communities, though with the added complexity of having been established to serve both resident audiences and incoming performers. Fort Stockton’s organisational network can be interpreted as a relatively conservative form of maintaining the status

quo, seeking “consensus across community divisions” (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 145). Meanwhile the Fringe festivals are explicitly providing a platform for “experimentation and innovation, that simply takes time to engage local performers and audiences” (Jarman, 2021, p. 106).

The final paper of this selection from Van Niekerk & Getz (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 18-21) to be considered in some depth, relating its themes to SNA’s interest in attributes and homophily, is Richards’s examination of events in the network society (Richards, 2015a). This paper introduced his categorisation of “pulsar” and “iterative” events (Richards, 2015a, pp. 555-558). In this work, as in others, Richards applies Castells’s work on the network society to the field of events and festivals (Castells, 2000). The relevance of pulsar and iterative events to the current discussion on attributes and homophily lies in their alignment to Castells’s conceptualisation of the “space of flows” and the “space of places” respectively, which also serves as a foundation for the Fringe networks paper being submitted here (Jarman, 2021). These are realms of social activity that inhabit different spheres of life: one operating at a global scale, with flows of capital, far-reaching decision making power, and a small elite of well-connected people; the other a local environment where cultural identity is formed and reformed, the focus of day to day activity for the majority (Richards, 2015a, pp. 555-558). The former might be represented by the unconventional image of the Fringe network above (Jarman, 2021), the latter more aligned with small town Fort Stockton’s entrenched organisational network (Ziakas & Costa, 2010). Consideration of personal attributes prompts various lines of enquiry in relation to the network society, including whether individuals operating in these contrasting spaces of “flows” and “places” have differing attributes, that allow them to carry out their roles. Castells highlights the role of “switchers” operating in the space of flows, connecting networks and directing flows of information and resources (Castells, 2004, p. 224): to what extent does homophily facilitate switching, between people who recognise an affinity with each other? At a local level, through iterative events, it is “programmers” who generate content with relevance to their domestic audience (Richards, 2015a, p. 556): through what means and by what measures do programmers find common cause with those around them?

Finding shared identity and common cause with peers is therefore potentially valuable for both switchers in the space of flows, and programmers in the space of places. Homophily can be a valuable force in strengthening ties within likeminded communities, as explored in this book’s ego network research (Jarman, 2017). Yet switchers are important in connecting different and disparate groups, spanning the homophilous worlds of the programmers. This implies that to carry out such a role effectively they must also be skilled at working in heterophilous contexts as well, dealing with those who are not like them just as often as with kindred spirits, across

the various challenges of a project-by-project creative career (Jarman, 2017, p. 74). Such thinking can be extended further, if festivals are considered in the roles of switchers and programmers: linking communities and places. This approach has potential if festivals and events are classed as social actors themselves, as Richards suggests through interpretations of actor-network theory (Richards, 2015a, pp. 554-555). Homophily could thus exert its twin forces on festivals themselves: encouraging contact and collaboration between those that are similar, while prompting greater similarity between those in contact with each other. This has implications for the development of shared characteristics and attributes of a kind sometimes ascribed to isomorphism (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011, pp. 443-444). This could also help explain the role of events and festivals as vectors from one city to another in Richards's later conceptualisation of "network-centric eventfulness", with the attendant benefits and opportunities that it might afford host destinations, such as Den Bosch and Barcelona (Richards, 2017). Identity is thus important to the actions of both individuals and organisations, in festival settings as in many other contexts, reinforcing the utility of considering attributes and homophily.

This manuscript's commentary now turns to articles included in the *Event Management* special issue (Richards & Jarman, 2021), to see if they too can be reinterpreted in the SNA terms of attributes and homophily, as expressions of individual and collective identity. From data collected in Brazil, the festival of São João informs Marques, Borba and Michael's development of the "Event Social Interaction Scale" (ESIS) (Marques et al., 2021). Colombo, Altuna and Oliver-Grasiot drew on the "*Correfoc*" fire festival of Barcelona in their analysis of community networks (Colombo et al., 2021). Finally, the Royal Welsh Show is the backdrop to Langridge-Thomas, Crowther and Westwood's consideration of an event's platforming role, in supporting networks and the knowledge economy (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021). In the cases highlighted here there is interplay between two processes of interpersonal connection formation: one characterised by formally organised groupings as a function of each event; the other due to more organic activity. This balancing of formal and organic tie formation, under the influence of homophily, is akin to that seen across this manuscript too, from the project and resource based networks of egos (Jarman, 2017), to the underlying factors helping to shape relationships in the volunteer arts festival (Jarman, 2018b). To the extent that personal attributes are a factor in these processes, there is potential value to researchers of considering the impact of homophily, and thus framing the analysis in terms of social networks.

The role of organised, formal social groupings and their importance to the events in question is a prominent feature of all three papers from the special issue. This might undermine organic open network formation, or in SNA terms emphasise the "bounded" nature of some networks (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 32-35). From Brazil,

groups known as “*quadrilhas*” bring “dance, theatre and music... from the periphery of the big cities” into the heart of the event (Marques et al., 2021, p. 22). At Barcelona’s *Correfoc* a similar role is performed by the “*colles de diables*”, the city-wide “devil groups” who bring their performances, and fire, to the festival (Colombo et al., 2021, p. 58). The Royal Welsh Show contains a wide range of formalised components, from breakfast meetings and civic lunches, to livestock competitions and agricultural demonstrations (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021, p. 50). It is in these structured spaces that the participants demonstrate and celebrate their shared identities. In each case involvement with the more organised parts of the event leads to greater levels of engagement for the individual, such as very strong activity within a person’s “known-group” at São João (Marques et al., 2021, p. 20). There is also recognition that identity and allegiance can be layered, such as where inter-group “relationships and ties as well as the differences and tensions” are reflected at *Correfoc* (Colombo et al., 2021, p. 60). Even where individuals and families are representing only themselves, such as farmers competing in agricultural livestock events (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021, p. 49), sharing the experience with other farmers gives the investment meaning.

This latter point exemplifies one end of a “continuum” identified by the researchers: at one end the event platforms managed by the organisers, at the other those with a more open nature (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021, p. 51). The most committed contributors are drawn to these events by their more formal structures, where they anticipate and then share experiences with those to whom they have an affinity. The events give a platform on which these identities can be displayed and performed. To borrow from the continuum model though, the *formalised* elements of the events are then perhaps given greater meaning and value through their attendant *informal* practices, where participants may have greater liberty to express their (shared) attributes. Conclusions of this kind can be reflected onto the contexts in which this PhD’s research was carried out. Arts festival volunteers, in interviews, happily framed their involvement within their ascribed functional department, yet the social network based on “most important” contacts overlooked this organisational structure (Jarman, 2018b). Here, a formal structure underpinned the creation of a community, which was then provided with opportunities to generate interpersonal relationships based on personal choice, perhaps legitimating the forces of homophily safe in the knowledge that the festival’s operations were secured. Similar processes are conceivable within the Fringe festival network, where the administrative strictures of applying to take part were a necessary device to bring like-minded people together (Jarman, 2021). These considerations have further relevance for the relationship between agency and structure, as discussed below in the Contributions to Knowledge chapter (5.2.2).

Homophily has explanatory potential for those seeking to understand the forces

shaping social activity at festivals and events. It is a means by which to structure discussions around personal identity, group affiliation, and the co-creation of value. There are limitations to applying the term, including an awareness that forms of homophily might easily be based on misconceptions: individuals being drawn to each other because they interpret a shared set of values and beliefs in each other, that might not actually be present (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 429). This factor is recognised in the ego network research submitted for this thesis (Jarman, 2017), where it is framed as a consequence of adopting interpretive methods: how the ego appreciates and understands their network is the basis of how they respond to it. There is also an accompaniment to homophily in the form of “heterophily”, where social situations might encourage engagement with those of differing attributes and characteristics (Crossley et al., 2015, p. 77). The three papers highlighted from the special issue demonstrate that this force also appears to play a part in their events, but sometimes under different circumstances and understandings amongst those involved. There is also a degree of overlap between homophily and heterophily, where a member of a fire group may break from their home team to engage with those from another, while recognising that they might collectively (and jokingly) unite “to burn, to burn tourists!” (Colombo et al., 2021, p. 66).

An important general limitation, and consideration, in the study of homophily is the need for longitudinal data, in order to transform a static picture of a networked social environment at a moment in time, into a dynamic process. A longitudinal methodology has the potential to demonstrate if homophily is acting to unite those with shared attributes, or if over time those who are interacting are becoming more alike; Prell refers to this as disentangling social selection from social influence (Prell, 2012, pp. 129-130). To this end there is a risk that too much has been inferred from the papers reviewed above, which more data might confirm or confound. Richards’s recent article in the special issue updates previous research on the “Bosch 500” project, hosted by the Dutch city of ‘s-Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch) in 2016 (Richards, 2021). Longer term reflection has re-framed this largely successful programme of events as a partially missed opportunity, with various connections, ties, common interests and shared projects being somewhat neglected over time. Homophily based on shared characteristics and interests may have helped bring people and organisations together in preparation for the 500th anniversary year, but appears to have been insufficient to maintain such levels of close cooperation over time. Richards recognises the value of this longitudinal work, and indeed frames it as a story of value as recognised by different stakeholders through the course of the Bosch 500 project (Richards, 2021, pp. 95-96). Snapshots of network data can be richly rewarding in their way, while remaining limited in their representation of evolving social relationships.

In lieu of longitudinal network data, the papers presented in this book have employed

alternative approaches and methodologies to provide insights into attributes, homophily, and identity. The use of mixed methods informed work on homophily within a journal special issue on diversity and inclusion (Jarman, 2018b). Two dimensions of identity emerged from this analysis: the situation of each individual amongst their colleagues; and the social implications for the organisation as a whole. Certain characteristics were revealed as being more common in the periphery of the social network (such as non-British nationalities), which then had a bearing on whether the network's leadership core group were conscious of such disparities, and maybe endeavoured to recognise these minority viewpoints in any way (Jarman, 2018b, p. 128). In turn the experiences of non-British volunteers themselves might have been very different to British colleagues who also inhabited the periphery of the network. In the context of the SNA research, nationality assumed a prominence that might not have been apparent in the day-to-day workings of the festival, yet it could be isolated, tracked and exposed through statistical analysis and graphical illustration. Other characteristics, based on a person's "values, attitudes and beliefs" (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 419), were researched through Likert style questions. Volunteers were asked whether they felt that the festival "fits in" with its neighbourhood, or how beneficial the festival was to the longer term viability of the venue (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 130-131), recognising that normative responses to such attributes can be diffused through a network. The paper's closing remarks encourage greater sharing of information about the festival from core to periphery, to "share information about the organisation's work, to increase the engagement and confidence of peripheral figures and to do so while benefiting from the inherent diversity of communities united in their championing of creativity" (Jarman, 2018b, p. 131).

This section has demonstrated that while the network analysis terms "attributes" and "homophily" are yet to find popular usage in the events studies literature, the themes and processes they encapsulate are of high relevance to the field. Identity is an ever-present component of social engagement with events, festivals and creative communities, from a person's self-identification, to the way they perceive and interpret others, and ultimately to the group associations and identities that bind organisations and other groupings. Adopting a network perspective emphasises these dimensions, as both a lens on social worlds, and as an opportunity to employ SNA research methodologies as discussed in Chapter 3. The publications reviewed above have shown that at the very least there is potential to enrich the vocabulary being used to describe the formation and actions of event groupings, such as among Brazil's *quadrilhas* (Marques et al., 2021), the Catalan *colles de diables*, (Colombo et al., 2021), and within the Indian diaspora celebrations of New Zealand (Booth, 2016). With this expanded vocabulary comes the potential to generate novel insights and theories from existing data and knowledge (as shown below in 5.4). The burgeoning popularity of network-based approaches is increasing the research options available

to those in pursuit of relevant and meaningful analyses of the social world. SNA has its limitations, but as both a mindset and a research methodology it complements the more common techniques in the academic toolkit. Additionally, by aligning attributes and homophily with identity, this discussion has shown that analysis of networks within the events literature does not always need to make explicit use of SNA terms and methodologies. As noted at the start of this section, network analysis is as much concerned with what is being connected, as it is with the nature of those connections (or the lack thereof). To develop the discussion further, attention will now turn to the network themes of clusters and cohesive subgroups: regions within a network that contain relatively dense connections, where homophily (and heterophily) can be at their most perceptible, and the short-term social co-presence that helps define events and festivals can be illustrated and analysed.

### *2.3.4 Clusters and cohesive subgroups, networked in space and time*

Emphasising the network themes of “clusters and cohesive subgroups” has the potential to bring fresh insight to the very meaning of events. This section will first turn to the (relatively strict) means by which the SNA literature defines its terms. The publications highlighted by Van Niekerk & Getz (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019), and the *Event Management* special issue (Richards & Jarman, 2021), as well as those submitted here, will then be used to assess this opportunity to refine mainstream definitions of festivals and events.

The imperative for social network analysts to clarify their terms stems from the plethora of concepts at play, and the distinctions between them. With reference to the current themes, Scott’s historical background to SNA notes that from a founding interpretation of a “clique”, there are now “‘clusters’, ‘components’, ‘cores’ and ‘circles’... [with] very little in common with one another, apart from beginning with the letter ‘c’” (Scott, 2017, p. 114). Each refers to “the extent to which the members of a network are formed into more or less cohesive social groups” (Scott, 2017, p. 114). Prell’s consideration of “cohesive subgroups” sets out criteria by which the items in Scott’s roll call of terms might be distinguished (Prell, 2012, pp. 151-153). These include the density of ties linking the members of a subgroup, the subgroup’s relative isolation from the rest of the network, and the subgroup’s vulnerability to fragmentation (Prell, 2012, pp. 152-153). SNA textbooks, and the research they reference, set out the defining characteristics and applications of these different forms of cohesive subgroup. Ultimately, they are referring to “portions of the network in which actors interact more with each other than they do with actors who are not in the group” (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 205). This includes subgroups discussed above in relationship to core-periphery structures (Jarman, 2018a), but potentially taking

place anywhere within the entirety of a network.

In practice two approaches are available to those seeking and studying cohesive subgroups: one defined by the nature of the research (e.g. looking for evidence that influential employees of one festival have, previously, been associated with another) (Jarman, 2016, pp. 301-302); the other to allow the algorithms within SNA software to identify groupings from the primary data (e.g. the apparent cohesion of one functional team within an overall festival network, while other such teams remain obscured) (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 9-12). Both approaches reflect Borgatti *et al.*'s note that these are instances of increased interactivity within a wider social context, and both are relevant to academics because they occur at the interface of precise research focus and everyday life. While it is incumbent on the researcher to make purposeful choices as to why and how they are investigating particular network characteristics, the festival practitioner remains free to go about their business producing experiences to the best of their ability. It is for this reason that this section will proceed by adopting a more informal approach to the use of terms, preferring an all-encompassing "cluster" to denote regions of increased social cohesion, dynamism and activity within a network, which in turn potentially relates to contagion and homophily (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 51-52). The suggestion being made here is that a festival or event could be defined in comparable terms: a period of time framing intensified social activity. It can thus be proposed that social network clusters on the one hand, and festivals and events on the other, are not so very different from each other.

Festivals and similar phenomena have been the focus of many attempts to define their form and nature. Characterising events as "temporary clusters" of activity and exchange (Richards & Jarman, 2021, p. 3) draws from earlier research that positioned them as a kind of community of practice (Comunian, 2017). Such approaches emphasise function rather than form, which is not uncommon in the established events literature. Bowdin, *et al.* refer to "any incidence or occurrence esp [sic] a memorable one" (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011, p. 17), while Getz & Page recognise that "planned or special events are a matter of perspective and are social constructs" (Getz & Page, 2020, p. 51). Focusing instead on event forms would highlight venue, setting, attendance, contents, degrees of organisation and objectives, while Richards & Palmer accentuate content, timing and location, audience, and stakeholders (Richards & Palmer, 2010, pp. 41-42). Finally, for Raj, Walters & Rashid, the management of events is "the capability and control of the process of purpose, people and place" (Raj *et al.*, 2017, p. 5). The academic study and education of festivals and events has yet to coalesce around agreed definitions, though it is apparent from these sources that festivals can be understood as "temporal phenomena" (Getz & Page, 2020, p. 51), where often "[c]ommunity, or communities, is thus the most important of the event objective components" (Raj *et al.*, 2017, p. 5).

To adapt the above description of network clusters, therefore, festivals are also instances of increased social interactivity, generally taking place within wider community and chronological contexts that pre-date and outlive the event in question.

Equating the temporal and social clustering of festivals and events with social network clusters aligns with how persistent year-round Indian community organisations in Auckland are “activated” through cultural festivals such as Diwali (Booth, 2016, p. 112). Booth’s paper uses a form of sociogram to illustrate relationships between organisations, and between organisations and festivals, providing a longitudinal, four dimensional appreciation of clustering effects under the energising influence of a series of festivals. This work builds on the characterisation of “pulsar” and “iterative” events (Richards, 2015a), supporting the notion that pulsar events can reconfigure local networks, as a prelude for a potentially longstanding and sustainable culture of iterative events. These are the kinds of ambitions held by the volunteers arts festival discussed here (Jarman, 2018a), where organisers hope that their injections of life into under-utilised venues will have a legacy of locally generated activity after the festival has moved on. In both Auckland and Scotland, presenting festivals as both social and temporal clusters is dependent on both the event at hand (as the clustering stimulant), and the wider social environment (providing the raw materials, ripe for clustering).

Local government and the public sector can be instrumental in shaping the relationship between a festival and its host community, and the clustering forces that connect the two. Council departments, publicly owned venues and facilities, and a responsibility to represent the public interest all play a part. Relationships between actors in this environment have been represented graphically (Ziakas & Costa, 2010; Van Niekerk, 2014), and via use of the Business Model Canvas from the perspective of local government (Norman & Nyarko, 2021). Where one paper is very positive about the power of networks as the foundation of a destination’s events portfolio (Ziakas & Costa, 2010), and another advocates adopting a “network relationship approach” in order to reflect the complexities involved (Van Niekerk, 2014, p. 714), the third publication sounds a note of caution on just how constrained smaller local authorities are in their actions (Norman & Nyarko, 2021). The picture that emerges is one of considerable potential, limited by structural fragility, with limited resources for Booth’s activation of network clusters (Booth, 2016). To be successful in such aims, local public sector destination management organisations may need to adopt new roles, including “creating a network for stakeholder engagement” (Van Niekerk, 2014, p. 715). This activity is akin to the governmental connections identified by respondents to the ego network research for this book (Jarman, 2017), creating both strong and weak ties in support of local practitioners and public sector objectives. The local authority has the reach, responsibility and remit to encourage the social

cohesion so valued by network cluster researchers, manifested in effective relationships, trust and other aspects of social capital. Resources are not so assured, however, with council officers having multiple roles and limited capacity to invest in forging and supporting sustainable network activity. The prize of establishing a town or city as “eventful” is far from inevitable, and the various models available all require investment, strategic planning and compromises (Richards, 2017).

There is a gravitational dimension to the temporal clustering forces of festivals, in relation to the networked communities that are most engaged in them. Lei & Li found that the annual Chinese music festival they studied had the capacity to warp time for members of the social media communities that have emerged among attendees and adherents: contributors to online conversations categorise the network’s year-round activity three ways as “before, during and after [the festival], and normal days” (Lei & Li, 2021, p. 38). This corresponds with the fire running groups of Barcelona, for whom “it is this network [of year round communication and planning] that generates the event [the *Correfoc*]”, resulting in a festival bounded by time, location, and the cultural affiliations that differentiate insiders from tourists (Colombo et al., 2021, p. 66). In Wales, the Royal Welsh Show enables social interactions “which stimulate and perpetuate networks” of short-term and longer duration respectively (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021, p. 52). Each instance demonstrates the parallel clustering effects of festivals: they provide a persistent core around which social networks can coalesce over long stretches of time; then during the festival period itself, there is a temporal clustering of activity and connections of an intensity not seen through the rest of the year. From this PhD’s research, this is comparable to the volunteer arts festival (Jarman, 2018a): its core group of seven are established veteran contributors, engaging with each other over many years, and providing a foundation for a larger community to coalesce during the planning and delivery periods of each iteration of the festival. Overall, the forms that this clustering activity takes in each location will be unique, and culturally significant to the people and communities involved. There are however common functions being performed at each, that reinforce both the significance of the festivals, and their ongoing legacies as a foundation of persistent community networks.

Viewing festivals as periods of social clustering is a novel development in the appreciation of their community building outcomes, captured through an analysis of networks as a fundamental organising principle of social life. It is apparent, however, that pursuing beneficial impacts in this way requires management, and strategic interventions. From the examples drawn from above, festival producers who post videos online after the event contribute to the sustainability of social media communities, stimulating conversation and communication (Lei & Li, 2021, p. 38). In Wales, the creators of agricultural shows must recognise that considerable social

value at such events is co-created by attendees, and it is incumbent on the shows' planners and managers to provide the range of platforms required to facilitate unstructured interactions and "the stimulation of network value" (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021, p. 52). This thesis commentary will turn its attention wholeheartedly to such management and coordination in the following section, focused as it is on the network theme of "centrality". Awareness that "relationships in event networks are strategic resources" (Izzo et al., 2012, p. 240) is however an empowering notion, reflecting the value and values embodied in festivals and events, which can be revealed and studied through the methods advocated by these publications.

This section will close with comment on the papers presented in this thesis, specifically instances of festivals activating cohesive subgroups within their host communities: temporal and social clusters coalescing. The earliest publication submitted for the PhD originated in undergraduate research, focused on the Edinburgh Festivals and Scottish national identity in the 1940s and 1970s (Jarman, 2007). The work recognises that each of the city's summer festivals has a different relationship with Scotland, with the Festival Fringe's open access model particularly well suited to reflecting a politicised debate over the nation's future. The festivals combined to provide platforms on which to present a "truer understanding of Scotland" than was proving possible through the contentious rise of Scottish nationalism, and campaigns for the devolution of power from the distant London parliament to Edinburgh (Jarman, 2007, p. 7). The temporal clustering of Edinburgh's summer festivals gave form to pre-existing imagined communities (Anderson, 2006), enabling them to become tangibly real for a short period, and increasing the range of voices heard in debates over Scotland's future. Further research into the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016) illustrated the presence of a cluster of freelance administrators helping to shape the future of the city's festival sector. Sociograms in this paper illustrate how the most central nodes in the festival's network tended to report being permanent or long term freelancers, who had worked at the preceding year's festival, and were also veterans of other Edinburgh festivals, such as the Festival Fringe and the Edinburgh International Book Festival (Jarman, 2016, pp. 299-302). It is a feature of this urban festival economy that contributors will cohere at one festival after another. A network perspective and research methodology combined to highlight how this affected one such festival, paving the way to further investigations as to the nature and experience of a lifestyle lived within clusters and cohesive subgroups.

### *2.3.5 Centrality, as a foundation for leadership, management and influence*

Adopting a networked appreciation of the social world encourages particular lines of enquiry, and the issue of network “centrality” attracts considerable attention as one of the earliest SNA concepts to emerge (Scott, 2017, p. 96). Individuals within a network find that their experiences are shaped by centrality: from their access to resources and information, to their ability to influence conversations and decisions that affect the community, and their appreciation of how others see them (Prell, 2012, pp. 95-96). Centrality is a window onto “popularity, brokerage, mediation and exclusion” at both an individual level and at the global scale of whole networks (Scott, 2017, p. 9). As with the preceding discussion around clusters, this section will generally adopt a flexible approach to definitions of centrality, as a way of likening it to analogous analysis of festivals and events. Comparable terms used include “gatekeeper” (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 138), “network orchestrators” (Izzo et al., 2012, pp. 226-227), and “switchers” (Richards, 2015a, p. 556). Other research considered the centralising role of organisations in developing networks and platforms, through which others could then co-create their event communities (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021, p. 51), and generate network value (Richards, 2021, p. 91). Centrality is therefore another theme where social network-orientated perspectives might bring fresh insights into festival and creative communities research.

Definitions and measurements of centrality are many and varied (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 163-180). Since the mid-20th century “a number of competing concepts” have been developed, each with “a concern for the relative centrality of various points in the graph” (Scott, 2017, p. 96). Four such concepts were employed for this manuscript in the volunteer arts festival research (Jarman, 2018b; Jarman, 2018a). Centrality findings based on participant survey data were aggregated, to help select a sample of interviewees for further data collection. The first form of centrality considered was “degree centrality”, which refers to a straightforward count of the number of ties a node has (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 165-168). This is sometimes considered in terms of “indegree” or “outdegree”, where ties are directed and either enter a node or exit from it. “Eigenvector centrality” builds on this, by weighting each adjacent node by its own centrality, so “a node is only as central as its network” (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 168-169). “Beta centrality” was used as a potential reflection of the influence that one person might have on others in the network (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 170-172). Finally, “betweenness centrality” was also included, as a measure of how frequently a given node appears on the shortest paths between other pairs of nodes, offering a “high-betweenness” node access to the network’s flows, and gatekeeper potential (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 174-175).

Differentiating between forms of centrality of is not, merely, a question of

methodology, as the choices available carry different meanings and implications. Such considerations informed the decision to aggregate rankings amongst the arts festival volunteers, where “[s]ufficient correlation is presented to reflect comparable phenomena, yet diversity between measures suggests each has its place” (Jarman, 2018a, p. 342). Valente *et al.* noted eight different measures of centrality available through the UCINET network analysis software (Valente *et al.*, 2008), with more potentially added in the years since. (Their full list reads: “degree, betweenness, closeness, eigenvector, power, information, flow, and reach” (Valente *et al.*, 2008, p. 1).) These divergent approaches to centrality reflect nothing less than the variety of disparate environments and situations in which social interactions take place, where it is valuable to participants and observers to better understand the nature of those interactions for either intrinsic or instrumental purposes.

Centrality, and centralising tendencies, contribute to network analysis principles discussed in previous sections as well, shaping social relationships and organisational forms. Clustering is a component of “small world” network characteristics, for example, which also reflect the central role of some nodes in connecting otherwise disparate parts of a network (Crossley *et al.*, 2015, pp. 38-43). Small world networks have been identified as helping to explain a festival’s connection to place (Richards, 2015a, p. 563), which in SNA terms could heighten the status of whichever person, people or organisation is helping to facilitate such connections. For Richards this means understanding the role of switchers, “who link different networks together” (Richards, 2015a, p. 556), in ways defined by Castells in his characterisation of managerial elites in the “space of flows” (Castells, 2000, pp. 445-448). Izzo *et al.*, meanwhile, describe successful network orchestrators as those who deliver on three distinct responsibilities on behalf of a festival organisation: “(i) partner selection, (ii) creating a climate of trust, (iii) integrating and leveraging multiple resources, knowledge, and capabilities” (Izzo *et al.*, 2012, p. 227). Not only must the individuals described be in central positions of influence, they should also be capable of delivering desired benefits to their partners and stakeholders.

Festival stakeholder relationships usually involve organisations, rather than individuals. This does not preclude the use of social network focused methodologies and mindsets. For Langridge-Thomas *et al.*, the central role of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society (RWAS) is fundamental to the nature and success of the Royal Welsh Show (Langridge-Thomas *et al.*, 2021, p. 51). Activities at the Show are on a continuum, from those “tightly controlled by RWAS to those organically created by other actors”, and it is this combination that delivers value to those who attend and engage (Langridge-Thomas *et al.*, 2021, p. 51). For Ziakas & Costa, degree and betweenness centrality helped them to understand relationships between the agencies involved in event delivery, in rural Fort Stockton (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, p. 138). This is also another example of multiple approaches to centrality being

combined to develop a richer picture of the local situation, which in turn helped the authors generate general perspectives on inter-agency connections. Centrality of one form does not necessarily imply others, but it can create favourable conditions for their development: if a high proportion of colleagues identify someone as being important, it is unsurprising if they also part of a core leadership cluster, and a potential conduit for flows of information through the organisation (Jarman, 2018b, p. 127). At an organisational level, the administrative functions of the RWAS put them in a strong position to shape and influence developments at the Show, and throughout the agricultural year.

Representing (or perhaps “re-presenting”) stakeholder engagement as an integrated system, more akin to a network, is exemplified in Bostok’s “stakeholder centric approach” mapping (Bostok, 2014, p. 33): here, the heart of the map represents not a festival or event, but rather the locality in which it takes place. The greater the involvement and investment a stakeholder has to the host locality, the closer they are to the heart of the model, and thus the greater their centrality. This subverts a traditional view that places the festival and event organisation at the centre, surrounded by categorised stakeholder groups (Getz et al., 2007). Bostok’s approach offers new potential for event creators, to both identify relevant stakeholders (now under the headings of “moral” and “strategic”), and to deliver events that meet a wide variety of desired outcomes (Bostok, 2014). Removing host organisations from their centralised position in festival and event networks may also expand the potential to consider them as social actors in their own right. As noted above, Richards develops the potential of this approach with reference to actor-network theory (ANT): the social systems that deliver festival experiences are here comprised of both human actors making decisions, and non-human actors contributing objects, environments and meanings (Richards, 2015a, p. 554). This approach helps to justify conclusions drawn in relation to Izzo *et al.*’s network orchestrators: they attribute this role not to individuals, but rather to organisations (Izzo et al., 2012). In their three case studies network orchestration is identified within organising committees, senior management, and host organisations (Izzo et al., 2012, p. 239). These organisations are widely recognised as being central to their festival’s ability to generate benefits for the locality, but also central in terms of embedding the festival within their host communities. The community is thus represented in and by the network orchestrators, who in turn facilitate festivals that are widely anticipated, accepted and welcomed, in seemingly successful application of Bostok’s locality-centred approach to stakeholder mapping. Actor-network theory permits observers to grant network presence and status to the festivals themselves, in what is ultimately a complex yet sustainable system for the localities involved.

The relevance of centrality to leadership and management has also been highlighted by the investigations into the Royal Welsh Show (Langridge-Thomas et al., 2021)

and Fort Stockton (Ziakas & Costa, 2010). Whatever the factors that gave prominence to the most central organisations (respectively the RWAS in Wales, and the Tourism Department and the Chamber of Commerce in Texas), it is now incumbent on them to lead and facilitate the delivery of successful events. This aligns with consideration of what could be said to make for successful leadership: “confidence, integrity, connection, resilience and aspiration” (Jackson & Parry, 2008, p. 17). In this definition connection represents more than flows of communication, it also requires the ability to link leaders and followers in an authentic and effective manner. In the context of festivals and creative communities, the concept of followers might be difficult to articulate, given the prevalence of independent freelancers, host communities, and audience members with varying allegiance to an event. The ego network analysis carried out for this PhD is relevant here, exploring centrality beyond the confines of a specific organisation (Jarman, 2017). The data and analysis were rooted in the two egos’ perspectives, where each was central to their own network: “in modern societies most people interact and form ties across a number of distinct ‘social circles’ or ‘domains’ whose membership, with the exception of ego herself, does not overlap” (Crossley et al., 2015, p. 21). This is centrality of a deeply personal, unique kind, that is fundamental to the human condition. It is also an appreciation of the connections between festivals and the creative communities of which they are a part, the communities that provide them with people, ideas, resources, audiences, and rationales for existing.

The papers presented in this book ultimately apply notions of centrality in a variety of ways, some implied and some explicit. Early research with Edinburgh’s Festival City Theatres Trust adopted a stakeholder-oriented conceptual position, yet as part of this its interest in internal stakeholders led to an appreciation of relations between the Trust’s management and other organisational departments (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011). Varying levels of familiarity with the Trust’s strategic ambitions were reported amongst representatives of those departments. Subsequent work reviewed SNA concepts, literature and methods in the context of festivals (Jarman et al., 2014), and in doing so made reference to centrality effects for venues and their employees within a broader event economy. As has been noted above, an aggregated approach to centrality measures benefited research into a volunteer-run arts festival (Jarman, 2018a). In each case, centrality has been presented as a means of understanding social relationships within organisations. Festivals and events have an acute need to manage such relationships, while recognising the distinct challenges associated with their human resources (Jordan, 2019). These include, but are not limited to, the pulsating and cyclical nature of their staff in terms of size and competences, the encouragement of organisational culture and motivation amongst a temporary and often volunteer workforce, and the inherent complexities of the projects being undertaken. These challenges in relation to a festival and its host community are integral to festival management, and network

thinking can both explain them and present effective responses. Such ideas are further developed in the following sections, after a conclusion that draws to a close this consideration of networks.

### *2.3.6 Networks conclusion: understanding relationships within festivals and creative communities*

The preceding five sections have demonstrated that a network-based perspective is critical to the further development of knowledge and understanding of festivals and creative communities. Five dimensions of network science have been discussed to reflect some of the breadth and complexity of this approach to research, in the process of which they were linked to five considerations of festivals and their environment.

- Connection and contagion, from network science, were considered as components of festival collaboration.
- Network structure and tie strength, were considered alongside perspective and meaning as they relate to those experiencing, creating and observing festival experiences.
- Attributes and homophily, were linked to collective and group identity in festival settings.
- Clusters and cohesive subgroups, were the foundation of a redefining of events and festivals as social and temporal clustering occurrences.
- Centrality, finally, was equated with leadership, management and influence.

The papers used to inform and illustrate these discussions have been reinterpreted through this analysis, helping to demonstrate that network focused perspectives are complementary to other, sometimes longer-established approaches. In addition, it is clear from the discussions above that in festival and creative communities research the primary unit of analysis is often the individual. Even when considering relationships between organisations and stakeholder groupings it can be interpersonal ties that matter most. For the individual person, festivals, events, venues, public sector agencies and other organisations are labels for different forms of networked communities, and in order to understand communities it is necessary to consider the people of which they are comprised.

## 2.4 Creative communities

The remainder of this commentary's literature based consideration of key conceptual topics will focus on the matched themes of creative communities (2.4) and the network society (2.5). This a reflection of the prior pairing of festivals (2.2) and networks (2.3). The focus on community, and then society, has some echoes of Tönnies's late 19th century identification of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* respectively (Tönnies, 2021), such that considering distinctions between the two can help to frame the subsequent discussion here. Tönnies emphasised social connections in the opening sentence of his book: "Human wills stand in manifold relations to one another" (Tönnies, 2021, p. 32). He describes *Gemeinschaft* relationships as "real and organic life", community that is built upon "intimate, private, and exclusive living together" (Tönnies, 2021, p. 32). A *Gesellschaft* relationship, by distinction, is conceived as an "imaginary and mechanical structure", society that is experienced as "public life – it is the world itself" (Tönnies, 2021, pp. 32-33). In reviewing the book in 1889, Durkheim emphasised the communal nature of *Gemeinschaft*, of shared property, the importance of the family, and of wider relationships wherein such a group "is not a collection of individuals differing from one another; it is a mass, undifferentiated and compact" (Aldous et al., 1972, p. 1193). He characterises *Gesellschaft* as a corollary of living in larger congregations, such as industrial cities, where relationships are based not upon status but upon contracts, sanctioned by a strong state (Aldous et al., 1972, pp. 1196-1197). Tönnies's conceptualisations have been interpreted as "ideal types or mental constructs which do not actually exist empirically in pure form"; rather they bookend a continuum from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies, 2021, p. 7). In seeking to use this framing to better understand creative communities, emphasis will be placed upon those relationships that owe something to *Gemeinschaft* and a sense of mutual bonding between individuals. The following section (2.5), built upon Castells's interpretation of the network society (Castells, 2000), is influenced by elements of *Gesellschaft*, and a more instrumental appreciation of social relations. Both sections seek to explain something of the contemporary environment in which festivals take place, to identify the value of such events for those involved, and to appraise the merits of a network-orientated approach.

The complex relationship between festivals and communities is vital to the development of each, presented in this book with reference to a network-orientated perspective. It might be appropriate to suggest that festivals be best understood as communities in themselves. Festivals provide dynamic environments where social relationships are created and reinforced, and which are often either rooted in existing host community ties (Jarman, 2016), or have the potential to leave a significant legacy of new connections (Jarman, 2021), or both. Whatever their genesis, interpersonal connections are the basis of links between a festival and its host

community, in a relationship that is deeper and broader than a typical “impacts” type analysis might suggest (Bowdin et al., 2011, pp. 64-69). When considering “creative” community contexts, important for supplying much of the human capital and innovation that gives a festival its originality (Izzo et al., 2012, pp. 232-235), this manuscript’s ego network analysis project is of particular relevance (Jarman, 2017). It has an explicit focus on revealing how people view and interpret their professional milieu. Reflections on this paper will help to lead the following discussion, alongside consideration of a formalised creative community in Scotland. The extent to which a network approach is appropriate to studying such communities will also be addressed, and how it compares to two alternative approaches: firstly social capital, then secondly place-based analyses.

#### *2.4.1 Identifying creative communities*

The research projects leading to this PhD’s submission developed an appreciation of the relationships between festivals and the communities that support them. As the research focus has changed from paper to paper, so too has the nature of the communities involved: from a Scottish nation debating its identity (Jarman, 2007), to the employees of a Science Festival contextualised within a wider cultural economy (Jarman, 2016), to the potential community born of hundreds of applications to a network of Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021). In this commentary the term “creative communities” is often used, partly alluding to a comparatively organic social milieu, where a better label might be “communities of creatives”. The term “creative” has become established as an umbrella term for a wide range of career paths (Cunningham & Bremner, 2015; Lines, 2015). Such vocations and professions include festival and event producers, craft makers, musicians, and visual artists. In the ego network research it is to these creatives that the egos most referred when providing their data, answering “Who have been your most important professional connections for support and collaboration... over the past two years?” (Jarman, 2017, pp. 75-76). The paper concluded with comment on the importance of relationships for direct and indirect access to resources, and for shaping how individuals present themselves to the world, mindful of their own perceptions of how others are interconnected (Jarman, 2017, pp. 85-86). This reinforces the importance of focusing on individuals and their perceptions, as a means of providing greater detail and nuance than a stakeholder group-based approach generally allows for.

The creative communities investigated for this thesis have generally been identified by either (1) the researcher (Jarman, 2018a), or (2) the individual ego (Jarman, 2017), as befits each project. A further means of defining the nature and extent of a creative community can occur when (3) members of a community self-identify as

such, in a formalised manner. A case study example of a formally organised community can be seen around Creative Edinburgh, an organisation that seeks to “bring people together from across different disciplines through our networking events, peer support, mentoring and opportunities” (Matheson, 2015). Creative Edinburgh actively seeks to create environments and opportunities for otherwise disparate creative practitioners to engage with each other. Such community engagement is an active decision, made by freelancers and other interested parties, who recognise the personal and collective benefits that accrue through such interactions over a sustained period. The organisation itself has a permanent staff, a board of directors, a steering group, and has received public funding from the local authority and Scotland’s national arts and cultural agency (Creative Scotland) (Creative Edinburgh, n.d.). Creative Edinburgh has successfully established itself as an organisation that is of value to individual actors (its members), and those who engage with it as a community (such as its institutional stakeholders). It is a community, and a dynamic set of overlapping networks, that reinforce and support each other. SNA methods could reveal intra-community connections as a basis of further understanding this organisation and its value to those who engage with it. However, when used in isolation social network analysis can be limited in suggesting what such networks means to those within them. Recourse to different perspectives on communities may offer some of the richness that SNA alone can struggle to deliver.

#### *2.4.2 Social capital*

Social capital has become established as a conceptual frame for festival and event studies, from initial analysis linking it to community resources, celebration and cohesiveness (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006), to more recent work covering sociology’s role as a foundational discipline informing the events field (Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 107-108). Foley, McGillivray & McPherson’s text on event policy devoted a chapter to social capital, in recognition of the complex social dimension of events, and the diversifying criteria against which they are planned and ultimately measured (Foley et al., 2012, pp. 89-101). All three sources define social capital in similar terms, drawing from Putnam (Putnam, 1995), Portes (Portes, 1998), and other social scientists. Quinn presents social capital as providing a language and vocabulary through which the social environments of festivals and events can be described, and their social impacts considered (Quinn, 2013, pp. 119-122). For her, the term “relates to the social relations between humans and particularly to how the interrelationships between humans lead to the accumulation of certain benefits that are of value both to them individually and to the communities to which they belong” (Quinn, 2013, p. 119).

For individuals, social capital is a combination of factors that allows them to “act effectively” within social structures, while also describing a “cumulative and transferable public good, freely accessible by the community” (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006, p. 4). As a hypothetical festival volunteer interacts with others, they work together, come to trust one another, establish shared norms and values, and strengthen their connections with people both similar to and different from themselves against a range of criteria. Comparable findings were reported in interview data from the multi-arts festival studied (Jarman, 2018b). Social capital themes also contributed to the earlier consideration of networked connections and contagion (section 2.3.1). These factors are all means of defining relationships between individuals and their community, and in turn they help to define the meaning of social capital at these two levels. The Science Festival research captures some of this potential (Jarman, 2016), sometimes highlighting the network position of particular individuals, alternatively reporting on characteristics of the whole network overall. Wilks’s PhD thesis on social capital and music festivals drew from Bourdieu and his focus on the individual: “The volume of the social capital possessed by an agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he [sic] can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those agents to whom he is connected” (Wilks, 2009, p. 55). She turned to Woolcock for a broader, macro interpretation of social capital as “facilitating collective action for mutual benefit” (Wilks, 2009, p. 55). This underlines the need to understand the personal value of community engagement, alongside the collective interest in providing opportunities for these shared resources to be developed and sustained.

Earlier sections in this commentary (2.3-2.3.6) have proposed that commonalities and resonances are to be found between the ways festivals and networks can be discussed and analysed, to which can now be added elements of social capital theory (Table 2.1): deeper understanding of one category of analysis can be instructive when reflecting on another. Collaboration in a festival context, for example, has been linked to the SNA concepts of connection and contagion, and can also be seen at the heart of Arcodia & Whitford’s foundational text on festivals and social capital (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). They present festivals as opportunities for community cooperation and participation, with the potential for beneficial outcomes to extend beyond those directly involved in the project at hand. In terms of perception and meaning, social capital’s association with establishing communal values, norms and trust is a process through which individual and shared perspectives can be developed. Likewise, identity is relevant to socialisation, subcultures, and other themes noted by Getz & Page in their reflections on festival and event sociology (Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 104-117). With reference to the reinterpretation of festivals as social and temporal clusters, similar forces have been

highlighted already in the context of social capital (Quinn & Wilks, 2013), through a concentrated accumulation of activity. Finally, in relation to leadership, Foley, McGillivray & McPherson (Foley et al., 2012, p. 92) apply Bourdieu's notion of social capital to events, analysing the benefits an individual might accrue through their access to resources, and thus the potentially controlling brokerage role they might assume through their social position. Across five categories, social capital and networks appear to provide complementary insights into different dimensions of festival management and experience.

Advancement of the relationship between social networks and social capital can be found in the SNA literature (Scott, 2017, p. 7), reinforcing the connection between the two, and helping to frame the benefits that their mutual consideration can bring to festival studies. In SNA terms, social capital can be interpreted in (at least) three ways (Crossley et al., 2015, pp. 26-38): "one focused upon access to resources; one focused upon social cohesion; and one focused upon 'brokerage' across 'structural holes'". The extent to which exponents of social capital theory have made use of empirical SNA appears limited, though the connection was made in this PhD's initial proposal for a networks focused consideration of festivals (Jarman et al., 2014, p. 315). Instead, evidence such as community participation and mutual trust is used in social capital focused research, either as proxies for networks, or as illustrative case studies (Crossley et al., 2015, pp. 32-33). The most straightforward interpretation of social capital's correlation with social networks may be that while the latter can illustrate and quantify relationships, it is the former that gives them depth and meaning, particularly for those being studied. Conversely though social capital can account for what is transmitted across social ties, it has difficulty in showing the details and complexities of how such ties are arranged.

Among the papers presented in Chapter 4, structural interpretations of social capital are presented in a number of contexts. Access to resources is a feature of the work with art festival volunteers (Jarman, 2018b), and with applicants to a network of Fringe festivals, in search of places to perform (Jarman, 2021). Investigation into social cohesion was a motivating factor for work with the Edinburgh International Science Festival, which considered a social network community bounded by organisational attachment (Jarman, 2016). The potential for brokerage was reported in the ego network analysis (Jarman, 2017), and in the earliest empirical research that identified limited cross departmental communication within a venue's internal stakeholders (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011). There are opportunities for further research though, particularly in relation to more normative and values-driven forms of social capital, to complement the structurally focused work noted here. Whether that be rich qualitative data, or further use of Likert type questions (Jarman, 2018a), undertaking social capital focused SNA research offers further appreciation of the meanings as well as the structure of festival and creative community connections.

### 2.4.3 Place

The concept of place is closely linked to creative communities, and has important implications for festivals, their operating environments, and their outcomes. At a local scale, for example, the city of Bristol's Watershed venue (in South West England) hosts cultural activities across film, digital and other creative arts, to provide "a venue that has become a central space in the city for cultural exchange, promoting engagement, enjoyment, diversity and participation" (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010, p. 19). The community orientation of Watershed's work is evident in its position at the heart of a "complex creative ecosystem" (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010, p. 20). This in turn underpins Bristol's identity as an innovative and experimental city. At a larger scale, Creative Scotland is "the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries" across the country, and of its five strategic ambitions for 2014-2024 one is dedicated to place (Creative Scotland, n.d.). Here, place is connected to quality of life, and "imagination, ambition and an understanding of the potential of creativity", reinforcing the connection to community (Creative Scotland, 2014, p. 17). At an international scale, the British Council has engaged with numerous countries in a Creative Hubs project, each hub being "a place, either physical or virtual, which brings creative people together" (Mathieson & Easson, 2015, p. 4). Meanwhile UNESCO lists 246 members of its Creative Cities Network, "placing creativity and cultural industries at the core of their development plans at the local level and actively cooperating at the international level" (UNESCO, 2020, p. 11). Place, community and creativity are therefore recognised as close partners, manifested in the creation and use of cultural venues, and public policy objectives explicitly geared towards participants in creative communities. Festivals are often important contributors to the fulfilment of these relationships and projects, through opportunities for collaboration, meaning, identity and other themes discussed above.

Place is a frequent theme across the works being presented in this manuscript, and it has informed both the research approaches taken and the case studies that were investigated. Edinburgh, Scotland, is the context for a number of publications, from the earliest papers that pre-date the start of empirical SNA methods (Jarman, 2007; Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011; Jarman et al., 2014), to subsequent data collection from the city's festivals, such as the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016). Edinburgh is a relatively small capital city of around half a million inhabitants, though it is generally international in outlook, dynamic in ambition, and supports a sustainable festival economy (BOP Consulting & Festivals and Events International, 2015). The most explicit appraisal of place and place-making amongst the collected works focused on the volunteer run multi-arts festival, which used a mixed methods approach to explore relations between the festival and its host community (Jarman, 2018a). Interview data showed how volunteers in differing positions of centrality and leadership within the organisation had contrasting perspectives on the festival-to-

host relationship, though all appeared to have prioritised the creative and cultural objectives of the festival above its place-making role *per se*. This was a festival that had transformed a large derelict theatre within the local neighbourhood, creating a temporary social centre out of a cherished building, that helped to validate a historically independent region within a larger city. The sustainability of the festival's impacts and legacies in that locality, as an institution promoting individual and collective identities, is now in the hands of the community.

Friedmann drew from Cresswell's interpretation of how a local place can be defined: a combination of "reiterative social practices", local landmarks, open spaces suitable for inclusive performability, and a degree of dynamism (Friedmann, 2010, p. 154). This is place as it is experienced, by residents and visitors, akin to the ambitions of the volunteer arts festival above (Jarman, 2018a). Friedmann introduces additional qualities: "the place must be small, inhabited, and come to be cherished or valued by its resident population for all that it represents or means to them... Yet a fourth criterion important to the formation of places is the existence of one or more 'centers' or spaces of encounter and/or gathering" (Friedmann, 2010, pp. 154-155). These themes are aligned somewhat with papers from a special issue of *Event Management* in 2017, focused on "Rethinking the Eventful City" (Richards & Colombo, 2017). Many of the associated contributors are also involved in the international FESTSPACE project, to "explore how festivals and events create or restrict access to public spaces" (FESTSPACE, 2019). Place is thus now established as an important contemporary concept in the ways festivals are researched and considered, in turn emphasising the roles they and other events play in the identification and experience of place (Platt & Ali-Knight, 2018). This theme crosses borders and finds common cause between cities and communities across the UK, Europe and beyond.

Five elements of festival management and experience connect the previous sections on networks and social capital, as set out in Table 2.1, and they now frame the following consideration of whether Friedmann's characterisation of place can further inform this understanding of festivals. The "pedestrian", *small* scale that Friedmann advocates (Friedmann, 2010, p. 154) appears well suited to this book's analysis of festivals, for whether the event in question takes place in a single building (Jarman, 2018a), or is spread across a city (Jarman, 2016), the urge to experience it at a human scale is generally strong. Rojek's presentation of factors drawing people to events shares this personal dimension, including "connotations of anticipation, pleasure, festivity and emotional uplift... departing momentarily from life routines and performing various rituals of transcendence" (Rojek, 2013, p. 100). He juxtaposes these stirring experiences against sporting mega events described as exercises in power, accumulation and communitarianism. Festivals, on the other hand, tend to be more intimate affairs, often so embedded in a place that the two become

synonymous with each other, as Edinburgh's festival are keen to encourage (Jarman et al., 2014, p. 318). This manuscript therefore links a small, neighbourhood scale sense of place to an interpretation of festivals as moments of social and temporal clustering. This adds a place based, spatial dimension to a gathering of festival participants. It also reinforces the sense of place that individuals and communities feel as a consequence of their shared experiences, through memories associated with particular locations (Andrews & Leopold, 2013, pp. 94-95). This rich appreciation of the interplay between festivals, place, community attachment, and individual emotions reflects the composite experiences inherent in events, and in turn the need for a nuanced methodology to fully understand them.

The *inhabited* criterion of place helps to emphasise the neighbourhood dimension of Friedmann's definition, enhancing opportunities for local development and attachment as a consequence of "the simple fact of being lived in" (Friedmann, 2010, pp. 154-155). Where a place is inhabited it holds potential for forms of collaboration, of the types that in this thesis have previously been linked to networked connections and contagion. Festival production and participation can contribute to places acquiring additional meaning for their residents, influenced by the interactions between festival activities, participant engagement, and the spatial dimensions framing the event (Stevens & Shin, 2014). On these grounds, collaboration can take many forms, both formal and informal. A place that is inhabited is constantly under a form of social surveillance, meaning that festival activities are being observed, and are potentially able to draw upon community resources. This was reported in an interview for the arts festival research, when a local resident visited the venue pre-festival and offered to donate "a load of tools that you can have" (Jarman, 2018b, p. 130). This was an opportunity for the resident to use the festival to reinforce their own connection to the locality, building on the *attachment* to place that Friedmann also highlights. His appraisal of individual and collective attachment to place noted that it is largely "invisible", only coming to the fore at times of stress and change, such as the influx of newcomers (e.g. to produce a festival), or the prospect of physical demolition and interference (Friedmann, 2010, p. 155). Attachment appears to be a sleeping giant in these terms, of great meaning to those concerned, yet only awoken by the threat of disruption. When viewed in this context festivals appear to offer an alternative means by which attachment to place can be roused, linked to this PhD's interest in perspective, perception and meaning. Festivals can encourage and embody the means by which resident hosts and visitors may come to cherish and value a place, akin to Getz & Andersson's identification of festivals becoming viewed as "institutions" because of what they contribute to a community (Getz & Andersson, 2008). Engagement with local affairs and organisations shapes an individual's perspective of the people, resources and processes present in that place, providing opportunities for festivals to motivate and encompass such activity, to give it meaning, and generate attachment.

Friedmann's fourth criterion of place is of "*centering*": the presence of focal spaces for social encountering and gathering, that may take on sacred status (Friedmann, 2010, pp. 155-157). His acknowledgement of such spaces is inclusive and incorporates temples, market places, town squares, and street carnivals. What matters is not so much the overall scale of the place in question, but rather the nature and use of the centre or centres that help to hold such a place together, to give it meaning and identity (Friedmann, 2010, p. 156). In the context of the current discussion, a geographical social centre has analogies with network centrality, which has already been linked to forms of social capital associated with access to and control of resources (Table 2.1). In festival management terms, this manuscript has placed these alongside leadership, reflecting the influence that a focal individual or core group can exert on such an endeavour. A place's centre is known, recognised and understood by a community, but it is not inevitable that a given centre should acquire such a role. Evidence from Athens, centred on Piraeus Street, reflects the potential fragility of a centre that attracts a "creative cluster" at a time of constrained resources, limited engagement from the local authorities, and conflicted ambitions (Karachalis & Deffner, 2012). There is substantial potential for festivals to help facilitate the role of such centres, to attract attention, engagement and investment, and to provide the context for local leadership to emerge or be appointed. Festivals can inhabit places in ways that actively direct human traffic towards, through and around a place, guiding movement and flow according to how their venues are positioned and accessed. Festival producers might then have a hand, consciously or otherwise, in processes of place-making, delivering a catalysing influence that drives home a sense of place.

The efforts made thus far to link festivals, creative communities, and place have largely been presented in beneficial terms, though relationships between the three are not always interpreted so positively. The UK mainstream media has reported on the uneasy reception that some of Edinburgh's festivals receive from components of the host population (Ferguson, 2021), as well as Florida's revisions to his observations and culturally-driven recommendations for urban renewal (Wainwright, 2017). This commentary's final marrying of Friedmann's criteria for place with consideration of festival analysis, links his *displacements* and *place breaking* (Friedmann, 2010, pp. 157-159), to considerations of identity. Identity has been interpreted in terms of attributes, socialisation and subcultures in the discussions above, and it is implied in some of the preceding passages focused on place. It is telling that among Friedmann's case studies illustrating displacement he turns to an event, namely the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing: he cites the wholesale demolition of close knit *Hutong* neighbourhoods, that robbed former residents of "their place in the world... the web of meanings they had spun over a lifetime of talk" (Friedmann, 2010, p. 157). Individual and shared identities were fractured and

relocated to the outskirts of the expanding city, with apparently little regard for retaining community structures that would respect and encourage processes of homophily and tie formation.

This is a salutary lesson for those who actively promote and fund place based social engagement projects, such as Creative Edinburgh and Creative Scotland, when it comes to understanding what contributes to a healthy and rewarding community. Some of life's necessities could be replaced for the displaced *Hutong* residents, and they may have found that their new residences provided better heating and living conditions. These are not the factors that gave their lives meaning though. Likewise for the members of Creative Edinburgh's creative community, the importance of their social connections as sources of support, inspiration, problem solving, resources and opportunities cannot be quantified. The ego network analysis for this thesis notes that "[t]he festival, event and creative industries are networked communities, and they are only truly intelligible when a broad sense of overview and perspective is matched to the specific perspectives of those who navigate their pathways and connections" (Jarman, 2017, p. 85). There is a natural analogy between social networks and physical places, presenting challenges and opportunities for researchers seeking to understand the experience of traversing either.

#### *2.4.4 Creative communities conclusion: festivals and their social environments*

Consideration of the interrelatedness of festivals and creative communities has advanced a richer understanding of how each side of this relationship affects and reflects the other. Festivals have thus far been examined from three perspectives: social networks, social capital, and place. These are complementary lenses, each helping to address limitations and opportunities of the others. SNA, for example, can tend to focus primarily on the network being studied, under-reporting the potential consequences of connecting places and people. As suggested earlier, festivals might ultimately be best interpreted as communities themselves, first and foremost. The resonances with social networks, social capital and place have argued that festivals can embody social and temporal clustering, as well as examples of collaboration and shared identity. To the extent that these are characteristics of interpersonal groupings more generally, the study of festival social dynamics has implications for wider community relations.

In terms of festival planning, viewing them as communities has implications for their management, both as individual events and as parts of larger networks or portfolios. It might even be possible to talk of a community of festivals in some instances, should they be organised and presented with the necessary acknowledgement of

shared identity, meaning, collaboration, leadership and clustering. This is arguably the case with Edinburgh's highest profile festivals and their formal collaboration through the Festivals Edinburgh organisation (BOP Consulting & Festivals and Events International, 2015), with similar arrangements in place in Adelaide, Rotterdam and elsewhere. Regarding this commentary, the importance of communities has been acknowledged frequently, providing a context in which festivals are inspired, created, enjoyed, and studied. The following section explores a final conceptual frame of reference, interpreting the social environment in which festivals are delivered through Castells's account of the network society (Castells, 2000).

## **2.5 The network society**

Network-based perspectives and research projects have dominated this thesis, yet the scale of analysis has tended to be relatively confined in line with the publications being presented, limited to case studies and the scope of individual papers. The current section advances a broader understanding of the importance of networks to contemporary society, at both personal and global scales, with reference to Manuel Castells's exposition of the "network society" (Castells, 2000). Thematically, the network society has become increasingly prominent over the course of the PhD, culminating in the final piece of applied SNA and its consideration of a formal network of Fringe type festivals (Jarman, 2021). This latter article presented a response to the critique that empirical SNA is conspicuous by its absence from Castells's work (Anttiroiko, 2015). It also expanded upon Richards's use of network society logic in festivals and events research (Richards, 2015a), and a critical analysis of that work (Fisker et al., 2019). Richards has developed the most comprehensive and sustained application of the network society to the fields of festival, event and leisure research, to which his inaugural address at Tilburg University made an initial contribution (Richards, 2010). This section of the PhD commentary will present an interpretation of the network society as a lens for examining festival and creative communities, followed by a critique of its contemporary relevance at a distinct mid-pandemic moment in time.

### *2.5.1 Castells and the network society*

Castells presented his consolidated work on *The Information Age* in the late 1990s, spanning the global economy, society, culture, the self, organisations, place, space and time. His three-volume magnum opus was updated at the turn of the Millennium,

and includes as its first book *The Rise of the Network Society* (Castells, 2000). Castells built his analysis on the identification of a new paradigm framing economies and societies the world over: one shaped by information technologies (Castells, 2000, pp. 69-76). There are five characteristics to this information technology paradigm (Castells, 2000, pp. 70-76). (1) “[I]nformation is its raw material: *these are technologies to act on information*”, in a clear change from previous eras where information acted on technologies. (2) In the network society, information technologies have exceptional “*pervasiveness*”, affecting “all processes of our individual and collective existence”. (3) “[N]etworking logic... can now be implemented into all kinds of processes and organizations”, and in time the value of the network increases exponentially as a square of the number of nodes involved. (4) “[F]lexibility” is an inherent feature of the information technology paradigm, with networks able to grow, change and adapt with potentially liberating effects, yet also the power to oppress. Finally (5) sees the “*convergence of specific technologies into a highly integrated system*”, such that advances in software and hardware have enabled previously distinct technologies and fields to become increasingly aligned, according to the networking logic and the sharing of information. Such a paradigm has not ushered in a novel information society, nor a knowledge society, nor even a technological society. It is a combination of these factors, fed by a raw material of information and shaped according to a flexible relational logic, that has enabled the network society (Castells, 2004).

The twenty-first century has witnessed much popular interest in the ramifications of the network society. The profound opportunities and potential unleashed by mass adoption of the internet underpinned Shirky’s call for greater understanding of these powerful new forces (Shirky, 2009). Krotoski ended her book on the social psychology of the internet with questions over the philosophies and ideologies on which such technologies are based (Krotoski, 2013, pp. 189-195). The close of Ormerod’s *Positive Linking* is focused on the challenges that an interconnected world might bring to established political, social and economic processes and policy makers (Ormerod, 2012, pp. 258-292). Christakis & Fowler bring *Connected* to a close with an optimistic plea that for humanity “to truly know ourselves, we must first understand how and why we are all connected” (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, p. 305). “Comprehensiveness, complexity and networking” are the fundamental characteristics of the information technology paradigm (Castells, 2000, p. 76), and thus the network society it begets. As discussed elsewhere in this book (Jarman, 2021), the network society has implications for the role of the state, for social and economic inequalities, and for the creation and consumption of communications media content in all their forms. To operate effectively in this context, government institutions are under pressure to work with an interconnected environment of multiple service providers, research organisations and strategic planning units. Meanwhile inequalities owing to “[d]ifferential timing in access to the power of

technology for people, countries, and regions” (Castells, 2000, p. 33) were recognised by Castells at the turn of the century, and are no less relevant twenty years later. Finally, media content and creation are now profoundly networked processes, recently shaping the experience of “attending” online and offline events.

Evidence for the network society is present in this PhD from the earliest empirical data collected to the most recent analysis of festival and creative communities in a variety of contexts. Though the 2011 investigation of Edinburgh’s Festival City Theatres Trust was framed in terms of internal and external stakeholder representatives, there was a broad understanding that the organisation operated within a network of artistic producers, institutional partners, and rivals (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011). The Trust was seen as an important contributor to a creative economy and ecosystem, though it was also recognised that stakeholders could work around it, and make use of their connections with alternative venues. The first paper here to adopt an explicitly network-orientated perspective recognised the importance of understanding festival cities as networks (Jarman et al., 2014), the realisation of which could unlock research methods to increase understanding. The influence of networks on personal experiences was also explored here, touching on social media as a window onto international flows of information. This expansive global perspective was contrasted with the small world networks of a typical festival venue, such as on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe: strong ties being developed over time at a local level, but potentially in relative isolation from the rest of the festival. Analysis of the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016) commenced with reference to the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, and its reliance on networks of national passenger railways, international shipping trade routes, and information sharing of various kinds. Here was an event that, arguably, exemplified principal elements of the network society some 150 years ahead of its time: information, technology and knowledge. The intervening years have seen changes and advances in these areas, as well as an evolution of societal structures that can take advantage of networked relationships in place of more rigid economic, social and organisational hierarchies.

The tension between networks and other forms of social organisation is at the heart of the multi-arts festival research, reflected in the core leadership team’s challenge to effectively manage two social groupings: one arranged according to organisational departments and tasks; the other a social network of informal ties and often longstanding allegiances (Jarman, 2018a). Consideration of this festival’s place within a broader cultural ecosystem advocated an inclusive and outward-looking networked perspective on inter-festival relationships, advocated by Richards (Richards, 2015a), rather than construction of event “portfolios” (EventScotland, 2015, p. 19) that can potentially be more selective and introverted in their approach (Jarman, 2018b, p. 123). Meanwhile, at the smaller scale of inter-personal ties, ego

network analysis of creative professionals placed the individual at the centre of their own network (or rather their multiple networks) of overlapping connections and ties (Jarman, 2017). This methodology was used in order to explore the structure and relative diversity of each ego's network, against a range of criteria, which in turn informed discussions on social capital, power, location and influence. In this context, the social network appeared to have little competition as the primary form of social organisation for the egos concerned. Access to resources and opportunities, and indeed social standing, were all interpreted socially, and thus as a consequence of networked relationships.

In the most recent empirical study, focused on a formalised network of Fringe festivals, network society theory informed the discussion directly to a greater extent than in any other paper, and also indirectly courtesy of Richards's prior applications of the concept to festivals and events (Jarman, 2021). Reflecting on the paper here can offer a distillation of its key findings, while also enriching the current examination of Castells's work. The creative environment being studied was described as a network of networks: multiple Fringe festivals working together both publicly and behind the scenes, each of which was recognised as a decentralised network of performers, administrators, audience members and more, with many individuals likely to fall into more than one category (Jarman, 2021, pp. 99-100). The most dramatic findings from this research demonstrated the benefits enjoyed by new Fringe festival members of the case study network: by announcing themselves under the umbrella of the established network, they attracted hundreds of applications from their very first year of operation, with no track record of their own to draw from (Jarman, 2021, p. 109). The festivals' coordinated approach was made possible through integrated communications processes, from a shared online application form to the reciprocal promotion of each others' festivals and programmes. "To interact with one festival is to engage with them all, for this is a network that speaks with both one voice and with many" (Jarman, 2021, p. 109).

This research also drew from Richards's conceptualisation of "iterative" and "pulsar" events (Richards, 2015a), a classification of events and festivals that emphasises their relationships to place, the extent to which they either maintain local social structures and communities or challenge them, and the form of social capital that tends to result from their outcomes (Richards, 2015a, p. 557). Iterative events, broadly, have a localised focus, support existing bases of power, and are associated with Castells's "Space of Places" [SoP]. Pulsar events, by contrast, are more aligned with the "Space of Flows" [SoF], a rarefied stratum of the international network society, populated by decision-making, resource-deploying elites, "where communications technologies have reordered life around flows of information, capital, and interaction" (Jarman, 2021, p. 100). The SoF has three layers: communications and information technology networks; the "nodes and hubs" of key

global cities, attracting this status according to their significance in one or more valuable networks; and, finally, the “spatial organization of the dominant, managerial elites”, from company headquarters to executive lounges at airports (Castells, 2000, pp. 442-448). Associating the SoP with iterative events, and the SoF with pulsar events, is an important element of the ways Richards has brought the network society into the academic discussion on festivals and events. It has opened up new opportunities for research, including the application of SNA methods. It has also been subject to critique, for overlooking empirically observed nuances and subtleties in the extent to which a given festival might fall between the two camps (Fisker et al., 2019). A body of work is thus being developed on these themes, to which this manuscript also aims to contribute. As noted above, the Covid-19 pandemic years are a critical juncture in global history, with “pulsar” potential of their own. The following section will establish some unique characteristics of 2020-2022 as the contemporary backdrop to this commentary, and critique the insights they can offer on the validity of Castellian interpretations of festivals in the network society.

### *2.5.2 A contemporary critique of Castellian interpretations of festivals in the network society*

Contemporary society has been under strain in recent years, affected by manifestations of the network society. From early 2020, countries and citizens around the world responded to the spread and impacts of a global pandemic, as the Covid-19 coronavirus placed unprecedented strain on healthcare systems, governments and populations (Pennington, 2021). By early March 2021, organisers of summer music festivals in Britain had put the Westminster Government on notice that they had only weeks left in which to confirm their upcoming events, or cancel for a second year (Association of Independent Festivals, 2021). In the wider economy, Government advice and regulations kept very large parts of the workforce at home in the UK (CIPD, 2020), and elsewhere (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). European politics was also experiencing transformational change, as the UK’s departure from the European Union was completed, following the Brexit referendum of 2016 (BBC News, 2020). This all took place against the backdrop of Covid-19 containment restrictions, the development of vaccines at unprecedented speed, and efforts to deploy those vaccines around the world (News, 2021).

Social and cultural debates and divisions reached new levels of intensity in 2020, which continued on into 2021 and beyond. Black Lives Matter protests (Buchanan et al., 2020), and post-colonial historical revisions (Cameron, 2021), affected many cities. Gender and sex were at the heart of debates on violence against women (European Commission, n.d.), recognition of transgender rights (Morgan, 2020), and

cultural representations of sexual relations in the wake of the MeToo movement (Fleming, 2021). Environmentalism had new impetus, led by youth movements across the globe and Greta Thunberg (Milman, 2019), ahead of Scotland's hosting of the UN's COP26 conference in late 2021 (Newsround, 2020). Cultural forms and products were increasingly experienced online, as cinemas and theatres closed their doors (Devlin, 2021). All of these themes were informed, discussed and argued over via social media networks, which in turn attracted political attention in countries such as the USA (Bose & Bartz, 2020), and Australia (Guerrera, 2021).

These developments, and the pace of change in so many areas of personal and public concern, reflects the evolution of network society logic as experienced by so many. There is an emphasis on communications technologies, the globalisation of information and cultural products, and the interplay of individual and collective interests (Castells, 2000). Such circumstances also point to potential weaknesses in the Castellan world view, and internal contradictions regarding its account of social and technological networks in such transformational times. Of particular interest are the environments and processes encapsulated in the Space of Flows and the Space of Places, which are among the principal aspects of Castells's work to have been brought into academic analysis of festivals and events. Their presence is important in the identification of pulsar and iterative event types (Richards, 2015a). This in turn has helped in the establishment of a "network-centric" form of eventfulness, which emphasises the network value that eventful cities might achieve through the hosting and management of festivals and events (Richards, 2017, pp. 539-541). Richards explains the achievement of network-centric eventfulness by casting such cities as "switchers" in their own right (Richards, 2017, p. 539), performing the role of Castells's global elites, and forging important connections between networks (Castells, 2004, p. 224). Switchers are compared to "programmers", those events and individuals that operate at a local level, helping to represent places and forge bonding social capital (Fisker et al., 2019, p. 5). This balance of festivals and events understood with global and local interpretations appears well suited to the network society, yet it is through events that critiques of Castells may now be levelled, questioning the extent to which the elements of his argument can account for society and culture in extreme times.

### *2.5.2.1 Online festivals and events*

This commentary's first reconsideration of the network society comes through reflections on the online cultural events and festivals that were delivered through the "lockdown" months of 2020 and beyond. With the cessation of live in-person events throughout much of the world, online events became more common and more

varied. Examples included pandemic-restrictions-compliant performances, such as Nick Cave's solo piano concert at London's Alexandra Palace, which was streamed to paying customers at timings suitable for key markets around the globe (nickcave.com, 2020). Scottish Ballet produced a feature film for Christmas 2020, combining elements of previous works in a production that enveloped the camera, and thus the families who bought tickets to stream it at home (Scottish Ballet, 2020). The independent podcast network, Relay FM, delivered six and seven hour globally distributed live "Podcastathons" in September 2020 and 2021, in aid of a children's research hospital; these events followed up 2019's in-person event, with wholly online editions that raised considerably more money (Hackett, 2020). Apple's annual Worldwide Developer Conference was a wholly virtual affair in 2020, from product launches and information workshops, to forums and award ceremonies (Apple Inc., 2020). Finally, British musician Tim Burgess hosted "Twitter listening parties" from 1 April 2020, inviting fans of different artists to listen to their albums at home, in sync, while both artists and fans shared an online conversation about the making of the music; 1050 albums had been played by 13 December 2021 (Richards, 2020). These events all demonstrated the power of the network society to unite people, to share information and ideas, and to enable collaboration on an immense scale. They also demonstrated means by which event producers can reach audiences directly, potentially bypassing, or at least redefining, the roles of switcher and programmer.

When producers of festivals and events are able to engage audiences directly, it is not clear who is playing the role of switcher, linking networks in order to deliver a live experience. If the producers are themselves those switchers, often demonstrating their versatility by creating the work itself, this may prevent them from acting as programmers. When events no longer inhabit an offline space, they circumvent any expectation to generate a sense of geographical place amongst those involved, or to contribute to place based communities. Perhaps each audience member must be their own programmer, defining the meaning of each event as they perceive it, and making choices as to how they communicate this to their networks, both long established and newly defined. Nor do these events appear to fit comfortably within either an iterative or pulsar definition of events (Richards, 2015a, p. 557): they appear to maintain existing social and political structures by attracting the interest of people already engaged with the producers' work (iterative characteristics); yet their online form is radically different from its in-person counterpart, is distributed at a global scale, and can attract media coverage to match (as might a pulsar event). Bonding forms of social capital are present between likeminded participants, sometimes organised in small world network structures (iterative), yet they provide some with a platform to develop political and cultural agendas, and play out according to a linear sense of time around which international audiences can engage (pulsar). The widespread adoption of virtual events and festivals demonstrated the complexities of identifying separate iterative and pulsar forms, such that distinctions

between the two should not be distilled to scale or location. The enforced process of adapting offline work to online may have offered some festivals and events the opportunity to move from being largely iterative to becoming pulsar in their effect, sometimes most clearly seen in retrospect. The simplicity of clicking to connect with such events belies the complexity of the experiences on offer, and in doing so can require the “local” SoP to become reduced to the dimensions of a single online participant.

The principal uniting factor amongst the novel “pandemic” events noted above was their online nature, a factor that served to underpin attempts at sharing information and experiences, and building communities. The very fact that these events were possible is of greater interest than the nuances of how each was created and received. To this end, with regards to Marshall McLuhan, the medium remains the message (Playboy, 2009). McLuhan emphasised that this meant the environment is the message, in that as each new technology comes to dominate contemporary life experiences, it shapes the context in which people make choices, and the meanings of those choices. Castells recognised his debt to McLuhan (Rantanen, 2005), and he saw that “We live in a world that... has become digital” (Castells, 2000, p. 29). In 2020, going into 2021 and beyond, that world relied upon its digital characteristics, communications and cultures. The internet facilitated and shaped relationships within and between families, workplaces, civil society organisations, and events. As a result, online events and festivals attracted new popularity, credibility and creativity. In a closing example, this allowed the 2020 Nordic Fringe Network (NFN) festivals to present a hybrid live and digital programme of events, which still aimed to capture the Fringe spirit of “being cutting edge, artistically and/or politically daring and representing arts which don’t usually get picked up by institutions or bigger stages” (STOFF, n.d.). The hybrid nature of the NFN programme, with some in-person events, is evidence that the SoP is alive and well, but it would seem that the “places” themselves are now split between the terrestrial and the virtual. Producers and attendees have continued to seek “relevance” in these events (Hertling, 2015, p. 10), and to recognise that they produce network effects (Richards, 2015a), shaped by their online, offline and hybrid forms. This combination of artistic drive, cultural contribution and technological platform suggests that, when given the chance, the festival is still the message.

### *2.5.2.2 Hyper local community events*

The Covid-19 pandemic, and governmental responses to it, provided an environment in which to explore what kinds of events could take place during a period when events were not permitted. These months, from late March 2020 onwards, represent

a liminoid time, a “time out of time”, akin to that around which Getz & Page built their foundational model of the planned event experience (Getz & Page, 2020, p. 255). These authors juxtapose profane liminoid experiences, against the ritualistic and sacred nature of liminal experiences, noting that the former are often vital elements of festivals, events, and the carnivalesque (Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 101-102). An individual or group approaches a liminoid event with a set of expectations and norms about social relationships, yet is open to having those assumptions challenged and altered. In countries around the world, Castellan network society characteristics help to describe the conditions in which people first entered periods of “lockdown”, and many sectors of their economies have been well served by networked connectivity for work and leisure (Tabner, 2020). However, the emergence of unconventional, decentralised and largely unprecedented communal live events challenged the extent to which the SoP and SoF, and their iterative and pulsar event interpretations, have proved able to encapsulate these novel forms of shared experience.

As lockdown measures became the norm across the UK, in cities, suburbs and villages, residents stepped out of their front doors on a weekly basis for just a few minutes, to break their domestic confinement and “Clap for our Heroes” (Clap for Our Carers, n.d.). In Italy, musicians and singers serenaded their neighbours with evening renditions of opera and folk music (Thorpe, 2020). Spaniards acted similarly, and came to see such events as “an opportunity to make human contact, connect with the neighbours and break the tedium of confinement” (The Local, 2020). The resulting in-person celebratory experiences resided in the liminoid period of populations’ first exposure to government mandated lockdown orders, as spring turned to early summer and it became more feasible, and attractive, to spend time outdoors. This was a period of some nostalgia for a comparatively carefree existence of just a few weeks earlier, when festivals and events of all kinds were possible. There was also uncertainty about what the future might hold at both personal and societal levels. Participants were acting locally, sharing the experience with those within eyesight or earshot of their front door or balcony, yet were also aware of the national and international scale of these happenings, courtesy of both social media and more traditional channels. On this evidence, the popular response to delivering events during their prohibition was to act locally, be self-motivated to engage and attend, and to demonstrate the primacy of neighbourhood localities in activating event communities.

Taking these factors into consideration it is not clear whether such events, to the extent they can be classed as such, fit either the iterative or pulsar model that has thus far helped to frame the application of Castells’s network society to festivals and events (Richards, 2015a). On the one hand they demonstrate iterative characteristics, with an emphasis on small world neighbourhood networks, bonding social capital, local places, and little in the way of efforts to politicise the happenings,

or mobilise people in protest (Richards, 2015a, p. 557). On the other hand, social media platforms have proved vital to the popularising and sharing of such experiences as a part of lockdown life (Baker, 2020), challenging established media's ability to convey these communal efforts. The small world network logic inherent in forging neighbourhood bonds in the space of places, implies that such places were simultaneously connected to other locations, doing much the same things and expressing comparable emotions. The full meaning of these "iterative" community events was only fully realised in the context of "pulsar" interconnectivity, made possible thanks to at least one of the three layers that make up the space of flows: that of computer networks and millions of online devices (Castells, 2000, pp. 442-443). The extent to which these shared lockdown happenings had an overtly political agenda is debatable. While the UK's shared applause was initially in support of public sector healthcare workers, the initiator later felt forced to distance herself from it, and to dismiss its characterisation as a political platform (Plas, 2021). Nonetheless, such events demonstrated that people could be mobilised at local and national scales, through both applause and opera.

This activity has been characterised as "hyper-local" by the European FESTSPACE research project, with a focus on how residents repurposed their public streets, and private spaces, to deliver "more localised and creative responses" to Covid-19 restrictions (McGillivray, 2020a). Hyper-local implies an extremely localised sense of place, down to the quarantined household, and thus in many cases individual people experiencing prolonged periods of isolation. It can also reflect the hyper-connected world of the network society, which has its own hazards for the isolated, "in a world where there is shrinking room for the computer illiterate" (Castells, 2000, p. 24). Lockdown happenings provided a means by which activity centred on the space of places utilised the tools of the space of flows, to the extent that individual people and households has access to the information and ideas it carried. These occurrences demonstrated that much of what people desire from festivals and events, particularly aspects of experiences and interactions (Berridge, 2007, pp. 65-80), could be delivered locally, independent from planned celebrations. In the globally influential space of flows meanwhile, cancellations and postponements affected all kinds of in-person events, from the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games (IOC, 2020), to the 50th anniversary Glastonbury Festival (Eavis & Eavis, 2020). In 2020 the elites of the space of flows were left to idle, as their network power was usurped by residents of the space of places. These hyper-local congregations charged their nominally iterative events with answering Hertling's rallying question: "What would be missing in the city or region without its festival?" (Hertling, 2015, p. 10), and they did so without recourse to the high priests of established pulsar events.

### *2.5.3 Network society conclusion: grand theory contextualisation*

In the network society, Castells presents a framework for understanding social relationships, the role of the individual within them, the development of social movements, and the importance of three key factors that help to define the age: information, knowledge, and (communications) technologies (Castells, 2004). As a foundational concept for this thesis, the Castellian world view provides an overarching thesis that has seen further examination in the events field through Richards (Richards, 2010) and others (Fisker et al., 2019). Consideration of the network society also underpinned empirical work for the book (Jarman, 2021). There is therefore a grand conceptual foundation available here that is absent from the more applied SNA textbooks and sources, which have otherwise shaped the primary research seen in the assembled papers (Prell, 2012; Scott, 2017). In order to review and examine the contemporary relevance of the network society, online events and hyper local happenings in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic were analysed above. The network society made these events possible technologically and it underpinned their widespread adoption, yet they in turn have challenged the ongoing applicability of the concept.

By early 2022, the course of the Covid-19 pandemic had proved challenging and uncertain for communities and governments. Some rescheduled events were delivered, including the Tokyo 2020 summer Olympic Games a year later than planned, and with record levels of online engagement (IOC, 2021). Yet ongoing disruption to live events led to UK media reports of fans returning tickets and failing to attend performances as their engagement waned (Reidy, 2021). Some national leaders also saw falls in their popularity and credibility (Jenkins, 2021). In the modern network society, personal experiences are shared across space and time through interconnected media, transmitting information and opinions at a speed that political power can struggle to keep pace with let alone lead. The flowering of online and hyper local events discussed here brought comfort and creative expression to many, at a time of strain on planned event supply chains. Yet past engagement is no guarantee of future involvement, and constant re-evaluation appears necessary for producers in the experience economy. In this context, prioritising a networked perspective on society offers a methodological framework in which to gather and analyse research data. As the nature of social relationships has had to evolve during successive periods of lockdown, so any repeat of past research would need to address changes in the ways interpersonal ties are formed and maintained. Relationships between people and between organisations are comprehensible when viewed as networks, likewise the shifting flows of information, resources and opinions. The network society needs networks, both to provide evidence for the functions Castells identified, and also to help validate critiques of the type levelled above in consideration of events under Covid-19.

Introducing Tönnies's continuum, from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies, 2021, p. 7), helped to frame the analyses of creative communities and the network society in the sections above. These themes have since addressed factors contributing to a sense of community, the structure of society, and points in between. From social capital and place, to online interactions and impromptu anonymous balcony arias, human relationships and interactions have been shown to have many influences, many contexts, and many outcomes. The *Gemeinschaft* of community life is seen in a person's organic engagement with friends, local neighbourhoods, and the Space of Places. *Gesellschaft* society has been represented by the Space of Flows, the influence of formalised social relationships within and between organisations, and the political worlds of Black Lives Matter and COP26. The role of festivals and events in facilitating and framing such phenomena demonstrates their applicability to a myriad of circumstances. Not only this, but there is potential to reinterpret these concepts in terms that align with the networked interpretation of festivals outlined above. To the extent that such comparisons are viable and meaningful, they offer researchers alternative perspectives on the concepts at hand. The life of an individual is shaped by community and society, and also the networks that connect people to places, to social groupings, and to each other.

## **2.6 Conceptual context and literature review conclusion: setting the scene for empirical research**

By examining interpretations of communities and social relationships as they relate to a network-orientated analysis of festivals, this chapter has responded to the research objective of developing a conceptual context for the book. The principal themes of festivals, networks and communities (as interpreted through social capital and place-based theories) were initially introduced by way of a table of resonances and equivalences between the three (Table 2.1). The ensuing sections sought to examine and justify this approach, such that elements of each theme could be mapped onto corresponding components of the others. This approach has hopefully reinforced the rationale for studying festivals as networks, by demonstrating that this approach can complement more established perceptions of festivals and events. The chapter then closed with a consideration and critique of Castells's network society thesis (Castells, 2000). This served to locate the discussion in a broader interpretation of social, cultural and economic relationships, in an age of digital communications technologies, and organisational networking logic. These various themes have all contributed to the individual papers presented in the book, and this commentary has highlighted the common strands that link one paper to the next, developing into an overall thesis.

This chapter has also demonstrated the coherence of the body of work being presented. The study of festivals and networks has been shown to have a place within the existing literature, both through sources used in this commentary and the individual publications. Collectively, these sources have ranged from recent media coverage, to academic analysis of key themes, to historic texts from Charlotte Bronte (Shorter, 1908), Ferdinand Tönnies (Tönnies, 2021), and Marshall McLuhan (Playboy, 2009). The publications will inform subsequent sections as well, including the following Research Methodology chapter with its focus on SNA methods and the application of a critical realist research philosophy.



# Chapter 3 Research methodology

## 3.1 Methodology introduction

This PhD research has been motivated by two principal ideas: firstly, that novel opportunities for research on festivals and the communities that support them can be pursued through a methodology underpinned by social network analysis (SNA) methods; and secondly, that a network focused approach and perspective is valuable in understanding festivals and creative communities, to the benefit of both practitioners and researchers. These two considerations can be traced back to the first SNA-focused paper presented (Jarman et al., 2014, pp. 317-318). The article applied a systematic literature review to consideration of social network analysis and festival cities, recognising that despite SNA's maturity and relevance, it was under-utilised in festival and event studies. SNA was presented "as a complement to the more formalised structures inherent in established stakeholder analysis", while also seeing some potential methodological advances through greater use of the festival context in which to conduct such research (Jarman et al., 2014, pp. 319-320). The ensuing projects, publications and conference papers have sought to deliver on this ambition. Continuity has been emphasised through the use of complementary empirical SNA research methods, set within a coherent range of festival and creative community contexts, and an evolving narrative that has connected the different elements of the PhD. This chapter initially describes and considers the various SNA methods used to capture, analyse and illustrate primary data. The latter half of the chapter then introduces critical realism (Bhaskar, 2008) as a research philosophy that has informed these collected works. Both the methods and philosophy sections below are presented as the result of an evolutionary, iterative research journey.

This discussion of methodology is also closely linked to the following chapter, which focuses on contributions to knowledge. Both seek to demonstrate the overall coherence of the PhD, with their coordination a reflection of how important research methods have been in developing knowledge contributions: they are two parts of a whole. This is not the first combination of SNA and critical realism, with work from Buch-Hansen (Buch-Hansen, 2014) helping to structure the current discussion. Buch-Hansen refers to "two main layers" of SNA (Buch-Hansen, 2014, p. 307): firstly, a "foundation" of methods used to map and analyse social connections and networks; secondly, a "superstructure" of studies and publications on the "socio-theoretical nature and implications of social networks". With like purpose, commenting on mixed methods SNA, Crossley & Edwards note that the "way in which methods are used and thought about is the key to a consistent methodology, not the methods adopted *per se*" (Crossley & Edwards, 2016, p. 11). From a network analysis standpoint, therefore, there is merit in distinguishing between methods and

philosophy, and between foundations (the methods) and superstructure (the resulting studies and publications). This methodology chapter is principally about the foundations: looking firstly at how empirical research has been carried out; and then secondly developing an introduction to critical realism. The contributions to knowledge chapter turns to the superstructure: framed initially by Buch-Hansen's classification of "resonances" between critical realism and SNA (Buch-Hansen, 2014, pp. 313-318); then by reflections on the possible development of a network theory of festivals and events, comparable to similar considerations of stakeholder-orientated event theory (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 33-36).

The publications being presented in this book span a decade's work, during which time opportunities have been pursued and emergent themes given prominence. Key elements of this methodological development are set out in Figure 3.1 at the end of this section, which lists the nine publications, in chronological order. Opposite them, four categories of methodological focus have been identified as being relevant to the collected works: data collection methods used; SNA measures discussed; network types examined; and SNA software used. The following sections consider these themes, demonstrating how different approaches have featured in different combinations, to explore how SNA and networks can contribute to understanding relationships with festival and creative communities.

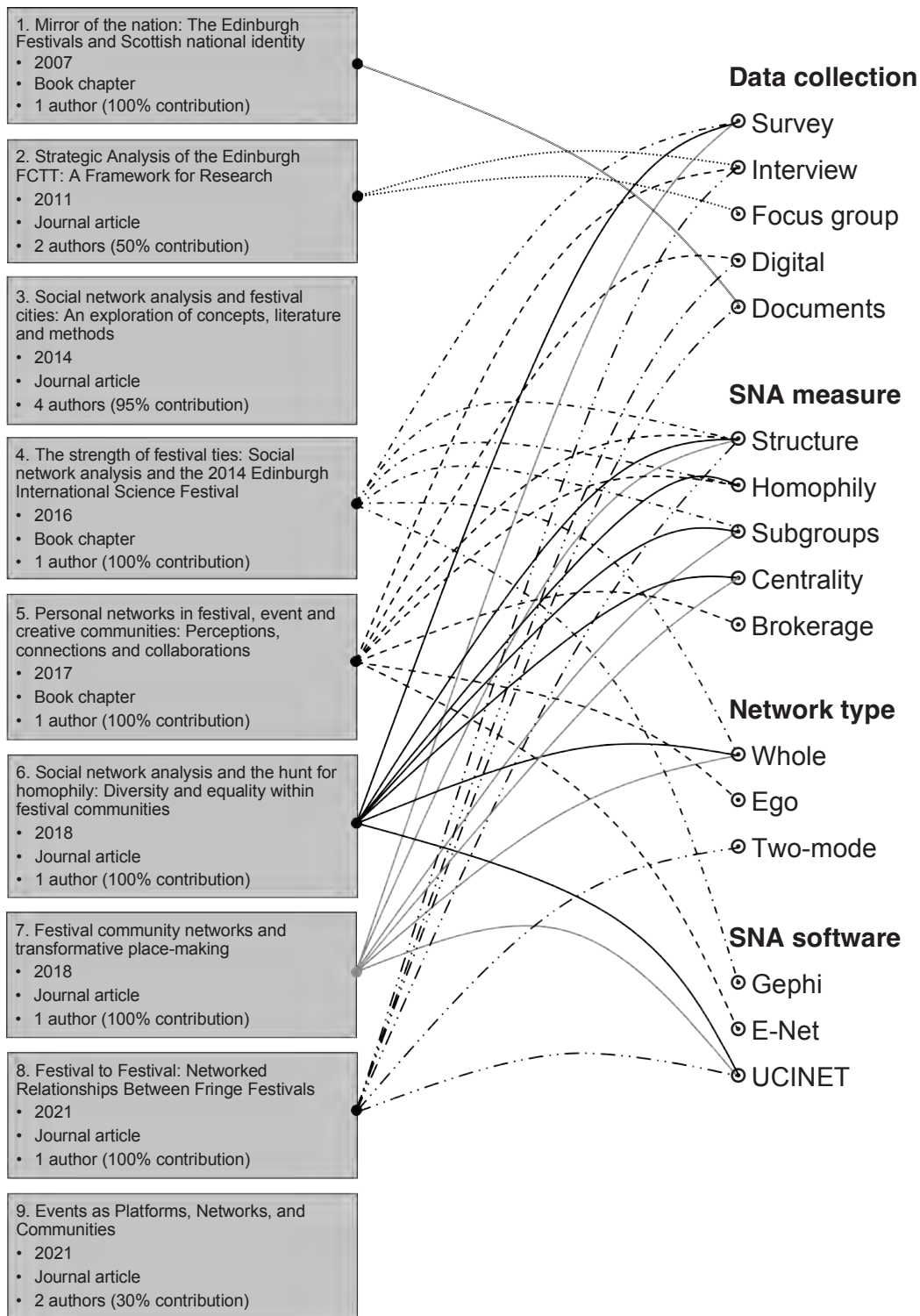


Figure 3.1 PhD publications methodological development model

## 3.2 Primary research methods: social network analysis

Scott describes SNA as “a broad approach to sociological analysis and a set of methodological techniques that aim to describe and explore the patterns apparent in the social relationships that individuals and groups form with each other” (Scott, 2017, p. 2). Such breadth is demonstrated through this book, from “whole network” projects that captured relatively small amounts of data from multiple members of a population of individuals (Prell, 2012, pp. 68-73), to “ego network” research where comparatively large data sets were gathered from single people (Crossley et al., 2015, pp. 44-75). The final project used an existing data set, of applications to a network of Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021), in order to develop a “two-mode” network that combined the applications and the festivals in one (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 231-248). Scott’s definition makes reference to “patterns” in relationships, interpreted as the arrangements, structures and systems in social connections that are discernible through SNA. To this end both graphs and calculations have their place in identifying and analysing aspects of those connections. SNA is “devoted to the gathering and analysis of relational data” (Crossley et al., 2015, p. 4), and it is “about structure and position” (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 10). As a research methodology, SNA is a means by which to explore the connection and contagion discussed in previous sections (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, p. 16), to link the themes of this submission, focus primarily on individuals as the unit of analysis, and ultimately reveal valuable characteristics of social life with relevance to communities and their festivals.

### 3.2.1 Primary research: data collection

Representing relationships in terms of connection and contagion requires processes of abstraction and reduction, in order to convert evidence from the social world into data that are suitable for SNA methods, calculations, and software. Methodological decisions over data collection have fundamental qualitative impacts on the nature of the connections and the contagion identified, and also what they might mean for the people involved. The three primary options for SNA data collection are (Scott, 2017, p. 42): surveys and interviews, capturing the subjects’ perspectives directly; researcher observations; and investigation of indirect records, including written and electronic archives. SNA does not tend to require specialist data collection methods *per se*, and it is subject to many of the same limitations as other social science methodologies (Scott, 2017, p. 42). The most important consideration throughout the thesis process has been the direct solicitation of information from subjects and research participants, through paper-based survey tools and face-to-face interviews. The earliest empirical research made use of individual and focus group interviews to gather data from an organisation’s internal and external stakeholders (Jarman &

Theodoraki, 2011), which inspired much of the subsequent research by demonstrating the limitations of expecting interviewees to represent a stakeholder community, rather than their own views and interests, relationships and attributes. Subsequent projects therefore allowed for this, where respondents could be seen and appreciated for themselves.

Three publications made use of “whole network” data, collected through paper surveys: initially the paid staff of the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016), and more latterly a volunteer run multi-arts festival (Jarman, 2018a; Jarman, 2018b). The ties identified in all three papers are based on who the respondents identified as their “most important” contacts within the relevant festival population, chosen from pre-prepared lists of names. In this whole network research the emphasis was principally on connections: people identifying others, allowing for structural analysis of the resulting networks. The results generated would have been different if alternative populations were being examined, such as extending the networks’ boundaries to include performers, artists, suppliers and other stakeholder groups. By limiting the networks to the paid staff of the Science Festival, and the most prominent volunteers from the arts festival, practical limits were placed on the respondents in terms of who they could identify, and potentially therefore the types of relationships that could realistically be reflected in the data. The chosen methodologies led inevitably to research that focused on relationships within a subset of the wider festival community, and had appreciable limitations that would require other applications of SNA to answer. Breaking out of such restrictions was a motivation for the ego network analysis (Jarman, 2017), though even in a whole network context this could be achieved through alternative forms of data, such as email records or social media ties (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 252-286).

Attribute data were also gathered about the respondents in these whole network projects, such as whether Science Festival staff had also worked for Edinburgh’s other festivals (Jarman, 2016, pp. 301-302), and the attitudes that the arts festival’s volunteers’ held towards their host community (Jarman, 2018a, pp. 345-346). Less was done here to explicitly investigate whether or how opinions and other attributes might be transferred from person to person. In SNA terms, such contagion via “hyperdiadic spread” (“the tendency of effects to spread from person to person to person”) was not a priority of the research (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 22-24). In other situations contagion is of greater importance, and pursuing as complete a picture as possible of the networks under investigation is vital. Anecdotal familiarity with the festivals and the populations being analysed, combined with the experience of setting up the projects, suggests that contagion through these networks could have taken a range of forms: professional, emotional and social support; information; leadership and management functions; aspects of friendship; encouragement; news dissemination and more. The combination of structural data and personal

characteristics provides much of the value of SNA, helping to reveal aspects of life in the network. Decisions are inevitably required in setting up projects such as these, both from the researcher in deciding which connections and which attributes to capture, and those assisting them in the process.

To carry out each of these two projects, preparatory communications with a key informant were vital to provide information about their organisations. This was calculated to open up space for others to then contribute independently, though potentially also framed the collection of data in restrictive ways. A similar scenario is outlined by Bryman & Bell in their consideration of ethnographic research (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 436), recognising that a well-placed “insider” can open the structure, history and culture of an organisation or community. Their principal caveat warns against an over reliance on such informants, whose influence on the researcher may suppress the broader picture being sought. Without the support of well-placed and influential informants, these two festival research projects would have taken different forms. Each key person helped to shape who was presented with the surveys, either according to particular characteristics (such as being a paid member of Science Festival staff, rather than a volunteer), or through a reflexive process by which the director of the arts festival hand-picked 35 volunteers to approach from within the wider organisation. In each case a list of names was then drawn up, with each name given a number, to facilitate the capturing of relational data between individuals; these lists accompanied the paper surveys during the data collection. Within these festival organisations, the key informants helped to introduce the participants to the project, which built trust and interest in the work. They also influenced the timing and means by which data collection was attempted, which was beneficial to participation rates. Though this devolved the framing of the research to the insider, in each case this framing was based on effective collaborations between researcher and informant, which in turn established relationships between the researcher and the populations being studied.

The richest data used in these collected papers, in terms of insights into the experiences and perspectives of the subjects being studied, came from interviews carried out with selected individuals. Research with the volunteer arts festival noted above included four interviews, with participants identified from the initial population as a reflection of their varying network centrality positions on a range of measurements (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 124-125). It was apparent that in an interview setting people wanted to talk about their connections (or sometimes lack thereof). They recognised the importance of relationships to their own involvement with particular projects, and the development of entire professional careers. Interviews also underpinned the ego network research with similar results, and provided an understanding of each person’s individual appreciation of their community, unconstrained by a particular festival or project (Jarman, 2017). The communities

thus described were not limited either, and the network data applied to social relationships that had accumulated over weeks, months and years. By breaking away from research focused on a specific iteration of a particular festival, the ego network research offers insights into the nature of creative communities as experienced by those who inhabit them.

Social network analysis is not the only methodological context in which interviews have helped to explore social relationships. The academic festivals literature includes examples of both stakeholder power (Tiew et al., 2015), and network focused research (Richards, 2021), that take such approach. However, the use of SNA for the papers in this book brought a new approach and vocabulary, which allowed subjects to explore and express their experiences of working in a networked environment. For the researcher, interviews allowed for closer engagement with the subjects. This brought a degree of validation for the work being carried out, and yielded interesting and novel insights into the lives of volunteers and professionals involved in delivering festivals.

The use of an indirect source of relational data for the final project in this book (Jarman, 2021) marked a departure from the surveys and interviews employed to that point, and as such heralded further potential perspectives and opportunities for applying SNA in festival research. The work focused on performers' applications to a network of Fringe festivals, using data made available by a key informant positioned at the heart of the network's administration. Part of the significance of this work is in its demonstration that fresh scrutiny of existing data, using SNA, offers new insights and understandings. Those involved in the development of the Fringe network were aware of the value that collaboration had brought them and their potential participants, but lacked an effective means of presenting their intuitions. The resulting project benefited from knowledge gained by the researcher during previous projects, leading to additional insights when working with the data. It also brought a new form of data set to the overall PhD, suitable for two-mode SNA which previously had not been possible. Network analysis textbooks (Prell, 2012, pp. 68-74; Scott, 2017, pp. 42-46) tend to reflect positively on the diversity of means by which relational data can be identified and gathered, and over the course of the papers presented developed for the PhD attempts have been made to adopt and apply this approach in a creative and informative manner.

### *3.2.2 Primary research: SNA measures*

Diversity across the range of publications presented in this book extends to the statistical analyses used in different projects, principally drawing from fundamental

considerations typical in SNA work: network centrality, density, sub-groups and homophily are all given due attention. Reflecting on two of these in isolation – sub-groups and homophily – it is instructive to see how the statistical dimensions of SNA contribute to its overall utility as a research methodology. The identification of sub-groups within the overall set of results was an important element of early research into the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016), and more latterly the volunteer run arts festival (Jarman, 2018a). From one project to the other, what was initially a proof-of-concept demonstration that SNA could help identify sub-groups in a festival context, became an approach that underpinned the overall conclusions reached about relationships within organisational social networks. In research for this PhD, the Girvan-Newman test was used to establish subgroups in the volunteer festival community, based on connection data alone (Jarman, 2018a, p. 343). By introducing such tests to the field of festival and event studies, as part of the use of SNA in this context, social structures are revealed across the span of a festival community that would otherwise remain hidden to the observer. There is considerable potential to researchers of festival and creative communities in the application of such well-established elements of network analysis.

Where identification of sub-groups has been used here as a relatively static determinant of network structure, consideration of homophily reveals some of the dynamism inherent in social relationships. Homophily (discussed above in 2.3.3) underpinned two of the articles being presented here in particular (Jarman, 2018b; Jarman, 2017), where it was defined as “the conscious or unconscious tendency to associate with people who resemble us” (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, p. 17). The dynamism in this situation lies in the processes by which such associations come about: either through people forming ties to those with whom they already share one or more characteristics; or where people influence each other to the extent that they become aligned. The statistical test chosen to reveal details of this situation was the EI index, where E represents the number of “external” ties a node (or person) has against a specified characteristic, and I represents the “internal” ties (Crossley et al., 2015, p. 81). A numerical score was thus derived showing, for example, the extent to which volunteers at a festival were drawn to others like themselves (denoting homophily), or not (suggesting heterophily), from a pre-prepared list of colleagues. By following up the survey with targeted interviews, an appreciation of the longitudinal forces at work was possible, building on the cross-sectional nature of the SNA component. The EI test was also used in the ego network analysis, where each participant could identify their “alter” connections without the constraint of a list of names, and then report their own perceptions of those alters’ attributes (Jarman, 2017, pp. 70-73). The resulting analysis was, understandably, of interest to the egos concerned. Firstly, it helped demonstrate how their own attributes and characteristics might have helped shape the nature and form of social connections they had forged, maintained, and sometimes left to wither into weaker ties. Secondly, each ego knew

that however important their interpretations of those connections and alters might be, they were carrying out their professional lives with incomplete and imperfect information about those around them.

The statistical dimension of SNA played a vital role in the development of this manuscript, as more was learned about what could be achieved through such methods. Engaging with network centrality, density and other themes helped to inspire and shape the types of questions that were asked of communities and organisations. Data collection was also affected accordingly, such as when clear distinctions were required of just what constituted “external” and “internal” in the context of different attributes and characteristics. Advantages and benefits were revealed in the process, recognising that they were the result of relatively rigid and quantitative forms of data, in a field where qualitative approaches are more common when considering social and community relationships. The resulting body of work helps to demonstrate how new insights can be delivered when an established methodology is applied in a novel setting, exploring SNA's different dimensions and considering what they might bring to the dynamic relationship between festivals and creative communities. This thesis has utilised mainstream and accessible elements of SNA methodology, to both complement and extend the alternative approaches that are more common in event studies. This is valuable work in its specific industrial environment, and also a recognition that the body of work being presented has delivered a study of social and organisational relationships regardless of context.

### *3.2.3 Primary research: SNA software*

Statistical analysis of networks is facilitated by specialist SNA software. Researchers have access to a range of software applications that can accept, analyse and present relational data (Prell, 2012, pp. 225-226; Scott, 2017, pp. 69-71). Such applications can handle much larger data sets than were gathered for these projects, though they are generally accessible in their use, and techniques learned in one environment can often be transferred to another. Three SNA software applications were used in this PhD, each chosen according to its suitability for the project at hand. *Gephi* (Bastian et al., 2009) was chosen for research with the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016), taking advantage of its cross-platform accessibility and presentational flexibility. *E-NET* (Borgatti, 2006) was used for the ego network analysis, having been designed specifically for this type of network (Jarman, 2017). *UCINET* (Borgatti et al., 2002) is the most commonly referenced application in the SNA textbooks cited here. It allows for a wide array of statistical calculations and tests, and underpinned work with both the volunteer arts festival (Jarman, 2018a; Jarman, 2018b), and later the Fringe festivals network (Jarman,

2021). These applications have allowed the manuscript to deliver on its ambition to engage with festival networks as both a mindset and a research methodology. They have allowed for the combination of relational data and attribute data, generally with the individual as the unit of analysis, that allows a network approach to complement other forms of festival and community research.

The use of SNA software in the context of mainstream festival and event studies literature is rare, and as such its centrality to this book is a core component of the contributions to knowledge being proposed in the following chapter: where SNA software is the medium, the application of such software is the key message (McLuhan, 1964). The present discussion can, however, accentuate methodological aspects of this theme. The requirements of SNA software dictate certain aspects of the primary data collection, management and analysis process. It is not just that this software is *able* to make use of relational data, it is a broad *requirement* of the research design that such data be identified and collected. The underlying rhetorical themes of network analysis are made real in the study of communities through SNA software: what is being connected (or not)? What is flowing across such connections (or is prevented from doing so)? What are the attributes associated with the nodes in such a network (and thus the people or organisations that they typically represent)? Drawing again from McLuhan, considering that “we shape our tools and afterwards our tools shape us” (Naughton, 2011), the choice to use SNA software has had profound implications for the practice of carrying out the resulting research. As has been discussed there is flexibility in the methods used, from interviews to surveys to online forms, but still a uniformity in terms of how the resulting data were presented to the software. To be intelligible to *Gephi*, *E-Net* or *UCINET*, relationships were presented as lines in a spreadsheet, and the characteristics of each individual reduced to coded attributes correlated with each node. Borgatti *et al.* describe how to appropriately “format network data for import... transform network data to make it suitable for different analyses... export network data and results...” (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013, p. 62). By conforming to the strictures of SNA software a researcher is regulated in how they define and represent social relationships, but they are also liberated by what such software can help to achieve.

### *3.2.4 Primary research: SNA data presentation, network sociograms, and methodological limitations*

The most visually arresting aspect of social network analysis is, generally, the way graphs are used to present network data. The appeal of constructing a social graph, or “sociogram”, in order to represent the relational data has an intuitive quality, and “can provide a qualitative understanding that is hard to obtain quantitatively” (Borgatti

et al., 2013, p. 100). As such the graphical illustration of nodes and ties can go beyond merely complementing tables of numbers and results, to offer a more tangible picture of the community being investigated. Over the papers presented in this manuscript, sociograms have helped to identify and demonstrate the presence of various network-based characteristics. These include the relative density of two ego networks (Jarman, 2017, p. 78), the presence of a core-periphery structure of an organisation, as shown in Figure 3.2 (Jarman, 2018b, p. 126), and the way 339 applicants submitted 1,084 applications to appear at a network of four Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021, pp. 107-108). By reflecting upon the relationship between qualitative and quantitative conceptions of information, Borgatti *et al.* have highlighted how important these visualisations are to various audiences involved in such research. For the subjects themselves, an instinctive urge to locate oneself in the graph is entirely understandable, particularly in an age when social media has so embedded itself into popular culture, and individuals have a sense of how they in turn are embedded in their own networks (Shirky, 2009, pp. 212-232). For a researcher, producing a valid sociogram can be a reward in itself, swiftly followed by consideration of how best to emphasise aspects of the data, and how the graph might inspire further consideration and investigation.

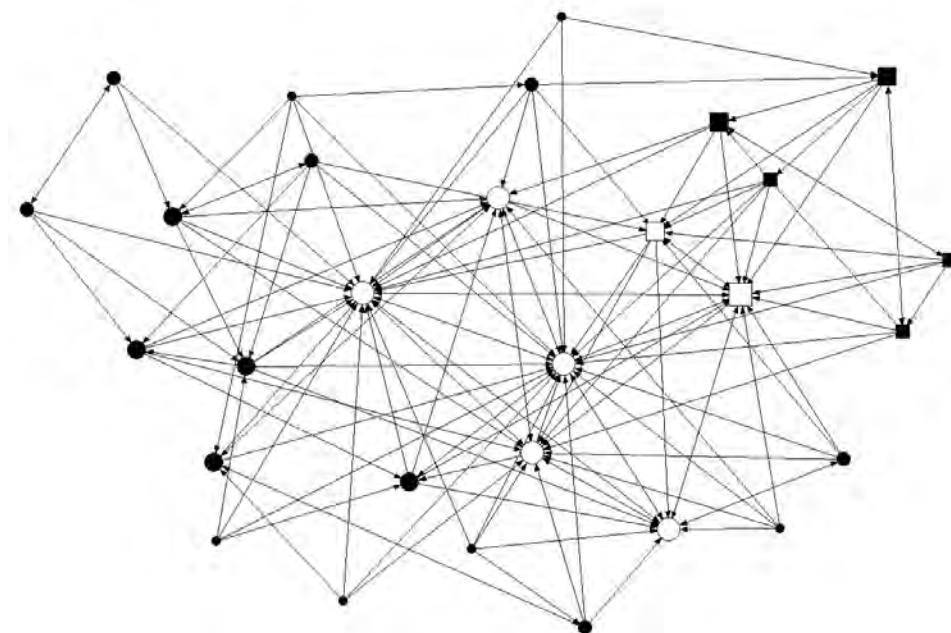


Figure 3.2 Core-periphery structure of a festival team (core nodes are white, peripheral nodes are black)

While SNA as a methodology might be relatively underrepresented within the festival and event studies literature, it is nonetheless comparatively common to find diagrams being used to represent relationships between social actors and social groups. This is perhaps unsurprising given the prevalence of stakeholder focused models of event management, and Van Niekerk & Getz include several in their dedicated volume (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019). Their models accentuate stakeholder categorisations and types, characteristics and attributes, and contributions to delivery of events. Bostok's "stakeholder centric" model introduces real world geographic dimensions, emphasising the locality of an event in order to accentuate the social utility and sustainability of such projects (Bostok, 2014, p. 33). From an event project management perspective, work breakdown structures and memberships of industry groups can also be shown graphically (Pielichaty et al., 2017). Papers cited by Van Niekerk & Getz, in their reference to social network theory, also employ illustrations to denote relationships (Izzo et al., 2012; Van Niekerk, 2014; Booth, 2016). Yet, as noted, none of these publications uses SNA software to develop their visualisations. The pictures are largely bespoke representations of research findings, or part of theoretical models. They frame such relationships for the reader, and provide an accessible basis on which further research might be developed. The models themselves are, however, abstracted from any primary data that has contributed to their creation. Where SNA has been explicitly used to analyse and present festival and event data, such as in the Ziakas & Costa paper also cited by Van Niekerk & Getz (Ziakas & Costa, 2010), there is a more direct connection between the research subjects and the reader. If their project had returned different data, it is clear that their diagrams would look different; these are not approximations and interpretations, for SNA has allowed the authors to present their findings in relatively raw, yet intelligible, graphs.

For all that they offer a researcher of social networks, SNA software applications and the sociograms that they produce have important methodological limitations and tensions. Scott demands that researchers understand the tools, terms and algorithms they are working with, if they hope to make valid sociological arguments for research based upon SNA (Scott, 2017, p. 3). Other authors appear more accommodating, recognising the increased popularity of research that emphasises social relationships, and thus an increase in "newcomers to the field, who might not have much confidence" (Prell, 2012, p. 2). This PhD has been a journey of methodological exploration and experimentation, emphasising the potential of applying novel methods in environments that are more familiar to the author. As such there has been a degree of trust in the calculations used, albeit mitigated in places by the use of multiple statistical tests where validity could be enhanced through further analysis. It has also been understood that SNA has some specific limitations that must be taken into consideration, such as the potential for sociograms and graphs to display nodes and ties in manipulable (even arbitrary) visual

arrangements. Distances between nodes can be deceiving if too much is read into their clustering on the screen, or the printed page. Missing data can be inadvertently overlooked in SNA, when software produces graphs and calculations that accurately represent the information supplied to them. In the papers presented below this factor tempers the conclusions drawn from 33% (Jarman, 2016) and 83% (Jarman, 2018a) response rates, though each paper addresses the resulting compromises that were of note in these projects.

In arguing for SNA's potential as a methodology to complement those more established in the study of festivals and creative communities, the work presented for this thesis has emphasised informed experimentation, and the application of diverse approaches within the context of social network analysis. Multiple forms of data, differing applications of SNA, statistics and visualisations have all combined. There is clear support for the further use of SNA in these areas of study, with opportunities to introduce a yet wider range of methods, new data sets, and industry collaborators. As has been noted, a parallel emphasis throughout the work has focused on networks as a mindset and a reference for researchers and industry professionals, which in its way is a reflection of the more philosophical dimensions of this research. It is to such philosophy that this chapter will now turn.

### **3.3 Research philosophy: introduction**

The remainder of this chapter introduces critical realism as a research philosophy that reflects the priorities and ambitions of this PhD. The adoption of a philosophical position on which to base a programme of work can help a researcher navigate a path through the many decisions, opportunities and challenges that will present themselves, as they pursue deeper, clearer or alternative perspectives on the natural or social world (Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 177-182). Critical realism is founded on two originating principles: firstly, that there is "an external world, independent of, and often defying, our desires of it and attempts to understand and change it"; and secondly, that "critical realists tend to share the social realists' commitment to *changing* unsatisfactory or oppressive realities" (Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 121-122). It follows that critical realism is, ultimately, an optimistic interpretation of what research can achieve in a social setting. This is reflected here in the guiding desire to identify and represent the experiences of individuals throughout the various projects, reacting to methodologies that subsume people within larger stakeholder groupings. Likewise, as each project has considered which method is most appropriate in its context, there has been a desire to demonstrate ways that SNA can bring value to festival and creative community research. A Castellan interpretation of "the network society" also become increasingly prominent over time

as a theoretical framing (Castells, 2000). As such, there is an emergent, exploratory and reflexive quality to this manuscript when seen as a whole, reflecting key characteristics of critical realism.

### *3.3.1 Research philosophy: critical realism*

Critical realism is founded on a realist ontology, and a subjectivist epistemology (Fryer, 2020). It acknowledges that there is a real world to be studied, outside of the observer and their experiences, while emphasising the importance of theory in trying to develop understanding from such study (Albert, 2020c). An explicit acceptance of the complexity of social life leads critical realists to seek the best explanation available for a given situation, process, or event, with a degree of reflexivity required in what is ultimately a “social process” of knowledge creation (Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 121-122). Recognition that the way social relationships are presented on the surface is not necessarily how they are experienced, that they can be misleading, is an vital element of this approach; indeed knowledge is an “achievement”, that must be worked at (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 57; Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 121-122). A variety of elements of critical realist epistemology flow from this, including an acceptance that although explanations may be proposed by a researcher, they will not be able to generate universal laws or predictions in ways that might be prioritised through a positivist process (Albert, 2020c). Yet neither would a critical realist pause their research upon presenting a subject’s stories and experiences, as might result from a constructivist approach (Fryer, 2020). Perhaps the critical realist’s work is never done, for “current beliefs will always be open to correction in the light of further cognitive work (observations, experimental evidence, interpretations, theoretical reasoning, dialogue and so on)”: critical realism is therefore a “fallibilist” stance (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 122), able to accept empirical findings, without them necessarily providing conclusive proof. As such there is recognition that although the learnings and contributions developed during this PhD are meaningful, they are also open to scrutiny, and critique, and debate.

The critical realism of social science owes a great deal to Bhaskar’s founding work on a critical realism of natural science, which introduced principal elements such as a stratified view of reality (Bhaskar, 2008, pp. 56-62). Bhaskar proposed three domains in which mechanisms, events and experiences might be encountered (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 56).

	<i>Domain of Real</i>	<i>Domain of Actual</i>	<i>Domain of Empirical</i>
<i>Mechanisms</i>	✓		
<i>Events</i>	✓	✓	
<i>Experiences</i>	✓	✓	✓

Table 3.1 Bhaskar's domains of real, actual and empirical

The “empirical” domain contains observed experiences, which the subjects of research are able to report. The empirical is a subset of the “actual” domain, which is characterised by events that “must occur independently of the experiences in which they are apprehended” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 56). In this framework the category of “events” encapsulates everyday occurrences and activities, of which planned and organised festivals would be merely a subset. From these two domains (the empirical and the actual), there is recognition that there is a “real”, independent world to be discovered, and that this world extends beyond what is observed and reported by people. The third domain is the “real”, which envelopes and overlaps the empirical and the actual, and sees them subject to the “causal structures and generative mechanisms of nature” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 56). Such structures and mechanisms are themselves independent of human observation, as discussed in greater detail below. From such domains comes much of the complexity that characterises the ways a critical realist beholds the world, and establishes their “philosophical ontology” (Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 125-126). In a social setting, as the real domain seeks to identify and understand the structures and mechanisms that influence society, so there is an opportunity (perhaps an obligation) to continually pursue deeper levels of appreciation: having proposed a set of causal structures and generative mechanisms, what might in turn help to explain those structures and mechanisms? Complexity would appear a near inevitability of such a view, forever open to critique and further consideration. The distinction between “open” and “closed” systems is also pertinent here, with the latter a reference to experimental settings where specific mechanisms might be isolated in the laboratory in order to determine their effects, while open systems characterise the real world (both natural and social), complete with its events and experiences (Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 129-131). Critical realism compels the observer to look beyond what can be experienced, observed and reported in the empirical domain, beyond the flows and sequences of events in the actual domain that set the scene for such experiences, and to consider what underpins all this in the real domain.

The mechanisms at work in the domain of real are akin to “the gravity that caused the apple to fall on Newton’s head” (Fryer, 2020, p. 22). Newton experienced this reported event empirically as the apple falling towards earth (Geffer, 2010), though in

reality gravity was acting to pull the two together. Underlying mechanisms are also at work in a social setting. They may be harder to identify, more numerous and complex in their effects, harder to distinguish from one another, and context-specific, ultimately making it irrelevant for the critical realist to seek universal laws (Albert, 2020c). The critical realist would thus contend that causal mechanisms act as tendencies, with apples tending to fall towards the earth because of gravity, and people tending to be attracted to others like themselves through a process of homophily. There may, of course, be many reasons why two or more people are attracted to each other in a given setting, of which homophily might play a greater or larger part. From Bhaskar, “tendencies are powers which may be exercised without being fulfilled or actualized (as well as being fulfilled or actualized unperceived by [sic] men)” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 50), which might make them difficult to uncover and analyse. Such is the nature of critical realist informed research, if it enables a clearer picture of society to emerge.

Amongst the most important mechanisms concerning this thesis are social structures, forming part of critical realism’s focus on relations between agency and structure (Fryer, 2020, pp. 24-25). In this realm, any theory of society must be able to account for both agency and structure: agency is real and individuals shape their lives; but their decisions and actions are influenced by real social structures, that constrain and enable a person’s choices. Such a structure might be a university, a network, a social circle, a hierarchy, a culturally bound system of signifiers that show a person just where they are located in the community, or it might be a family. Depending on the observer’s ontological position, four broad interpretations of what constitutes and informs a social structure can be identified (Albert, 2020b): (1) law-like regularities: a positivist view, based on facts; (2) stable patterns: resulting from repeated activities and ongoing social activity, with structural change resulting from changes in activity; (3) rules and resources: linked to socialisation, this interpretation sees people acting according to social rules (either consciously or unconsciously); (4) social positions: a relatively stable phenomenon that people might enter into, and then feel the effects of their position within such a structure. In open systems, such as the complex lived experience of individual actors, social structures of all kinds shape the scope and direction of the decisions available to each person. Context is important, but so too is any theory employed to try and explain how agency and structure influence each other. Network logic, social capital, place, homophily, and the network society are among the theories referenced in this manuscript, representing attempts to frame and examine the phenomena under investigation. The results are all context specific, and focus on illustrating and describing particular situations, but none is so bold as to suggest it might be capable of proposing a universal law of causality for the events experienced by its subjects.

The final theme to be considered is emergence: the properties of a system or entity

are said to be emergent from the elements that make it up, or rather “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Albert, 2020b). A view on social structure that emphasises amalgamated patterns of socialisation might be interpreted as “weak emergence”, while a more formalised situation (e.g. analysis of an organisation’s bureaucracy) could be seen as “strong emergence”. In both cases, the resulting social structure has properties that reside within its constituent parts (e.g. organisational departments such as payroll and IT support), yet the overall entity also has qualities and characteristics that cannot be distilled to smaller units than the whole. To view emergence from the other direction, so to speak, observers might ask which aspects of situation might be attributable to deeper levels of understanding: anatomy reduced to biology, biology to chemistry, and ultimately to physics (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 127). Critical realists push back against such reductionist approaches in a social setting though, recognising that although so-called lower level science can help explain the “constitution of the *mechanisms* at the higher level”, it does not say much about when or how “those mechanisms will be *exercised*” (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 127). In a social setting, emergence is part of the relationship between structure and agency, with structural, cultural and personal emergent properties helping to identify changes of interest to researchers (Albert, 2020b). As with natural science, emergence helps the social scientist to identify factors that reveal something of the complexity of the system being studied, giving importance to both the whole and its parts, society and the individuals who inhabit it, and wilfully considering how they influence each other.

### **3.4 Methodology conclusion**

This chapter has set out an overview of the SNA methods used in this thesis, as well as principal characteristics of critical realism as the underpinning research philosophy. This is the methodological “foundation”, on which Chapter 5’s “superstructure” of contributions to knowledge can be built, in line with Buch-Hansen’s model (Buch-Hansen, 2014, p. 307). The exploration of different applications of SNA, as above, has been a rewarding experience, with a variety of methods demonstrating their suitability for examining festival communities, and the wider social contexts in which they are delivered and enjoyed. Critical realism, in turn, has provided a philosophical structure, by emphasising the domains, mechanisms, structures, agency, emergence and other themes that help to define it as a paradigm for investigating the social world that festivals inhabit.

These then are the tools and perspectives used to develop an overarching analysis of festival and creative communities, that emphasises the importance of networks and the experiences of individual people. Developing a PhD through multiple

projects has proved an effective way to consider and apply a mixture of methods, sometimes in combination. A variety of concepts have been explored in this way, from place to social capital to organisational strategy, again benefiting from being addressed in some depth, isolated from each other across different publications. The following chapter (Chapter 4) contains the nine publications that feature in this submission, presented as PDFs from the original sources. Considering the papers together through this accompanying commentary shows how effectively different methods can reinforce each other's strengths, and in some ways address limitations, hopefully showing that in a critical realist sense this PhD is greater overall than the sum of its parts.

# Chapter 4 Publications

## 4.1 Publications note

Chapter 4 includes the nine publications that underpin this body of work. They are presented here in chronological order.

Tables, figures and graphs have been numbered according to their position within this chapter of the book, rather than within their original publications.



#### 4.1.1 *Mirror of the nation: The Edinburgh Festivals and Scottish national identity*

Jarman, D. (2007). *Mirror of the Nation: the Edinburgh Festivals and Scottish National Identity*. In C. Aitchison & A. Pritchard (Eds.), *Festivals and Events: Culture and Identity in Leisure, Sport and Tourism* (pp. 1-8). Leisure Studies Association.

Why programme an ambitious arts festival in a conservative north European city, inviting Europe's cultural elite to perform for an international audience in the midst of frugal post-war rationing and a British energy crisis that initially prohibited the floodlighting of the Castle? Vision and pragmatism created the inaugural Edinburgh Interut the Festivals today would leave a vacuum in global perceptions of the city, but during the founding of the event, questions were raised. To quote from Hugh MacDiarmid, he felt it was "like giving the content of a University Honours Course all at once to a class of mentally defective children", and he wasn't the only sceptic (Macworld's largest arts festival has built itself.

The two most prominent pre-war European arts festivals were Salzburg and Bayreuth, with direct links to the work and personalities of Mozart and Wagner respectively, yet both lay dormant in the mid1940s. Edinburgh lacked such obvious artistic foundations for its young festival, but it was just this that qualified the city for its founders' ambitions. What Rudolph Bing, the International's first Director, found there was a clean slate. He was also General Manager of Glyndebourne opera, and could keep it alive through lean years by creating a new festival to incorporate into its programme. His autobiography states that this "had been my own original idea for just this purpose" (Bing, 1972: p. 1). Beyond this partiality there was nothing to limit his appeal to Europe's finest performers to join him, whatever their art form, whatever the content and theme of their work. An admirable commitment to overcome the divisions of conflict through artist excellence and internationalism took hold, with the enthusiastic backing of the Lord Provost John Falconer, elite figures in Edinburgh society, and much of the media (Miller, 1996: pp. 1-4; Crawford, 1997: pp. 1-5). [1]

Yet the relationship between Bing's programme and Scottish performers and their work was ambiguous. He felt one of the hits of 1947 was "Edinburgh's own contribution, a military tattoo in the courtyard of the castle", yet today's incarnation is often disregarded as tartan and shortbread personified — a celebration of Scotland's role in Britain's military history (Bing, 1972: p. 93). Prominent Scottish inclusion in the earliest events was almost exclusively the result of perseverance and selfmotion by Scottish artists themselves. The charge of Scottish under

A defining example of the International Festival proclaiming a Scottish identity was the 1948 revival of Sir David Lindsay's 16th century pre-Reformation drama, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaites* (Miller, 1996: p14— 15; Crawford, 1997, pp. 16-19). [2] Robert Kemp (who also coined the term 'fringe' in 1948) adapted the play, Tyrone Guthrie directed and led the choice of venue — the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, the former temporary home of the modern Scottish Parliament. Those audiences and critics who praised the performances as art and a potent symbol of Scotland's ability helped cement the need for Scottish work on the International stage. Yet despite further runs in 1949, 1951 and 1959, *The Thrie Estaites* fails to appear in Rudolph Bing's autobiography: the most important figure in the Festival appears to have dismissed the most influential native contribution. Indeed the stimulus for the production came from a meeting of Scotland's theatre elite; the spur to artistic excellence was a failure to deliver first time around on the part of the official authorities.

Had the Edinburgh International Festival satisfied everyone's claims for inclusion, it might today be a respected festival with a unique heritage built on the idealism and achievements of its post-war creation. Of course it is all this, but the broader Edinburgh festival is now much more than its founding component. A handful of companies famously turned up uninvited in 1947, six of whom were Scottish. There was no common administration or organisation supporting them, they had their own independent motives for coming, and the fringe was some years from becoming a proper noun.

It is clear now that the clean slate afforded the International Festival was a blank canvas for others, with distinct interpretations of the festival model, and claims of ownership of it alongside Rudolph Bing, manipulating it as they contributed their own agendas and identities. In the establishment of the Edinburgh festival therefore, some groups and artists forged their own paths, and many of them wished it to have a stronger native base. With this precedent set, the freewheeling Fringe of later years has its own roots in a city relatively free from obvious artistic direction, and therefore limitations and restrictions. Theatre established itself as the genre of choice for these 'Additional Entertainments' as they were often called, but it was often drama in small or unusual spaces, with minimal staging, and enforced intimacy with the audience. In such necessities the Fringe model has its roots.

The Edinburgh International Film Festival also traces its ancestry to 1947, when Scotland claimed some seniority in a relatively new and evolving cultural form. The first events were predominantly docue nation. Yet the International Documentary Film Festival supplied a more pertinent need in the post-war years. It was a forum for sharing the experience of conflict across European borders — a mutual yet divided experience of the schisms that had split the continent for over a generation. Such

films were not intended purely to be art for art's sake; they showed both a devastated Berlin in Germany *Ground Zero*, and the Danish resistance movement, while *The Last Stage* gave a Polish perspective on Auschwitz. The Film Festival, with one voice and many, gave a whole industry and its subjects an international platform, thanks to its Scottish hosts and receptive audiences.

The broader public context of post-war Scotland was a struggle of pragmatism over idealism. Scottish civil society, through the Scottish Office and other bodies, was largely successful in governing its own affairs through greater political autonomy granted during the war. Such momentum had built up that John MacCormick's Home Rule petition in 1949 attracted two million signatures, while Westminster's confidence was further weakened as faults in the British Empire widened to fatal cracks. Yet Scotland's troops had fought for the British forces during the war, and only British government institutions were able to redistribute public funds to Scotland's advantage. To this end the Arts Council of Great Britain was established to support the arts, pursuing an elitist and patrician ambition to disseminate excellence; a policy shared by the BBC, the British Council, and naturally the Edinburgh International Festival. National identity and nationalism were vibrant forces in this period, despite their visceral connotations with fascism. Yet the British welfare state prescribed cultural improvement to match its other more prosaic provisions, in Scotland as elsewhere in the Union.

Despite opposition, much of which was won round in future years, the first festivals were a great success among audiences, critics and performers. Scottish national identity, in some of its guises, had found creative outlets too. As Scotland's politics and society continued to change, it was down to contributors and observers alike to direct and discover how this Scottish experience would contribute to the Edinburgh festival and vice versa.

Turning to the 1970s, the Director of the Edinburgh International Festival Peter Diamand presented his 1971 programme with the proviso that "I cannot please every single member of the public" (*Scottish Daily Express*, 9 September, 1971). A generation after their post-war birth, the different festivals were establishing themselves, each had its audiences — Edinburgh in festival was a many splendoured thing. Those shaping this evolution had encouraged the city's residents and visitors to raise their expectations: size and diversity were now such established hallmarks of the Edinburgh festival that Diamand's unwillingness to satisfy the range of festival-goers, be it perhaps elitist or defeatist, certainly reflected reality.

Through the 1970s the Festival Fringe grew, illuminating new performance spaces in old buildings, and attracting more companies from ever further a field. 182 groups registered in 1976, a threefold increase in just six years of gradual development by the new central Fringe administration, making it easier to come to the party, put on a

show, and make yourself heard. And this was a period with much to say, as post-war prosperity and harmony seemed to melt away in the 1973 oil crisis, full employment lost its political appeal, and global finance put the British economy under strain. The path was clearing for those in Scotland who felt that the UK state was ill-equipped to govern, or promote prosperity, north of the border; in 1974 the Scottish National Party gained 30% of the Scottish General Election vote. In 1979 the electorate was given the chance to vote for a devolved government and the nation? The International Festival found focuses in a grand production of Macbeth; in work on James VI, reflecting the union of the British crowns; and in Bonnie Prince Charlie's steps to disrupt the Union in *The Prince and the '45. A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* in 1976 stood as an important tribute to Hugh MacDiarmid — but was perhaps best appreciated by those familiar with his work. Therefore through niche appeal, history and public spectacle, Scotland on the International Festival stage was rarely a reflection of everyday life in the host nation, which prompted dis

Every event on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe appears because the performing companies have taken steps to arrange, fund and present their shows themselves. There can be no tokenism for example, because no central programming body sits down to decide what should appear, and which issues should receive attention. The possibilities are boundless, and as the Fringe expanded it can be hard to make meaningate just what the Fringe could do within its democratic framework.

The Traverse theatre cemented its position as a figurehead for new Scottish writing in this period, premiering work by Jimmy Boyle and John McGrath, reflecting sections of the Scottish community to others in the same nation (*Daily Mirror* 22 Aug., 1978). The work of the theatre always had relevance beyond its walls, capturing the heightened sense of class that had infused Scottish politics through the decade's economic and political debates. Where the Traverse could shine however was for one month in twelve when it had the world's media to hand; here was a chance to present Scotland free from the need to sanitise your interpretations, or filter them through pan-British institutions.

Billy Connolly sought this same contextualisation of the nation and the international in 1972 with his *Great Northern Welly Boot Show*, reflecting the Upper Clyde work-in when redundancies loomed in Glasgow's dockyards such as he had once worked in. Here were local events affecting local people, at the mercy of distant London politicians and international money flows: globalisation and the individual, as told on the Fringe without the filter of institutional authority.

In both Scottish politics and festival culture there was a sense of 'democratic deficit'. The UK state was failing Scotland, and further administrative devolution was no longer appeasing in the 1970s — calls for constitutional reform could not be

quietened in the pursuit of accountability and legitimacy. Likewise the festival was out of touch, characterised as an "element in the tiresome fantasy-life the Scots have been doping themselves with, a dream-nationhood to take the place of the real one", according to Tom Nairn, writing in 1967 (pp. 265-266). The remedy was to get involved, to see what could be done.

Thus the 1978 devolution bill was passed in Westminster, subject to referendum; and the Fringe grew ever larger, reaching 494 groups in 1981 (Bain, 1996) Here were opportunities to alter the status quo, for Scottish society to renew its acquaintance with itself. But while the Fringe appeared in rude health, the referendum failed to clear an imposed hurdle of attracting the support of 40% of the electorate, never mind that the majority of actual voters were in favour of reform. This at a time when the Traverse continued to receive public support and funds via the Scottish Arts Council for promoting elements of national life. That same public, funding radical theatre, was none the less reluctant to weaken its ties to London, particularly when compared to the driving energy behind the 1997 referendum.

So, did Scottish society simply find it more acceptable to express its disparate identities and ambitions culturally than politically in this period? At issue was just this complexity. The many committees and reports, newspaper articles and speeches which discussed the state of the union in the 1970s make it abundantly clear that consensus was beyond the fingertips of civil society.

The success of the Edinburgh festivals was an ability to embrace this diversity. To put on a romanticised Tattoo, an International Festival of national orchestras and opera, and a dazzling Fringe playing host to scenes from Glasgow's docks, estates and whatever else the contributors felt necessary. A truer understanding of Scotland was possible, because Scottish identity was not an Act of Parliament, but a complex discussion of what united and divided its communities.

The 1970s managed to answer many of Nairn's disillusioned criticisms of the festival, principally indeed through the Fringe. The heterogeneity of Scottish society, which continues to enrich the Edinburgh festivals, obscured the search for a cohesive politicised national identity. Perhaps Peter Diamand could not satisfy every member of the public, and for this the festival grew stronger — that a generation of politicians also ultimately failed was perhaps inevitable, given their divisions. The immense consequences of these events were felt through the 1980s and 1990s though, leaving the 21st century Fringe in seemingly rude health, while the state of Scotland's current constitutional settlement is a matter for other papers.

## Notes

[1] Lord Provost Falconer was aided by individuals such as Lady Roseberry and figures from Edinburgh University.

[2] The Estates were the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal and the Merchants, the Satyre a representation of the experiences of 'John the Common Weal' — the common man — against the corruption and suppression of what made up 'the old Scottish Parliament' (Miller, 1996: p. 14; Crawford, 1997: pp. 16-19).

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#### 4.1.2 Strategic Analysis of the Edinburgh FCTT: A Framework for Research

Jarman, D., & Theodoraki, E. (2011). Strategic Analysis of the Edinburgh FCTT: A Framework for Research. *Economia della Cultura*, 21(4), 441-454.  
<https://doi.org/10.1446/36617>

### 1. Introduction

The paper stems from the work undertaken by Edinburgh Napier University for the Festival City Theatres' Trust (FCTT). The conceptual background, research framework and analytical tools developed for the purposes of that work are presented and defended as a fruitful means to strategic analysis of cultural non-profit venue organisations. Goals, perceived risks, notions of the overall environment and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are proposed as useful variables for generating a summative picture of the organisation's strategic outlook. This position, in turn, can assist in selecting the best suited strategic option from the range available.

The paper consists of three parts. The first reviews the literature on managerialism and strategic management in non profit sector organisations, urban cultural strategies that put city competition centre stage, and pressures of isomorphism through sector wide mimesis. The task here is to consider the capacity of that literature to illuminate approaches to exploring a non-profit cultural venue organisation's strategic position and the strategic options for its future growth. The second and main part of the paper defines the research framework adopted for investigating the FCTT and discusses the detail of the rationale for including particular shareholders and concepts and variables. Finally, part three, discusses a reflection on the research process, as this has unfolded for the study of the FCTT, its limitations and its contribution to future analysts.

### 2. Part One

In addition to a discussion of the literature on strategic management and the role of analysis in it, it is necessary to also consider the origins of organisational drives to perform it and to develop an awareness of the wider context of the cultural political economy and institutional setting.

## 2.1. Strategic management in the non profit sector

Increasingly in the last two decades and for some of the reasons mentioned below, strategic management related processes are widely employed to arguably holistically address the needs of organisations to plan for their long term future and achieve related aims.

As defined by Johnson et al. (2008), «strategy is the direction and scope of an organisation over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment... with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations». These authors discuss this broader subject area and identify three distinctive parts in the process: strategic analysis, strategic choice and strategy implementation. In effect, strategic management represents the continuous process of analysing circumstances, organisational and environmental, considering the options available for future development (these being market development, market penetration, product development or diversification) and then marshalling resources and driving the change to the new positioning. Following establishment in the new position, analysis is once more required to consider future positioning and growth. As the first step of the process, analysis entails an understanding of capabilities and resources and an awareness of the state of play by competitors or significant others. By seeking to elicit the views of internal and external stakeholders, analysts can thereby access data on perceptions of strategic capability.

The strategy process is viewed by Mintzberg and Queen (1992) as interplay of the forces of power, sometimes highly politicised. Rather than assuming that organisations are consistent, coherent and co-operative systems, tightly integrated to pursue certain traditional ends, the authors exhibit different premises. They share the views of Quinn (1977) that organisations' goals and directions are determined primarily by the power needs of those who populate them. Their analysis raises the question: for whom does the organisation really exist? For what purposes? Power in non-profit organisations has traditionally rested with volunteers in boards, but Thatcherite politics and neo-liberal governance in the UK has slowly but surely eroded such power that moved to paid professionals. For most cultural organisations the introduction of strategic management was part and parcel of the prevalence of managerialist ideology. The term «new public management» or «new managerialism» is usually taken to refer to some combination of processes and values that was developed as a distinctively different approach from the co-ordination of publicly provided services (Clarke et al., 2000). The term, in essence, refers to the incorporation and application of private sector management systems and techniques in the public and not for profit services with one of its features being the introduction of strategic management (Farnham and Horton, 1993; Clarke et al., 2000), although Flynn (2000) argues that comparative studies have tended to show

wide national divergences in reform programmes.

The conceptual framework of new managerialism can be meaningfully employed to explain changes in the management of non-profit cultural venue organisations. Venue Trusts, local authority culture departments and other arts and cultural clubs that are dependent upon government grant aid have been shaped by public sector initiatives to introduce strategic management and open them up to private sector investment. The introduction of compulsory competitive tendering in British local government under Conservative governments (Lawrence et al., 1994) has also been espoused by subsequent Labour governments. More recently the coalition government also introduced steps for further private and voluntary sector involvement most notably under the «Big Society» banner. Since the 1990s, arts, culture and sport establishments have been led through modernisation programmes that for many meant a decline in grant aid, the ring fencing of subsidy for special projects, pressures to amalgamate with other bodies for the same artistic or cultural activity, or a change in their legal status and transformation to limited companies. Managerialist thought and pressures for entrepreneurship in non profit cultural venue organisations are expected to be prevalent in FCTT stakeholders» agendas of things to do. It is therefore possible to hypothesise about the high significance of goal setting and entrepreneurial spirit in the FCTT whilst before the organisation was mostly a relatively passive, grant recipient. In the current ethos, observers can expect to see an income maker agenda and related paradigm guiding the FCTT»s future strategic aspirations.

Institutional analysis can arguably inform researchers» understanding of the broader environment of an organisation under study and thus aid in better capturing its strategic capabilities. The term «organisational field» is used to describe organisations that in aggregate constitute recognised areas of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and project consumers, regulatory agencies and other organisations that produce similar services or products (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott, 1992). In the initial stages of their lifecycle, organisational fields display diversity in approach and form. Once a field becomes well established, however, there is an inexorable push towards homogenisation or «isomorphism» as the constraining process that forces one unit in a population to be like other units that face the same set of environmental conditions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that isomorphism with environmental institutions may mean that organisations incorporate elements which are legitimated externally, rather than in terms of efficiency; they employ ceremonial assessment criteria; and this dependence on externally fixed institutions reduces turbulence as the organisation remains successful by social definition. However, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) contend that isomorphism occurs as the result of processes that make organisations more similar without necessarily making them

more efficient. Capturing the institutional norms affecting the FCTT can be hypothesised to offer important exploratory and maybe explanatory perspectives on strategic aspirations entertained by management. Pre-existing or institutionally favoured models for growth can ultimately be considered within the strategic choice phase of strategic management (that follows strategic analysis) as these may, or not, be a) physically possible to pursue given the resources and circumstances or b) supported by stakeholders. The particular context of the city where a non-profit cultural venue organisation exists has a lot to explain for the organisations' set up, modus operandi and raison d'être. In the case of the FCTT the links to Edinburgh's world renowned festivals is central to understanding the field and any attempt to discuss strategy. As the name of the Trust illustrates the venues are to be primarily at the service of the city's festivals.

## **2.2. Urban Cultural Strategies and the City of Edinburgh**

Edinburgh's events strategy prioritises events that «encourage people and businesses to live in, invest in and visit Edinburgh and strengthen the city's international relations and international development work» (City of Edinburgh Council, 2007:10), «satisfactorily balancing the demands of creative ambition, social objectives and commercial viability» (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001:31). A sustainable and professional venue infrastructure is the foundation for these ambitions, facilitating the world's pre-eminent festivals and year round programming fit for a capital city.

Cities such as Edinburgh exist in a competitive marketplace, seeking to attract tourists; commercial enterprises, media attention and status, and their cultural strategies now have important parts to play (Quinn, 2005:931). In Edinburgh's case it has inspired groundbreaking reports such as *Thundering Hooves* and the ensuing work being done to promote the interests of the city's festivals (Scottish Arts Council [SAC], 2006; *Festivals Edinburgh*, 2010). That report, in particular, adopted a benchmarking approach between locations, at one point isolating factors listed below that help set a «leading festival city» apart (SAC, 2006:19-21). This has relevance for the current paper because of the number of categories that may be affected by venue infrastructure, which include: distinctiveness of location; diversity of cultural ecology; invading and interacting with the city; investment by the public sector; developed festival infrastructure for all visiting publics; excellent facilities (SAC, 2006:19-21). Quinn's article reminds us that a number of locations are also taking a more pronounced attitude towards festival provision. The cities she cites include Glasgow, Galway and Avignon (Quinn, 2005:931-939). Meanwhile *Thundering Hooves* looks to Barcelona, Melbourne, Montreal and Singapore as it places Edinburgh in a global context of «festival cities» (SAC, 2006:53-76). A comparative

approach is therefore both relevant and prevailing (in public debates) in the bid to establish good practise in the area of cultural strategy and (with reference to the Trust) appropriate venue-based provision of resources. A 2007 study of the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff explored the relationship between the provision of cultural opportunities and a city's economic health, arguing that, «unless their local economies have proved buoyant throughout the twentieth century», today's cities are likely to have a relatively poor artistic offering (Foreman-Peck, 2007:20). In light of this, it is encouraging that Edinburgh's «variety of exceptional cultural spaces», seeking to build on «by examining the future needs of its residents and visitors, and planning carefully for their provision» is enthusiastically commented upon (PMP, 2009:1). Yet, the value of the Millennium Centre extends beyond financial sustainability and return on investment – «the point of the arts is not economic, a means to an end; they are an end in themselves» (Foreman-Peck, 2007:22). To this end, Cardiff is now home to a venue, the «Millennium Centre» which has a vision to «be an internationally significant cultural landmark and centre for the performing arts, renowned for inspiration, excellence and leadership» (Wales Millennium Centre, 2010).

Edinburgh takes cultural provision and leadership seriously and it is little surprise that numerous documents are available for consultation. It is possible to identify common threads within the number of sources that have already been introduced. Both the Trust's Business Plan and the PMP Cultural Venues Study highlight a need for leadership within the city's cultural infrastructure. Whether this stems from «innovation and uniqueness in programming... [demanding] that the Trust continues to take a leading role in consortia comprised of like minded venues», or PMP's research findings that there is a «perceived lack of clarity» regarding who has responsibility for the «crucial development and progress of the cultural life of Edinburgh» (FCTT, 2009:30; PMP, 2009:162). Likewise, both reports draw their readers' attention to the current state of (dis)repair that some of the city's venues are in, with the King's Theatre singled out in particular. Drawing on this wealth of existing research can provide an initial feeling on the views of the Trust's key stakeholders, both internal and external to the business itself. This opportunity is made all the more valuable by the wealth of documents which were consulted by PMP when drawing up their report, thus contributing to a considerable body of existing work (PMP, 2009:appendix A). If leadership is an institutionally defined must, then how does this aspiration affect the other FCTT goals, and what is the view of stakeholders? It can therefore be hypothesised that such a pursuit may undermine other organisational (maybe less bold but equally important) goals.

Having presented the literature that illustrates issues that shape strategy in non-profit cultural venue organisations, three guiding hypotheses have developed: a) The FCTT will exhibit strong goal setting and entrepreneurial attitudes in public in line

with managerialist ideology; b) Fashionable, industry wide aspirations such as being a leader in the field will feature in senior management thought as a result of mimesis; c) Predominance of leadership aspirations may be confusing or ill conceived as they are externally appropriated.

The following part of this paper presents the research strategy that sought to test these hypotheses during the strategic analysis of the FCTT that involved staff, external stakeholders and other primary sources such as organisational documents.

### 3. Part Two

#### 3.1. Research Setting

*"Culture should be for the many not the few. And the few must not be the only ones to experience or create the most brilliant productions or the most outstanding works of art... It is absolutely central to my politics that excellence should be accessible and access should be to excellence."*

Jack McConnell, First Minister of Scotland, St Andrew's Day Speech, 30 November 2003

The roles played by «culture» in displaying, debating and defining a nation's identity have been the subject of debate across generations and communities. A drive to tell and retell the narrative of a country and its people explicitly, underpins a great deal of the cultural expression experienced by its citizens and visitors, a force which runs alongside the plethora of cultural influences they are subjected to every day.

Regardless, the artists, funders and institutions that support it are subject to a variety of broader environmental factors that affect their ability to control their own destinies – quite apart from any attempts to predict the future trends within their specific art forms, or the industry as a whole. The FCTT is one such institution in Edinburgh, established in July 1998 to manage the city's «Festival Theatre» and «King's Theatre» (with seating capacities of 1,915 and 1,359 respectively) (FCTT, 2009:5).

The opening to the Trust's 2009-2013 Business Plan strikes an optimistic tone, confirming to its stakeholders that it «is in the fortunate position presently of having found its feet artistically and financially» (FCTT, 2009:1). The ambition of the Trust is clear to see, too, claiming that it «is imperative that the Trust maintains a forward moving momentum that can help it achieve its greater ambitions», rather than lapse into former difficulties and uncertainty (FCTT, 2009:1). Such considerations are driven by a need to maintain the strategic viability of the venues, quite apart from the artistic choices that shape the programmes of the two theatres. To this end, while Jack McConnell's ambitions may be shared by the Trust, in terms of granting access to excellence, further considerations must be borne in mind by its board. The

Business Plan notes a number of financial constraints on the ability of the Trust to carry out its objectives – such as the expectation of static grant subsidies from the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Arts Council in the coming years, as well as the loss of previously bankable performing companies in the coming years such as Scottish Opera and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (FCTT, 2009:8-9). Nevertheless, the two theatres continue to fulfil their unique roles in Edinburgh's cultural landscape, with the potential for further diversification already identified in reports such as the City Cultural Venues Study (PMP, 2009:109). If the Trust's own ambitions for ongoing investment and development can be shown to contribute to plans for the city as a whole, they ultimately help their public sector stakeholders achieve their own ambitions, and thus stand a better chance of gaining their support.

The Festival and King's Theatres are vital to the success of the Edinburgh International Festival, hosting drama, dance and opera on a regular basis. The King's is home to the city's highest profile pantomime every winter and presents the work of many touring productions that otherwise would likely miss Edinburgh out altogether. There is much strength to this strategic asset; however it is instructive to note the objectives that the Trust has set itself as well as some risks that may jeopardise their achievement: goal 1: develop our creative ambitions by continuing to invest in our artistic programme; goal 2: improve our business effectiveness and capability in order to maintain financial stability, promote long-term sustainability and underpin the economic viability of our business; goal 3: increase the size, range and reach of our audiences by entertaining, educating and engaging with them; goal 4: maintain and improve our physical assets and our buildings so that they are accessible, comfortable, safe and inviting; goal 5: establish an industry leadership role for the Trust and its venues as Scotland's National Performing Arts Centre, empowered by public investment (FCTT, 2009:18-32).

In their scope, these goals demonstrate the need to address all aspects of the business in order to prevail in any one area – after all, audience development is likely to be hampered if the venues are not accessible and inviting and the programme lacks sufficient appeal.

Edinburgh's King's Theatre and Festival Theatre are recognised and cherished elements of the city's artistic and festival institutional infrastructure. Their management structure is discussed in the PMP report, which recognises that the «not-for-profit trust sector does provide a focus on cultural delivery» (and beneficial tax arrangements), yet perhaps lacks the harder-edged «delivery» that the private sector can deliver (PMP, 2009:150).

The framework that follows aims to propose a case study approach to strategic analysis of non-profit cultural venue organisations. It was utilised to illuminate the

nature of the FCTT's operating environment and the resources available to its management to achieve the goals listed above; including that which seeks to consolidate its role as a leading voice in Scotland's artistic and festival industries. Although the authors are limited by confidentiality clauses as to what results they can reveal, the methodology presented here was utilised to good effect for the production of the original report to the FCTT and a reflection upon what the process has revealed allows the fine-tuning of the previous hypotheses that can be tested in Edinburgh, in the future, or elsewhere in the non-profit cultural venue scene.

### **3.2. Method**

The conceptual underpinnings from strategic management, new managerialism and institutionalism help constitute an analytical framework that evaluates the circumstances faced by a major festival venue operator (as perceived by its key stakeholders) and captures the potential implications of these perceptions and related strategic actions on the organisation's future growth and development.

The FCTT 2009-2013 Business Plan sets out the Trust's understanding of its current operating environment through a SWOT analysis (2009: 17) and a more extensive Risk Analysis. The relationship between these environmental factors and the Trust's stated goals requires further analysis and thus provides the foundation for the primary research in a two-partite way. A focus group was carried out with representatives of the FCTT's internal stakeholders – members of staff who represent relevant departments within the organisation. The rationale behind this approach was to establish what FCTT staff and departments recognise as being the organisation's goals and objectives, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and risks (initially without reference to the Business Plan). This identified the degree to which the Plan was representative of deviant opinions or had permeated the organisation, and thus provided an insight into its perceived acceptance, sustainability and contemporary relevance. Using internal stakeholders (predominantly staff) in this way, provided an additional degree of legitimacy to the results, beyond that which could be attained by the external researchers.

Structured interviews then followed to enable primary FCTT external stakeholders to contribute their understanding of the Trust's SWOT, risks and strategic goals from their perspective. The FCTT is fully aware of the importance of working in partnership; being Edinburgh/Scotland based and subject to many of the same environmental factors as the Trust, these stakeholders can comment on the Business Plan's key sections with important insight. It was anticipated that some of the Trust's goals coincide with the objectives of their partners, while new risks could also be identified during this phase of the data gathering process. As with the use of

internal stakeholders, consultation with FCTT partners lends an additional element of validity to the work. It may not have been common for the Trust to consult its partners in this systematic way.

### **3.3. Selected Foci**

The focus group interview with staff revealed what their perceptions of goals centred on. When presented with the actual FCTT stated goals staff expressed varied perceived levels of affinity to the goals. Similarly to staff, stakeholders were then presented with the five goals that underpin the Trust's ambitions, as set out in the Business Plan. They were asked to what extent their organisation shared these goals, and therefore to identify possible synergies between the partners. At the heart of this enquiry was a desire to identify additional support for the FCTT in working towards and achieving its goals. If doing so would aid others in reaching their own ambitions there was the potential for more effective joint lobbying, establishment of a more sustainable foundation for future work and opportunities to share good practice for mutual benefit. It was anticipated that shared ambitions and values could indeed be found, with the Trust's work being directed towards developing their programme, business, stability, audiences and assets. Their fifth goal, the establishment of a National Performing Arts Centre, was perhaps the most ambitious and transformative for the organisation and would therefore benefit greatly from widespread support.

The views of stakeholders were also elicited to capture their perceptions of the environment. Although it was possible to gain a great deal of knowledge about an organisation's working environment through secondary research, much can also be gained by gathering the views of its partners where they work with many of the same environmental constraints and opportunities. To this end they were asked to describe its general and task environment and then comment on the viability of the Trust's goals within these contexts. The strategic capabilities of the FCTT might be best understood by those directly involved in setting its future trajectory, yet seeking outsiders' perspectives offers the chance to contextualise those ambitions, and perhaps temper them. In addition to this it was instructive to see which aspects of the Edinburgh working environment are of greatest importance to this mix of stakeholders: they may be predominantly financial, given the current uncertainty over public expenditure in general, or, more broadly based, to reflect a wider mix of contextual themes.

With a resonance of the focus group, stakeholder contributors were asked what they perceived to be the greatest risks to the Trust achieving its goals. Any internal risks identified here could reflect on the management of the organisation, with the

potential that problems could also be overcome internally. External risks, which might well be shared by others in their own strategic development, can require collective action in order to manage them – or at least provide opportunities to recognise good practice. By raising this topic with both staff and partner stakeholders, a more complete picture of the strategic position of the FCTT would be achieved, with the potential to help the Trust's management prioritise areas of greatest concern.

Stakeholders were also asked for their views of opportunities available. A final question in their survey/interview built on the identification of risks and solicited suggestions for overcoming them. By asking what opportunities might exist for the Trust to overcome risks, the questionnaire sought to reflect current thinking on strategic development in the Scottish arts and cultural sector. A subsequent question included whether opportunities existed for the Trust to work in tandem with others to overcome risks. To the extent that a partnership approach might appear most effective for overcoming them, there are opportunities for the organisation to provide leadership and direction across the sector. Any ideas put forward at this stage must be seen in the context of the FCTT's operating environment, one which is shared by others and is influenced by myriad factors, some of which have been identified earlier. Data gathered with selected external stakeholders may then build on the results of the internal stakeholder focus group. Structural consistency is maintained by continuing to focus on the goals, risks and environmental position of the Trust, though with more focused questions being presented to each contributor. As such, the topics continue to draw on the Business Plan, as well as pertinent concepts.

A broad range of views was to be solicited that represented performing arts companies, funders and comparator venues and members of the Trust's board of trustees. As expected, some individuals may fall into more than one category, yet it is felt that even those whose primary connection to the FCTT is as a board member, they could still add valuable insight from a position outside the daily operations of the organisation.

Creating a picture on the above illustrates the general summative perceptions, whilst a comparison of the differences and similarities between respondents from various management levels and internal versus external positions reveals some divergence of opinion naturally expected to be present.

## 4. Part Three

### 4.1. Reflections on Research Process

It has been a feature of the work process that both the academics from Edinburgh Napier University and senior FCTT staff have contributed to the development of the conceptual and analytical research framework proposed. Both groups recognised a need to address the objectives of all concerned. The conceptual and analytical set of tools presented can potentially be applied in other settings, whether that is the FCTT in the future, or with other art/cultural venue organisations. The framework developed in the course of this research was robust whilst empirically tested and can be applied to good effect; a relatively straightforward focus on the goals, risks, opportunities and environment of an organisation matched to a methodology that involves internal and external stakeholders. There was sufficient flexibility in the process to enable both FCTT senior management and the researchers to influence its development, and meet various objectives. Armed with knowledge of the structural and contextual details as perceived by key stakeholders', consideration of strategic options is possible and carefully grounded decisions arise on market development, market penetration, and product development or diversification strategies.

«Decide what it is your wish to be and pursue it with a health obsession!» (Mintzberg, 1979). Given pressures and influences from the environment such a decision may be elusive and rather difficult to reach. For the FCTT, a number of strategic options are theoretically (Johnson and Scholes, 2008) possible. A market penetration strategy may be maintaining the status quo for the FCTT. In times of stringent finances, however, it may be a weak strategy as many providers are competing for the same audiences. (This strategy seeks to increase market share with the current portfolio of offerings. Because services are not altered, market penetration has the least risk of all methods of expansion). A service development strategy can be employed to sell new services to its faithful public customer base. (This strategy seeks to offer new services to existing customers. Existing services can be improved, or new services can be developed to match other expectations of existing customers). A market development strategy would also be possible if services can be marketed to new audiences such as generation y – people aged between 15 and 30 – although some changes to at least the «feel» of services will be required for such a strategy to have realistic chances of success. Similarly, such a strategy can be employed to bring performing companies from abroad. [1] (This is a strategy of marketing an existing portfolio in a new market. The service remains the same, but it is marketed to a new audience, such as a new geographic territory). Finally, a diversification strategy – this strategy occurs where an organisation markets completely new services to new customers – is also possible, but it is of a

risky nature due to the resource intensity it would require to reach meaningful fruition.

Having carried out the research and reflecting upon the process in particular rather than the raw data, it is pertinent to revisit the earlier poised hypotheses. In addition to the expectation of a) strong goal setting and entrepreneurial attitudes b) top led leadership aspirations and c) confusion on the latter, the research process has also revealed that non senior management strata may hold different views of the organisations' circumstances and aspirations. Including various management levels gives the opportunity to add dimensions to a strategic analysis not envisaged by senior management who solicit the initial work. It also became apparent that external stakeholders may similarly have different expectations from senior management in terms of what the organisation should be about. As argued by Quinn (1977), organisations are not consistent, coherent and co-operative systems, tightly integrated to pursue certain traditional ends.

## **5. Conclusion**

This paper sought to present the features of a research framework that can be applied to the strategic analysis of non-profit cultural venue organisations. By incorporating mainstream strategic analysis with literature on managerialist trends in the sector and institutional setting, the proposed framework gained contextual relevance. The application of this framework to the strategic analysis of the FCTT allowed its testing, in terms of adequacy of theoretical constructs and validity of proposed method and the early formulated hypotheses have been revisited and fine-tuned. The conceptual framework did exhibit exploratory capacity and the method proposed allowed deviation of opinion to emerge between a) management levels and b) internal staff and external stakeholders. Furthermore, the respondents' involvement in the sample (beyond internal senior management), allowed the study to take up dimensions and roles not intended by those who traditionally initially design a strategic analysis brief. The power aspirations and perceived wisdoms of dominant players are easily challenged through a research framework that seeks to gain an overall strategic inside view and outlook by including all stakeholders. Serious limitations encountered, included the lack of availability, cooperation and time of some stakeholders. Nevertheless, the lack of cooperation from certain stakeholders can be seen to have allowed other voices (not initially recommended by the FCTT) to be heard as other respondents came forward. It is conceivable that the FCTT would want the sample to include people who share the same leadership aspirations in particular, those who it needs to show that it is boldly and courageously facing its future and finally those who may need to be lobbied at a later stage for support of the FCTT strategic path. Having researchers external to the

organisation carrying out the strategic analysis work can safeguard the project from single-mindedness and oblivion of hard truths but it can also lead to the high jacking of the work by researchers who are determined to reveal the picture as it emerges raw and naked, for better or worse, without the power dressings. Future analysts can benefit from the application of this research framework to other organisations in the sector, learn from the idiosyncrasies presented here on the nature of strategic analysis process and be alerted to the challenges faced and opportunities offered in the case of the study of the FCTT.

## Notes

[1] The Wales Millennium Centre recently announced a strategic partnership with the Cape Town Opera

<http://www.wmc.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseAction=DM.download&fileUUID=52C72642-E0C7-0F68-D72811FFC6477703>

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## Summary

### Strategic Analysis of the Edinburgh FCTT: A Framework for Research

Edinburgh's festivals are world renowned for their eclecticism. As their number grew and reach widened the coordination of the festivals became a complex and demanding organisational task for managers, and venue owners/operators introduced greater professionalism to tackle the challenges. With an increasing number of stakeholders and growing national and international competition, festival venue operators embraced managerialism in organisational processes. Economic realism (rather than social welfare) was upgraded to inform the ethos in any public spending and privatisations in services were introduced in line with galloping commercialisation in leisure consumption. Edinburgh's festival venue organisers have not been immune to rapid structural changes in Britain. The paper seeks to a) present the conceptual underpinnings and methodological framework for evaluating the circumstances faced by a major festival venue operator, the Edinburgh Festival City Theatres' Trust (FCTT), (as perceived by its key internal and external stakeholders) and b) to discuss the use of such a framework for facilitating strategic option decisions. The case study methodology proposed allows the in-depth analysis of the venue organisation's goals and any risks jeopardising their achievement as well as perceived structural and environmental circumstances. Other cultural organisations may also utilise this approach to strategic analysis for organisational

development. The paper concludes with a reflection upon the research framework, challenges faced and lessons learnt while utilising it out for the FCTT.

Keywords: strategy, cultural organisation, research framework



#### 4.1.3 Social network analysis and festival cities: An exploration of concepts, literature and methods

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#### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – Social network analysis (SNA) is an under-utilised framework for research into festivals and events. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the history of SNA and explore its key concepts, in order that they might be applied to festivals and their environments.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Secondary material underpins the paper, primarily SNA literature, tourism studies research and festival industry publications.

**Findings** – Festival cities offer dynamic environments in which to investigate the workings of social networks. The importance of such networks has long been recognised within the industry, yet there is scant reflection of this in the event studies literature. Uses of SNA in tourism studies publications offer some precedents.

**Originality/value** – This paper emphasises the importance of relationships between people in a festival economy, complementing and building upon stakeholder analyses. A research method is proposed, suitable for application across a diverse range of festivals and events.

**Keywords** Social media, Tourism, Social network analysis, Festivals, Edinburgh

**Paper type** Conceptual paper

#### **Introduction and background to social network analysis (SNA)**

This conceptual paper discusses the development of SNA, its application in a range of fields of enquiry, and potential as a focus of future research into the workings of social networks in festival cities. With twentieth century roots across a range of disciplines, SNA has developed into a research framework that is now being applied in many varied situations (Butts, 2009; Christakis and Fowler, 2010). To this end it is appropriate to examine the potential contributions and particularities of SNA when applied to festivals and events networks; to try to capture what has been termed the “structure” and “form” of social relations, considering the “outsider” and “insider” perspectives of a networked community (Edwards, 2010, p. 5). Many city destinations around the world have a portfolio of festivals and events where networks could be seen in operation in light of SNA. Destinations such as Scotland’s capital Edinburgh play host to mature festival economies that involve a range of

stakeholders, and the paper concludes with an illustrative outline for potential future research work in the case of this city's festival organisations. Examples of existing work are drawn from a wide range of fields, with particular attention paid to SNA methods as applied in tourism research.

The history of SNA's development reveals somewhat discrete antecedents, combining sociometric analysis, interpersonal relations and anthropological research into communities (Scott, 2000). Work by the "Harvard group" of the 1960s and 1970s brought a step change which saw SNA emerge as a "method of structural analysis", typified by papers such as Granovetter's work on "weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973; Scott, 2000, pp. 33-36). A delineated history of SNA is now identifiable, with a heritage of research methods and data analysis frameworks that are coalescing around some defining characteristics (Scott, 2000). In the later twentieth century proponents of a "relational sociology" pitched SNA as the basis of a new theoretical framework. Scott identifies Emirbayer as one such advocate, seeking a means of combining "culture and meaning" with "exchange or rational choice theories" (Scott, 2000, pp. 36-37). The emphasis remains on structures within societies, with analysis focusing on the methods open to researchers and the extent to which they might be deployed in a variety of situations and contexts (Scott, 2013).

SNA is a means to understanding the influence social actors have on each other, both the influences they are aware of and those they are not (Ormerod, 2012). It asks what effect our decisions have on our friends, family and colleagues and through them to their friends and their friends' friends (Christakis and Fowler, 2010). Partly through network effects people have a tendency to copy others, to emulate their views and imitate their actions (Ormerod, 2012). Connection and contagion are the complementary concepts on which this science is built. However, these are broad terms that mask a wealth of complexity. Connections may be committed bonds maintained for years, or they could be momentary chance encounters. Contagion – the act of passing something across a network – could be as tangible as presenting a gift or more abstract as when passing on news (Christakis and Fowler, 2010). Unlike the pioneers of SNA, we now inhabit a world where the previously hidden maps of our connections are readily accessible through new forms of social media (boyd and Ellison, 2008) [1]. The enigma of "small world" encounters between apparent strangers loses its mystery in the presence of software designed to encourage, even manipulate, our social interactions and the impacts they facilitate (Shirky, 2009, pp. 212-213).

### **SNA's breadth of applications, key terms and the presentation of network data**

As the tools available to social network analysts have developed and become more

accessible over time, so there has been an appetite for applying them to a greater range of subjects (Crossley, 2010; Edwards, 2010; Heath et al., 2009). This has included health (Valente, 2008) and library and information science (Cooke and Hall, 2013) of late, to understand structure, form, contagion, insiders and outsiders. This expansion of SNA's working parameters suggests its suitability for pioneering and exploratory research though established practitioners are conscious of pitfalls that may occur (Butts, 2009; Scott, 2000). Such limitations may include, but are not limited to, the tendency to capture only snapshots of dynamic relationships and a resource intensive preference for data sets that capture complete populations. A lack of expertise among researchers potentially risks invalidating their analysis if research fails to capture its intended data: a neglect to recognise differences between professional and private relationships, for example. To this end authors often take time explain the key terms being used, while establishing their own interpretation of the science (Butts, 2009; Crossley, 2010; Granovetter, 1973). Bringing such methods to bear on festivals and events is an attractive proposition; however, even identifying a social network is not straightforward. Heath *et al.* point to two approaches, namely "realist" and "nominalist" (Heath et al., 2009, pp. 650-654). In the former, the subjects themselves ("egos") identify their network according to whom they deem important. The latter, nominalist approach relies on the researcher to set inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Whether at the local, micro level of workplace connections, or in pursuit of a global macro picture, SNA is underpinned by shared, generally agreed, terms and definitions (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). Case studies and examples from the SNA literature encompass sports and global finance, the viral spread of online videos and other ephemera (Christakis and Fowler, 2010; Ormerod, 2012; Shirky, 2009), and the building of research networks (e.g. Cooke and Hall, 2013). In all these cases, though SNA is interested in the attributes of individual participants, it is fundamentally concerned with their relationships and connections. The methods used to gather this information need not extend beyond those regularly employed by social science researchers, such as questionnaire surveys, observations and conversations (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Once gathered, however, these data are described and discussed through the language of "nodes" (individual actors, such as people or places) and "ties" or "edges" (the relationships between the nodes, or lack thereof) (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005, ch. 1). The breadth of applications to which these approaches appear suited is indicative of the flexibility of these basic ingredients. Once a population has been identified, or a class of node defined, work can begin to map the network and calculate its properties. Here it is argued that an analysis of the staff of festival organisations in a given city, along with their key stakeholders, would lend itself to such research.

The use of a sociogram to represent relational data is one of the defining

characteristics of SNA. This provides an abstracted visualisation of nodes and the ties that may or may not bind them (Scott, 2000). It is through such graphs that observers can peer beyond the experiences and perceptions of individual actors, and are able to view the paths by which activity in one part of a network has a calculable influence on others at several degrees of distance (Shirky, 2009). The passing on of gossip, or word of mouth news about job vacancies, funding opportunities, or indeed the next great festival show takes advantage of these ties through a process of “hyperdyadic spread” (Christakis and Fowler, 2010, pp. 22-24). Network effects pass from person to person, beyond the visible horizon of any individual’s perceived social graph to the wider network (Christakis and Fowler, 2010, p. 22; Ormerod, 2012). Sociograms contribute to the presentation of such information. They contextualise the position of a single actor and reveal aspects of a more complicated picture. The process of creating such graphs is, however, an abstraction, the results a snapshot of the dynamic phenomena they represent (Clark, 2007). Complex systems in a state of flux are thus reduced to the presence or absence of a tie between two nodes based on specific criteria (Crossley, 2010; Edwards, 2010). That said, the use of a sociogram to illustrate and define the nature of a festival related social network can be a visually arresting contribution to a piece of research about festivals’ networks.

### **Small world networks, weak ties and close-knit communities**

In a festival city network such as that of Edinburgh the strategic collaboration of stakeholder organisations is made possible thanks to those who can facilitate effective connections between them. Shirky positions these “efficient and robust” small world social networks between the “unbuildable” (large scale networks where everyone knows everyone else) and the “unusable” (large scale networks with few connections such that the distance between two points is too great) (Shirky, 2009, p. 216). In network terms these are “dense communities or neighborhoods that are loosely connected by boundary spanners” (Tsvetovat and Kouznetsov, 2011, p. 38). Gladwell believes “their ability to span many different worlds is a function of something intrinsic to their personality, some combination of curiosity, self-confidence, sociability, and energy” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 49). Other terms used include “connectors” (from Gladwell) (Tsvetovat and Kouznetsov, 2011, p. 38); a “funneling” effect of higher network activity through particular nodes (from Milgram) (Clark, 2007, p. 11); and “short cuts” (Watts and Strogatz, 1998, p. 440). These are people who know people, and on this evidence their role within and between organisations in a small world network is vital. Festival directors, or people who hold positions of influence thanks to their role in key stakeholder organisations, may undertake this role in the context of the city of Edinburgh. In addition, the flows of information and influence between box offices, press offices and other management

networks should not be overlooked.

The above terms reflect the concept of “transitivity” as an assessment of how embedded a node is within a network: if a person’s contacts tend not to know each other this reflects low transitivity, and an opportunity for that person to act as a bridge between higher density groups (Christakis and Fowler, 2010, p. 19). Key characteristics of small world social networks are “high transitivity” for the majority (so most of their contacts know each other) and a “low average path length” (where few connections are required for people to reach each other) (Christakis and Fowler, 2010, p. 162). What makes this a “small world” is that a few ties, via some well-connected people, hold dispersed groups of contacts together. Low average path length is viable because it is not necessary for everyone in one group to know someone in another: they just need to find a way to one another through the connector. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe’s venue map reveals the clustering of temporary venues around geographic hubs, suggesting that small world architecture might be present here as well (edfringe.com, 2012). The efficiencies of high transitivity within a cluster of people or venues can be enjoyed without the group being cut off, so long as it has a connection to the wider network. Efficient small world networks offer the best of both worlds: they operate at a large scale by linking tighter sub-networks together, achieved by connecting one cluster of nodes to another (Shirky, 2009).

Whether viewed from a small world perspective or not, some social relationships are stronger than others, and have built up over a period of time and been maintained for mutual and collective benefit. A dense network of strong ties is likely to allow close friends or colleagues to share information and resources with ease. However, networks are rarely formed of strong ties alone. This increases the vital importance of other connections, and has been termed the “strength of weak ties” (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). A weak tie could be an acquaintance from a previous events industry job, a fellow delegate at a conference or a rarely used connection through a social media platform (boyd and Ellison, 2008). Festival economies provide numerous opportunities to build these connections, not least because the fluidity of the labour market and the “pulsating” nature of each festival’s human resource requirements lend themselves to their creation. To the individual, however, the importance of their weaker ties is often hidden from view. Only by viewing the network at a macro scale can these vital connections be identified: the weak ties that facilitate the spread of information, resources and influence from person to person (Wellman, 2002). If a community relies on strong ties, it will experience “social fragmentation” because there is a limit to the size of group that can be sustained in this way (Clark, 2007, p. 12). Weak ties do not require the same investment, yet their importance to individuals, organisations and whole networks cannot be underestimated.

“Subgraphs” and “components” can also be identified within a social network and point towards real world groups and communities (Tsvetovat and Kouznetsov, 2011, pp. 61-92). Each term has a specific meaning in SNA. A subgraph is a group of nodes within the network, plus all their corresponding ties, and components are subgraphs that are not connected to a larger network (Tsvetovat and Kouznetsov, 2011). Clusters are identified due to their “contiguity” within a network and their “separation” from other clusters; they are patches of relatively high density, often visibly apparent in sociograms and calculable through appropriate software (Scott, 2000, pp. 126-127). When a cluster reaches maximal density and each node is directly adjacent to all others it may be described as a “clique” (Burt, 1992). Cliques are often characterised as having very strong ties and a cohesive group identity. As such they are typical habitats for the development of “bonding” social capital, which can engender trust, security and other benefits (Putnam, 1995; Wilks, 2009). However, from a network perspective, cliques tend to be poor at encouraging the wider diffusion of ideas. Valuable information can be circulated quickly between actors, but breaking out to the larger network is an altogether more demanding task (Granovetter, 1973). The use of sociograms to illustrate these network characteristics has opened up the social world to new forms of analysis and understanding of network intensity, even bringing statistical approaches to bear on otherwise poorly defined relationships.

## **Social networks and social media**

Since the turn of the century a proliferation of online platforms has brought the social network into mainstream culture, and there is an appetite among their users to know more about how their connections affect them. We can now “peer beyond our social horizons” and observe our places in a vast web of ties (Christakis and Fowler, 2010, p. 256). Hundreds of millions of people explicitly engage with their social networks on a daily basis, presenting researchers with a trove of data (on the originator, the recipient, the intensity, content and dynamics of the exchange) from which to understand these connected lives (boyd and Ellison, 2008). Analysis which takes advantage of these sources is accompanied by particular ethical considerations, where even the term “public” requires qualification in this context (Tsvetovat and Kouznetsov, 2011). While the disciplined interrogation of these media is yielding considerable information about social phenomena, it should ultimately be made intelligible to those networked individuals being studied.

The growth of social media, while not negating any of the more established features of the festival city’s networks, has been welcomed in as a supplementary layer of connections available to those in the festival network. This raises questions of its own:

- How do they perceive the networks of which they are a part?
- What impact do these tools have on the experience of individual people?
- To what extent has the number of strong or weak ties changed thanks to social media, and (if so) what does that mean for the spread of information and competition for resources?

For some researchers and festival contributors it may be more straightforward, relevant or important to seek access to social and virtual festival networks than the formalised structures of institutions and stakeholders.

### **Network-based tourism research**

Tourism studies has shown more of an appetite than Events academics for SNA. However, references to its limited application in the former are still found (e.g. Baggio et al., 2010; Mackellar, 2006; Pforr, 2006; Timur and Getz, 2008). Published material from the discipline tends to reflect upon the history of network analysis as a tool and its relevance to multiple fields of enquiry, suggesting a desire to demonstrate the value of these novel approaches (Baggio and Cooper, 2010; Baggio et al., 2010). This section of the current paper appraises the SNA data collection, analysis and presentation methods found within tourism research. With event studies having emerged as a critical sector of research it is appropriate that literature from the more established field of Tourism Studies should be considered in this context (Getz, 2012).

Case studies are prevalent in the literature. This is not uncommon in exploratory research. Shih (2006) reveals the geographical routes of self-drive tourists visiting a range of attractions in Taiwan, while Larson (2002) focuses on the political aspects of relationship marketing around a Swedish festival. From an Australian perspective SNA has shown the impact of introducing a convention element to an existing agricultural festival (Mackellar, 2006): greater cooperation between stakeholders was noted, alongside regional economic development, increased innovation and audience development. Regional tourism networks in four parts of the same country are also compared and contrasted, resulting in an analysis which recognises the advantages of breaking from a need to set geographical boundaries when conducting such research (Scott et al., 2008). In the Taiwanese example highlighted above reference is made to the “relatively isolated” nature of the area under consideration, even though it received over seven million visitors in 2004, “almost 13 times its own population” (Shih, 2006, p. 1033). Isolation can be beneficial in SNA as it aids the identification of the network, its boundaries and means of gathering data

(Baggio et al., 2010). Such advantages can be transferred to the analysis of festival network cases, where geographical isolation is enhanced by the temporally bounded nature of the phenomena being observed. The examples examined here are of a local or regional scale, again suggesting that their methods may be transferable to festivals and events.

Surveys, interviews and published information are popular forms of data collection in tourism SNA research. Lists of stakeholders are obtained by some, either from local destination marketing organisations (Timur and Getz, 2008) or “publicly available documents such as membership lists for associations and consortia, commercial publications, ownership and board of directors’ records” (Baggio et al., 2010, p. 814). Armed with this information it is not uncommon to find that key stakeholders are contacted by researchers to help establish the validity of such lists, leaving open the opportunity for additional organisations to be added, a form of snowball sampling (Timur and Getz, 2008). At times further sampling is used to reduce the number of stakeholders approached with an ensuing survey, from 180 to 54 in an analysis of Australia’s Northern Territory and the development of its tourism master plan (Pforr, 2006). In all, 35 of those 54 surveys were returned, including nine that were not completed due to reasons such as participants having moved away or died. In Taiwan, Shih’s survey was carried out through a randomised trawl of the country’s phone directory, which resulted in some 2,142 phone calls over a two-week period in early 2005 (Shih, 2006). A mixture of approaches is therefore apparent, supporting the view that SNA methods can here be adapted as required.

SNA carried out by Tribe on the nature of “territories and tribes of tourism studies” reflects on the development of the subject itself as its early pioneers are succeeded by a new generation (Tribe, 2010, p. 7). Totally, 16 in-depth interviews were carried out, 22 e-mailed surveys returned and 29 published biographical accounts identified, analysed by a researcher with a “long period of participant observation in the field” (Tribe, 2010, p. 9). This paper is unique among those reviewed with its focus on the academy, yet it is also able to cast a uniquely longitudinal eye over networks in “constant flux”, rather than capturing a potentially misleading snapshot of an otherwise dynamic system (Tribe, 2010, p. 23). On a different scale altogether, international tourist arrivals data from the World Tourism Organisation have also been analysed using network science methods: some 763 million arrivals in 2004 (Miguéñs and Mendes, 2008). Identifying the key airports from network analysis was achieved through measures of node centrality, to the extent that key departure and arrival destinations became apparent. As a reflection of the efficiencies of the global tourism system this analysis offers similar insights to those drawn in Taiwan in the search for how best to support both central and peripheral elements of the network. One asks where should hub airport investment should go, the other where drive tourism destinations should establish entry points and what facilities they should

offer (Miguéns and Mendes, 2008; Shih, 2006).

Across these papers the data analysed is presented in a range of forms, from sociograms (Baggio et al., 2010; Mackellar, 2006; Miguéns and Mendes, 2008; Pforr, 2006), to tables of statistical information (Baggio and Cooper, 2010; Pforr, 2006; Scott et al., 2008), and sometimes the extensive use of quotations (Tribe, 2010). There is also a tendency to provide extensive background on the statistical methods and tools used (Baggio et al., 2010; Miguéns and Mendes, 2008; Shih, 2006). Just as Tribe identified overlapping networks of tourism researchers, approaching the subject from different perspectives, so SNA offers an array of presentational styles and statistical results to suit the data and the context under examination (Tribe, 2010).

The papers are generally positive about the opportunities SNA affords to those seeking to describe and analyse complex social relations and other relational data. It is advantageous that the industry stakeholders in question can begin interpret the results for themselves, particularly when they are presented in sociograms and other models (Scott et al., 2008). Some challenges are identified, from the data-hungry nature of the research to the evolution of networks over time (Scott et al., 2008). Each paper is careful not to overstate the generalisability of its findings, although it is noted that these methods can provide important corroboration for existing analysis of politicised stakeholder relations in a destination (Pforr, 2006). Perhaps the most pertinent contribution of all features in Tribe's analysis of the development of tourism studies where he describes the impact of a single meeting in 1974, in Mexico City, which did "the most to introduce the social sciences and tourism to one another" (Tribe, 2010, p. 24). This is pertinent because it is recognised as having kick-started the academy's interest in tourism, and demonstrating the impact an event can have on a network and thus the benefits to be had from understanding how and why these phenomena influence each other.

### **SNA of the festival city: the case of Edinburgh**

Two categories of potential benefits to those studying and producing festivals are apparent from this analysis: first the conception of festivals and festival cities as networks; second the availability of analytical tools to aid further understanding of that network. SNA tools are undoubtedly relevant in the pursuit of understanding and insight into both intra-and inter-festival relationships (Richards and Palmer, 2010). Such analysis has the potential to reveal a different picture from that provided through established stakeholder analysis as the former emphasises personal relationships, rather than the institutionalised frameworks which stakeholder maps tend to deliver (Bryson, 2004; Prell et al., 2009). In this regard an understanding of

stakeholder relationships is seen as a starting point, a platform on which to build for both the employee and the researcher. In a typical scenario, a festival venue employee may have numerous local connections within the organisation, but if that venue is on the fringes of the wider network its staff will not enjoy much global centrality. The relatively peripheral festival venue, lacking the stronger ties that others may possess, still has connections to the wider network via intermediaries and brokers. Quite who those brokers are and which parts of the organisation they are connected to will vary, and presentational tools such as sociograms help to reveal this information. There may also be opportunities to cultivate connections with people in more central positions. Specialist suppliers, such as box office providers, may be well placed in this regard: their influence can be substantial, yet not immediately obvious as they go about developing connections across the city. Such situations hold out the prospect of novel research that has implications for festival producers, venue managers and their employees.

Thanks to the scale and maturity of its festival economy, the city of Edinburgh in Scotland presents an appropriate environment in which to test these concepts and to explore the importance of social networks in festival communities. Edinburgh is not a particularly populous destination, yet it is one that supports a disproportionately large number of arts and cultural festivals. Its Festival Strategy of 2001 helped the city take stock of over 50 years of annual celebrations, recognising that particular attributes were working in its favour. These included “an integrated culture (or industry) with people, ideas and skills moving between different festivals” (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001, p. 14). In 2006 the Thundering Hooves report compared the city to a range of international competitors, many of them bigger in size. It noted the advantages of their relative scale as expressed through public funding, visitor numbers and the overall festival offering (AEA Consulting, 2006). Yet Edinburgh is recognised as possessing a collection of high-profile festivals that strive to work together, whether formally through institutions and joint projects, or in the informal “integrated culture” noted above. Thundering Hooves advocated yet closer and more strategic collaboration between these organisations, resulting in 12 now acting together in key areas under the “Festivals Edinburgh” umbrella (AEA Consulting, 2006; Festivals Edinburgh, 2012). This has implications for trust and understanding between organisations and individuals, it helps to retain knowledge and experience within the local economy, facilitates shared identities and understandings, and supports numerous careers (Crossley, 2010, p. 7).

The transient and peripatetic nature of festival career paths is a fundamental characteristic of Edinburgh’s diverse cultural networks. Employees move from office to office, sharing knowledge and experience through the annual festive cycle. The periods of each festival provide peaks of activity within the calendar, injections of energy as new ties are formed and acquaintances reaffirmed. Between festivals,

during lulls that provide time and space to consolidate relationships, a tighter, smaller network emerges: the festival village of close connections and higher transitivity where everyone seemingly knows each other and cliques can form. This paper therefore uses the Edinburgh festivals as a suitable destination context in which to apply SNA methods. It does so in line with Jarman and Theodoraki (2011) who utilised the case of Edinburgh's Festival City Theatres Trust, managers of two main festival venues, to explore the application of strategic analysis in the study of cultural venue related organisational growth. The festivals concerned here include the sprawling and decentralised Festival Fringe, responsible for 45,464 performances in 2013 across 271 venues and overlapping with several others in the congested weeks of August (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2013, p. 4). Conversely the Edinburgh International Science Festival is centrally programmed and managed, taking place over Easter in relative isolation within the festival calendar. The remainder of this paper outlines a research methodology proposal with the potential to be applied across these different examples, drawing on aspects of studies mentioned above.

Once one or more key festival organisations have been identified it is proposed that research will be conducted with paid employees to record their existing person-to-person connections on the eve of a festival (Pforr, 2006; Timur and Getz, 2008). A coded list of all festival staff should be drawn up, akin to the lists of stakeholders used elsewhere (Pforr, 2006; Timur and Getz, 2008), as the basis of a paper survey for data collection. Staff members would identify the people most important to their festival work and/or their application to join the organisation, forming the nodes and ties of the resulting network graphs in later stages of the research. From the resulting sociograms a picture will emerge of the density of that organisation's existing pre-festival network helping to identify those actors with greatest centrality and those on the network's periphery. These data could also establish the extent to which the organisation is embedded in a larger network of festival workers, who move from event to event. There is a tacit understanding in many festival economies that in order to build a career in this environment it helps to know the right people and be adaptable and flexible; this research methodology aims to examine and provide insights into such assumptions.

A mixed methods approach is recommended to further explore such festival networks. Initially this could include interviews with key people, as identified from the network analysis and the organisation's structure. The experience of holding either a central or peripheral position in the network can therefore be explored, including varying access to resources and any opportunities to exploit a better-connected position. A follow-up survey could be implemented at a later date, using the same staff list and questions but with a sample of the original set. This would help to reveal the impact of the festival period on the network's characteristics and density.

Structural changes in the network over time can be examined, seeking to identify the people or circumstances that stimulate such activity and whether it can be effectively directed to the festival's advantage. It is in these elements of the proposed research that the greatest benefits of this work would become apparent to both researchers and festival managements.

This paper therefore advocates the employment of SNA methods to contemporary festivals and events, as a complement to the more formalised structures inherent in established stakeholder analysis (Bryson, 2004). Indeed, Prell et al. (2009) use SNA to inform stakeholder analysis. The authors are aware of the particularities of the different Edinburgh festivals, however, the methods outlined above would be appropriate across the range of their management structures and programming processes. Some festivals experience relative isolation in the calendar and this could facilitate cleaner identification of their network, and the impacts of the festival on that network. However, a more crowded time of year, such as in August when Edinburgh hosts six international festivals over four weeks, could highlight the degree to which an organisation is embedded in its broader festival economy. Limitations of SNA have been discussed, alongside its many opportunities as a research methodology. A greater understanding of intra-and inter-festival networks will benefit festival producers, academic researchers and ultimately those seeking to build careers within the networked festival environment, both in Edinburgh and in other festival cities around the world.

## Note

1. danah boyd always presents her name in lower case letters.

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#### 4.1.4 The strength of festival ties: Social network analysis and the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival

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##### **Introduction**

Charlotte Bronte's visit to London for the Great Exhibition of 1851 captured her imagination, as it did the millions of others who attended the Crystal Palace from May to October of that year:

*The multitude filling the great aisles seems ruled and subdued by some invisible influence. Amongst the thirty thousand souls that peopled it the day I was there not one loud noise was to be heard, not one irregular movement seen; the living tide rolls on quietly, with a deep hum like the sea heard from the distance.*  
(Shorter, 1908, p. 216)

As a festival of arts, manufactures, technologies, and cultures the Great Exhibition was unprecedented in its scale and ambition, providing a shared celebration for a confident nation. Visitors arrived from across the British Isles, delivered at speed through an expanding system of railways that were fast superseding the canals and turnpikes of previous generations. News of the event spread through naval trade routes to the far corners of Queen Victoria's global dominions. Bronte was but one part of a sea of humanity, a 'living tide' at the heart of a global phenomenon. The scale, success, and sheer ambition of the Great Exhibition were made possible through networks: complex interdependent systems that moved people, resources, news, and ideas from place to place. This chapter proposes that in the generations since the Crystal Palace laid down a template for modern events an industry has developed that relies on networks to an unprecedented degree, particularly social networks. It is also argued that attempts to better understand these festival and event networks are long overdue.

Social network analysis (SNA) provides a response to this need, a method of research that prioritises relationships between individuals within the webs of their networked environments. It is a means of analysing 'relational data... the contacts, ties and connections, and the group attachments and meetings that relate one agent to another and that cannot be reduced to the properties of the individual agents themselves' (Scott, 2013, p. 3). Moreover, SNA focuses on the global pattern of ties across a network, rather than particular relationships. Within this broad context, it offers the potential to make the festival box office manager the unit of analysis (or

the training officer, the front of house steward, the press officer, and the festival director) within the networks of which they are a part. The personal attributes of each individual are related to the patterns of relationships in which they are embedded. The breadth of non-event contexts in which SNA has been applied has contributed to an established literature, which also contains texts explicitly targeted at a mainstream audience (Christakis & Fowler, 2010; Ormerod, 2012). Likewise the role of communications technologies and social media in twenty-first-century life has spawned its own library of work that highlights the influence of increased network awareness on millions of citizens around the globe (Krotoski, 2013; Shirky, 2009).

The sections that follow consider the value of SNA to both academic research and events industry practitioners. This is done from the initial standpoint that a language of 'stakeholder' analysis is inadequate in this regard. A case study is introduced, drawing from data collected on the eve of the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival (EISF). These data are then used to explore aspects of SNA methodologies and some limitations associated with such approaches. Building on this platform the chapter develops a critical discussion around the potential for SNA to complement and extend our current understanding of festivals, events, their management, and the experiences of people operating within their networks.

### **A Critique of Stakeholder-Focused Events Research and Considerations of Events Industry Network Analysis**

When considering relationships between and within the constituent parts of festivals and events the current academic literature is well versed in the language of stakeholders; there are, however, challenges inherent in this perspective. Established event studies text books dedicate considerable attention to stakeholder definitions (Richards & Palmer, 2010, pp. 148–151), relationships between stakeholders (Getz, 2005, pp. 55–57), the contributions of stakeholders to an event's environment (Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011, pp. 126–136), and the experiences of different event stakeholders (Getz, 2012, pp. 208–214). In a broader context of leisure management, Veal emphasises the importance of stakeholder consultation as part of a comprehensive planning process (Veal, 2010, p. 140). These contributions are valid and valuable; they help events researchers describe and begin to understand the importance of partnerships in successful event creation. As Getz and Andersson have shown, exploratory research can reinforce these contributions by gathering the views of festival managers on the degree to which their festival is dependent on its various stakeholders (Getz & Andersson, 2010). However, these works risk presenting a reductive interpretation of the stakeholder organisations and groups that they identify. Two principal challenges result from this approach: firstly, to overcome a tendency to treat stakeholders as monolithic entities

and secondly, in turn, to help avoid presenting researchers, students, and practitioners with a simplistic interpretation of relationships within event economies.

There is an inherent tension between recognising the subtly nuanced operating environment of a given festival or event and seeking to describe its place in a web of partners, participants, collaborators, and competitors in a suitably accessible manner. Texts that seek to accommodate these dual requirements tend to approach them in one of two ways: through the use of diagrams to represent connections between those fulfilling different stakeholder roles (Getz, Andersson, & Larson, 2007, p. 109) or through narrative discussions that seek to describe the diversity of the events industry (Allen et al., 2011, pp. 126–136; Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011, pp. 229–241). The latter, for example, may recognise that an event manager can be directly employed, contracted in, part of an organising committee, or participating voluntarily, often depending on what type of organisation she is working for (Bowdin et al., 2011, p. 231). There is a clear recognition here that important individuals require special attention to adequately portray their places in the creation and management of events. As the text considers an event’s host population, however, attention switches to ‘the broad trends and forces acting on the wider community’, with limited consideration of individual people, save attempts to ‘identify community leaders’ for consultation (Bowdin et al., 2011, pp. 233–236). Others draw attention to a comparatively simplistic distinction between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ stakeholders to be found in some sources, splitting ‘employees, volunteers, sponsors, suppliers, spectators, participants and attendees’ from ‘[the] host community, government, essential services, tourist organisations and corporations’ (Rojek, 2013, p. 72).

These interpretations are problematic for they simplify the picture and can deny a voice to individuals within these stakeholder groups. If care is not taken to respond to this broad brush approach, observers and commentators risk homogenising diversity and complexity out of the picture through a process and a vocabulary of categorisation and labelling. The extent to which this is a result of necessary pragmatism should not shroud the (perhaps unintended) potential consequences. Researchers must be aware that there will often be limits to the generalisability of their findings from primary data (Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 195–196). They should also recognise that the conceptual frameworks on which such research is carried out can also sow the seeds of these generalisations. The voice of the individual can become subsumed within a dominant narrative that talks of ‘employees’ or ‘the host community’ without paying due regard to how reliably it reflects the varied experiences of those engaging with and operating in an event economy. In a challenge to event educators, students, and practitioners, Crowther demands that events be created from a ‘stakeholder centric outlook’, emphasising co-creation, collaboration and ‘an appreciation of the required and desired outcomes for all

stakeholder groups' (Crowther, 2014, pp. 15–16). While this approach is to be applauded and its application reflects a generation of ongoing professional development in the events sector, it does little to reflect the personal goals, resources, and relationships of those within the industry.

An event professional or attendee, be they a conference organiser, sports fan, or festival audience member, has a personal relationship to that event. They may, if required, feel it acceptable to be labelled according to their role or status, but rarely will a single label suffice: the person supplying event services to a rugby stadium may also be a fan, and thus keen to attend in both professional and personal capacities. Dual relationships with an event facilitate numerous person-to-person connections to other people, which may well overlap and reinforce each other for mutual benefit. To this end, it may be possible to view festivals and events as 'communities of practice', providing opportunities for the development of knowledge, learning, and careers among those with shared interests (Comunian, 2015, pp. 53–65). Meanwhile, somewhat less positively, Richards draws on Castells's concept of the 'network society' in asking whether modern technology is incubating a society of networked individuals, partially isolated from those they (physically) live and work amongst (Richards, 2015, p. 247). As a result, the overlapping connections between people can become distorted and contested, proving problematic, or even destructive, in their effect. Recognition of this complexity is all too often absent from the methods used by events researchers, and the event studies literature is all the poorer for it.

An area of events and leisure studies research where network concepts and considerations feature more prominently is that around power, and its deployment in search of returns and rewards. Network society literature also informs analysis of an English football club's proposal to change its name, ostensibly to better appeal to a Chinese market (Hayton, Millward, & Petersen-Wagner, 2015). The authors recognise that powerful, well-resourced agents often occupy the 'most profitable' positions in a network, where they may access and influence flows of information and other forms of capital (Hayton et al., 2015, p. 7). Their discussion contrasts modern dynamic and flexible networks with outmoded hierarchies, yet recognises the inherent advantages of the latter when created explicitly to control resources and work towards objectives. Similar themes feature in Jones's analysis of major events and regional development, in particular those peripatetic sports events which rest in a destination for only a limited period of time (Jones, 2005). In such situations, there is a strategic rationale for event owners to develop stronger high-trust ties to their established sponsors and long-standing partners in the media, rather than their temporary hosts (Jones, 2005, p. 187). It is clear from work with three Italian cultural festivals that where events are more deeply embedded in their community, over a longer period of time, the more likely it is that they will produce positive social and

cultural impacts (Izzo, Bonetti, & Masiello, 2012, p. 237). Further conclusions reached are that a balance of strong and weak ties often characterise successful festival networks, within which effective 'network orchestrators' are able to effectively manage relationships for the leveraging of resources (Izzo et al., 2012, pp. 235–240). Regardless of this academic attention, the protection and deployment of power, through a network, fits an intuitive narrative that is often recognised within the industry.

Those directly involved in producing events, festivals, and creative work may not be under any illusions about the importance of personal connections in their industries, though they may lack the tools to fully comprehend and articulate the impact they can have. Careers are partially constructed on a platform of 'who you know'; contracts are awarded on the basis of previous relationships; and funding opportunities are sometimes publicised through relatively closed and private clusters. Institutions in two English cities help illustrate the actions of organisations that have publicised their roles within local networks. In seeking to understand their role in 'ecosystems of cultural innovation', Bristol's Watershed venue recognises its place within multiple 'economies' (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010, pp. 10–12). A monetary economy, through which flows financial value, is joined by an economy of meaning, with art and experiences as its currencies (Leicester & Sharpe, 2010, p. 12). In Manchester, communities and networks underpin the work of three new major cultural hubs (Home, The Space Project, and The Sharp Project) as they strive to support a regional creative industry. Information flows within and between such organisations, but all too often it does so through personal contacts and may or may not follow official channels. A box office manager may turn to informal external contacts to help solve problems, not because they have a contract to do so but because they have had prior success when doing so before—maybe they worked together. The institutional stakeholder edifice is further eroded in the act of representing the organisation: who answers the phone, who sets company policy, and where is the front line and how well is it connected to the rest of the organisation? NESTA's (The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) work on creative clusters reflects some of these themes (Chapain, Cooke, De Propriis, MacNeill, & Mateos-Garcia, 2010). Likewise the Warwick Commission's report also used the vocabulary of an ecosystem, to describe 'the interconnectedness of the Cultural and Creative Industries in terms of the flow of ideas, talent and investment from public and private sources' (Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value, 2015, p. 21). Festival and event employees develop intuitive understandings of such situations, reflecting on what they might mean for both the individual and the stakeholder organisation of which they are a part. Yet this can only deliver partial awareness of the full picture, for in many circumstances it is very difficult to peer much beyond one's own connections.

## **Research and Development of Edinburgh's Festival and Event Networks**

The city of Edinburgh experiences a cultural year built around several high-profile festivals, where a portfolio approach explicitly encourages the development of effective partnerships in pursuit of strategic aims and objectives (Festivals Edinburgh, 2012). A similar environment in Texas, USA, has been examined using network analysis approaches at an inter-organisational level (Ziakas & Costa, 2010, pp. 138–141). The opportunity to use such methods to examine the ties between individual employees of an Edinburgh festival is discussed below in Sect. 4, following a review of the city's efforts to understand and promote connections in the local industry. In a spirit of building stronger bonds within festival and event economies, examples can be identified that have pursued such goals at an explicitly strategic level. In July 2010 the Edinburgh Festivals Innovation Lab introduced itself as a new champion for the uses of technology, social media, and collaborative thinking in the management of the city's highest profile festivals (Festivals Edinburgh, 2010). The twenty-first-century escalation in communications technologies connects festival communities in real time across a city and around the globe, accessible to event producers and audiences alike, 24 hours a day. The Festivals Lab has been in the vanguard of attempts to capture and exploit these opportunities, embedding itself in the social networks that exist in a mature festival community, such as Edinburgh's. This project extends beyond merely trying to sell more tickets for the festivals.

The Festivals Lab was itself the product of ambitious work to formalise and exploit the relationships between 12 of Edinburgh's key festivals, and helps illustrate the tension between working effectively at an institutional level and recognising the importance of individuals. The Lab was created under the umbrella of Festivals Edinburgh, whose broader mission remains to 'develop and deliver collaborative projects and initiatives which support growth, product development, leadership and audiences' (Festivals Edinburgh, 2012, p. 8). It builds upon the City of Edinburgh Council's Festivals Strategy of 2001, which in turn identified 'an integrated culture (or industry) with people, ideas and skills moving between different festivals' (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001, p. 14). These organisations and documents recognise the discrete experiences of each person, the development of individual festivals, and the wider economy of which they are a part. And yet, when preparing the groundbreaking Edinburgh Festivals Impact Study, published in 2011, the methodology was illustrated by way of catch-all stakeholder groups such as 'Festival organisers and staff' and 'Edinburgh cultural sector' (Consulting, 2011, pp. 10–12). The study itself is comprehensive enough that it can disentangle some individual stories from the bigger picture, though there remain opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the connections between people and the social network context in which they operate.

Spring 2015 saw the publication of three reports on Edinburgh's cultural and creative development, each of which highlighted the vital role of connections and networking in supporting the work of individuals and organisations. Most overt in its illustration of urban network infrastructure is the Leith Creative project, a grassroots effort to identify and map the physical hubs, festivals, and creative professionals that make up the cultural industry in this part of the city (Cunningham & Bremner, 2015). These same themes, albeit in aspirational form, feature in the Edinburgh-wide Desire Lines report (Desire Lines, 2015). This is the culmination of a broad conversation designed to produce clear aims and actions, such as to compile 'a register of current venues with capacities and facilities' for performers and promoters (Desire Lines, 2015, p. 21). There are digital ambitions as well, part of a desire to create 'a physical or online hub for artistic resources as well as spaces for creative people to come together and promote existing peer support events and networks' (Desire Lines, 2015, p. 22). Digital networks also come to the fore in Thundering Hooves 2.0, the 10-year strategic plan for Edinburgh's Festivals (BOP Consulting & Festivals and Events International, 2015). A call for better technological infrastructure and more coordinated activity has creativity at its heart, as do objectives related to overall partnership structures, transport links, and engagement with international programmes. These reports and the activity they represent suggest that Edinburgh's festival economy, and the networks that sustain it, are ripe for examination.

The research methods outlined below introduce an attempt to better understand the social networks of staff involved in one of the city's main celebrations: the annual EISF. The following analysis draws from social network data to examine the potential contributions of this approach within the chosen context, leading to a critical examination of its suitability and limitations.

## **Social Network Analysis and the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival**

The methodology outlined in this section follows a SNA design advocated by Prell (2012, pp. 59–91). Each of the nine steps in her approach will be introduced under her sub-headings, and illustrated through its application to the chosen case study on employees of the 2014 EISF.

### **Step One: Read up on the Literature**

As Prell is quick to point out, familiarisation with relevant literature is vital in developing a research methodology (Prell, 2012, pp. 60–61). Within the SNA literature, events have played a particularly important role in the development of 'two mode' network analysis (Prell, 2012, p. 31). The seminal Deep South study helped

develop this method, structuring its data in matrices that represented people across their rows and the events they did or didn't attend down the columns (Davis, Gardner, Gardner, & Warner, 1941). Within the event studies literature, the volume of academic work linking SNA to events is limited, although from the broader field of tourism research a more substantial literature helps establish this as a valid lens through which to view festivals (Jarman, Theodoraki, Hall, & Ali-Knight, 2014, pp. 316–317). A variety of case studies are presented here, from tourist routes across Taiwan (Shih, 2006) to relationship marketing at a Swedish festival (Larson, 2002). Some papers make valuable contributions to the development of appropriate methodologies, such as gathering data by asking respondents to identify their connections on rosters that have been drawn up in advance. These rosters may result from collaboration with well-connected industry partners (Timur & Getz, 2008) or publicly available sources (Baggio, Scott, & Cooper, 2010). The tourism studies literature also helps illustrate the diverse scales on which SNA may be deployed, from the limited in-depth interviews and email correspondence carried out as part of a review of tourism academics (Tribe, 2010) to the 763 million airport arrivals contained within official World Tourism Organisation data (Miguéns & Mendes, 2008).

Despite the earlier critique of stakeholder-centric commentary on festivals and events, there are works that actively seek to combine that approach with recognition of network theory, albeit without the application of SNA methods. Such discussions recognise that there are relationships between all stakeholders, not just between those stakeholders and the chosen, focal organisation. To this end, with an emphasis on 'power flowing between the links in the network, it is relevant to speak of the network as political' (Getz et al., 2007, p. 105). This politicised sense of network dynamism is apparent elsewhere, helping to illustrate the tendency for event stakeholder networks to emerge without deliberate planning, facilitating the transfer of existing power relationships into the event-planning environment and limiting the involvement of underrepresented groups, such as local communities (Richards & Palmer, 2010, pp. 151–152). These publications, from case study journal articles to established text books, provide a foundation on which to build further research. There is a diversity of purpose and scale of ambition that should be welcomed, for although SNA is still an emergent contributor to event studies research its value to a range of associated themes and topics has been firmly established.

## **Step Two: Developing a Theoretical Framework**

Prell identifies a generational shift within SNA from initial inductive and exploratory work to a field in which deductive studies are now more common (Prell, 2012, pp. 61–64). She goes on to identify social capital, social exchange theory, biased net

theory, diffusion of innovations, social influence network theory, and social selection network theory as commonly tested concepts and ideas. The EISF research reflected a range of frameworks that could contribute to a deeper understanding of the festival's workings. In focusing on employees and their relationships with each other there were opportunities to consider the relative importance or power of individuals, the diffusion of information through the network, the importance of connections made prior to the year in question, and even the influence of external organisations on the shape of the EISF network. Having established an understanding of SNA's potential the research instrument was ultimately developed with the potential to address a range of theoretical positions, a proof of concept exercise to facilitate further research.

### **Step Three: Developing a Research Question or Hypothesis**

These theoretical positions helped to inform the specific research themes pursued, though as has been intimated above the experience of being involved in events also inspires instinctive and intuitive conjectures in relation to festival networks. Prell encourages the bringing together of social networks with another variable or variables, to consider how one might influence the other (Prell, 2012, p. 64). Some of the considerations above, in Sects. 2 and 3, contributed to the foci of the research. They reflect an interest in the roles of individuals within organisations, relationships between institutions and a burgeoning interest in Edinburgh to better understand the city's creative networks. As a result, the following hypotheses were investigated:

1. SNA can identify individuals that others consider most important in their own work with the festival;
2. relational data can help reveal those people most important to the functioning of the EISF network;
3. on the eve of the EISF there will be distinct sub-networks within the wider network;
4. established and returning staff are more likely than new recruits to play a central role in the EISF network;
5. the EISF's social network reflects the extent to which people establish festival careers by moving between organisations.

### **Step Four: Who Is Your Population? What Is Your Network Boundary?**

Defining the population to be researched, the boundary within which it lies and issues of sampling receive considerable attention from Prell (2012, pp. 65–68). Some network boundaries are more easily drawn than others, and in collaboration

with the EISF management it was agreed that the research population would be defined as all the paid staff of the 2014 festival. To this end, the desired sample size was equivalent to the population under examination, the boundary was defined by the researchers (rather than the employees themselves), and the desired network was therefore a 'nominalist' (or 'whole') network (Scott, 2013, p. 43). So clearly defined was this network that all those included in the population were numbered, listed, and presented to the respondents as part of the data-gathering phase.

A variety of factors contributed to the decision to focus on the EISF staff, guided by a desire to capture data from across the festival workforce and the availability of opportunities to do so. The research population included permanent, long-term employees of the festival, as well as those on temporary contracts ranging from 2 weeks' to over 6 months' duration. A total of 95 staff members were employed in 'science communicator' roles: primarily science students and researchers through the rest of the year, they brought their expertise to bear at the festival. Others were professional festival administrators, having moved from one event to another through their careers. It was felt that the influence of all these experiences could be captured, illustrated and analysed through SNA. In total a potential sample of 35 permanent festival staff and their 127 temporary colleagues was identified. Some stakeholder categories were deliberately omitted, after consultation with the festival. Volunteers were not approached, for example, because of their particular relationship to the festival. Audience members and external partners were not included either, reflecting the chosen research focus and the difficulties of gathering suitable data.

Aside from whole networks, SNA can identify and investigate alternative types. These include those identified through a 'realist' approach, whereby members of the network themselves identify the boundaries of the network analysis (Prell, 2012, p. 66). In such a situation EISF respondents may have been denied the roster of names, drawing only from their memories and experiences. 'Ego' networks differ again with a sample of participants being asked to reflect openly on their connections, identifying their closest friends perhaps, with no attempt being made to capture the complete network (Scott, 2013, p. 49).

### **Step Five: Gathering the Data**

As a research method used across many fields of enquiry SNA has made use of both qualitative and quantitative data, from questionnaires and structured interviews to observation, diaries, and archival work (Prell, 2012, pp. 68–74). Online and digital platforms are increasingly accessible as sources of raw social network data. It is quite likely that many of the EISF survey respondents will have been more familiar associating the term 'social network' with their everyday use of modern social media

platforms, rather than more traditional forms of person-to-person contact.

The central relationship-focused question put to the festival staff through this research was: *'From the list of 2014 EISF paid staff, which five are most important to you in your work with the festival and/or your application to the festival?'* The question needed to make intuitive sense to all the respondents in the population, regardless of the length or strength of their connection to the organisation and their colleagues. Survey completion, in the days leading up to the festival, was overseen by the researchers' collaborators within the EISF, which brought clear advantages in terms of access to the staff. Respondents were asked to identify themselves by number (from the roster) and then the numbers of up to five others from the same roster. Most respondents did so by marking paper copies of the survey form during their training and induction sessions. Some filled in the form electronically when it was supplied as a spreadsheet file. This gave the researchers relational data as defined by the question asked, necessary when seeking to represent the social network on the eve of the festival. As has been discussed elsewhere (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2013, pp. 44–61), the data collection stage of SNA can be demanding and contentious, with different questions eliciting different responses and a great deal riding on the respondents' interpretations of key terms. Had the question read 'most reliable', 'most influential', or 'most disruptive' a different set of results would most likely have been returned.

The chosen question was presented alongside the staff roster to gather relational data, but it was not alone on the survey form. To add meaning to the ensuing analysis of the network, 'attribute' data was also collected from the respondents as they provided information about themselves. As intimated above, the attributes sought included:

- the employment status of the respondent: boxes were provided to categorise this data as 'Permanent', 'Long-term contract (3 months or more)', 'Short-term contract (up to 3 months)' or 'Only the period of the festival itself';
- any previous experience of working with the EISF: a box was provided for 'No', alongside one each for the five previous festivals and 'pre-2009';
- any previous work for other festivals: namely the other 11 festivals that make up Festivals Edinburgh;
- the 'normal' employment status of the respondent: options included 'Freelance festival administrator/producer'.

### **Step Six: Some Considerations on Gathering Network Data**

In the course of outlining her approach to SNA research methods, Prell draws

attention to some further considerations that are discussed here with reference to the EISF research (Prell, 2012, pp. 75–81).

- Directed or undirected data. These terms reflect how a tie is formed from one person to another, and whether that information is reflected in the data. The EISF survey resulted in ‘directed’ data, because each respondent made a judgement in identifying others, and there is a direction of flow as a result. Directed data can be considered richer in information than undirected data. An example of the latter could include responses to the question ‘Who did you talk to during your induction?’ (with no reference to who initiated the conversations or how meaningful they were).
- Binary versus valued data. The EISF survey, as described thus far, was based on binary relational data, for the respondents either identified another person from the roster or they didn’t. This has limited value, in SNA terms, when it comes to establishing the strength of those relationships. An alternative could have been for respondents to give a value for the strength of each connection (from 1–5 perhaps). In the EISF work attempts were made to establish the length of time that each ‘most important’ connection had existed, as a proxy for the strength of those relationships. An alternative measure of tie strength is regularity of contact, as explored in Granovetter’s seminal 1973 paper on ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’ (Granovetter, 1973). Looser connections are shown here to be vital in the transmission and receipt of certain types of information, such as job vacancies.
- Reliability and validity issues. SNA researchers are keen to highlight the issues and errors that can occur and thus influence the results of such research (Prell, 2012, pp. 77–78; Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 35–40). These can include wrongly attributing characteristics to a person, or the connection they have to another. Studies that rely on respondents’ memories are also prone to errors, and consideration of researchers’ biases is as much an issue in this method as any other. In the EISF research it was accepted that different respondents would interpret the question differently. The researchers and EISF management sought to arrive at a wording that would be appropriate to all paid members of festival staff.
- Missing data. The 2014 EISF staff survey gathered 53 usable surveys from a whole-population sample of 162 potential respondents, a response rate of 32.7 %. In the pursuit of a complete network, the research came up short. The primary reason for this was not felt to be an incorrect identification of the network boundaries. Nor was the data collection task itself deemed to be excessively complicated (though some respondents neglected to identify themselves, rendering the rest of their responses unusable). Gathering no more than a third of the desired data was instead interpreted as a consequence of working within the context of a busy, professional festival with

a large staff of temporary workers. It simply proved impossible to gather a larger return through the chosen methods, which affected the reliability and validity of later analysis; it has, however, resulted in other findings that will be used to illustrate points below.

- Ethical concerns. As noted, many of the considerations that affect all social science research can have a bearing on SNA, with ethical concerns among them. Prell identifies anonymity as having particular relevance in this regard (2012, pp. 79–81). As has been noted, the EISF survey respondents were presented with a roster of all the festival staff by name, which also included their job titles and separated out the permanent staff from their temporary colleagues. As with much of the research process, this was arrived at through consultation with EISF management. It was also decided that the survey would inform respondents that their responses would remain anonymous, though it left the door open to further questions should the researchers wish to follow up the survey with particular members of staff. With more contentious questions, it is not difficult to see how important anonymity can become, with the potential to highlight and describe the working relationships within organisations.

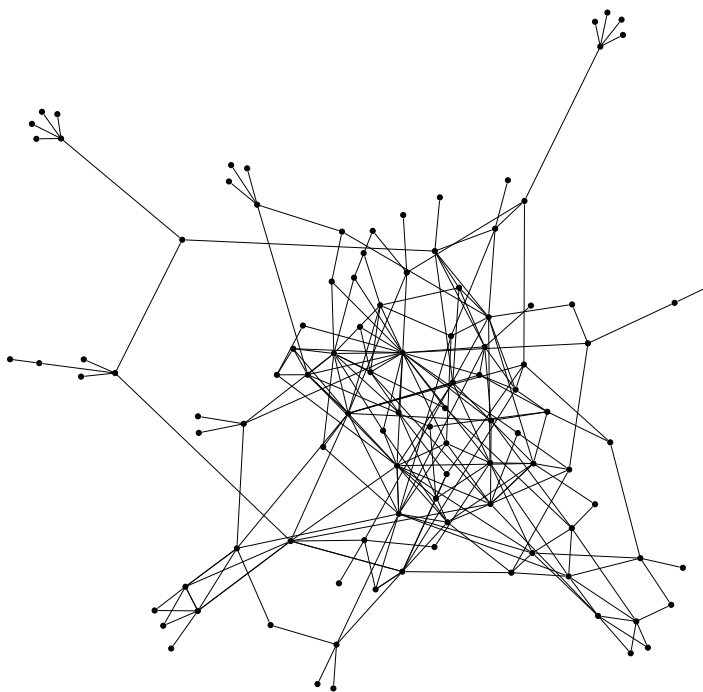
### **Step Seven: Inputting and Structuring Data into Matrices**

Prell notes that there are a variety of ways to use matrices in order to structure the resulting data (2012, p. 81). In this case study, with the completed EISF questionnaires collected and returned to the researchers, two matrices were prepared in a spreadsheet application: one reflected each person's attributes (their length of service, prior experiences with other festivals, etc.) and the other reflected their 'most important' relationships within the EISF research. In SNA terms, these matrices therefore contained data about the 'nodes' and 'edges' of the resulting network. Each row in the 'nodes' matrix started with the employee's code (which had been amended from their original roster number to assist with anonymisation), and proceeded to include all the attribute data that they had provided. If they had worked for the EISF in 2013 then '2013' appeared in the relevant cell against their code and in the relevant column; likewise 'EFF' was entered in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe column for those staff who had worked for that other festival organisation.

The 'edges' matrix was a simpler affair with three columns: the 'Source' code (identifying the respondents); the 'Target' code (meaning the colleagues they had identified); and the 'Weight' (which in the initial analysis was set to 1 throughout, but could have reflected the strength of the relationship if the length of time proxy data had been used). This matrix contained up to five rows per respondent, one for each of the colleagues they had identified.

## Step Eight: Initial Visualisation of the Network

An initial visualisation of the data in graph form, sometimes referred to as a sociogram, provides a first ‘feel’ of the data (Prell, 2012, p. 83). Such visualisations are not present in all SNA research, yet when used are perhaps the most recognisable aspect of network analysis. They create arresting images, can convey large amounts of data in an intuitive manner, and lead to both pertinent questions and meaningful answers in relation to the collected data. In the EISF research, the SNA software used was Gephi ([www.gephi.org](http://www.gephi.org)), chosen for its cross-platform capabilities, open-source development ethos, and free cost. An alternative for use in social science research is UCINET (which contains NetDraw for creating network visualisations). An initial visualisation of the 2014 EISF research data can be seen in Figure 4.1.



*Figure 4.1 Initial visualisation of EISF network data*

## Step Nine: Further Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Prell's nine-step process concludes with an invitation to further interrogate the data,

the 'analysing, interpreting and writing up' of results (2012, p. 86). With the gathered attribute and relationship data in place within Gephi, the EISF research then considered a range of hypotheses and questions to learn more about the festival and its staff network on the eve of the 2014 event. The following discussion draws out some of these results, as well as describing some of the key terms used in SNA.

## **Social Network Analysis Terms and Case Study Findings**

The following discussion is structured around the five hypotheses posited above. It seeks to respond to those hypotheses within the limitations of the research, illustrating more general points about SNA and some of the key terms associated with these research methods.

### **Hypothesis 1: Social Network Analysis can identify individuals that others consider most important in their own work with the festival**

Figure 4.2 illustrates the 'indegree centrality' of all the nodes in the EISF network. Where degree centrality reflects 'the number of other points to which a point is adjacent', indegree and outdegree take advantage of directed edges (Scott, 2013, p. 84). Here, larger circles represent those nodes with greater numbers of edges directed towards them; outdegree centrality would represent nodes by the number of edges directed away from them. From the received data, therefore, the people represented in this graph have been identified as 'most important' to more people than those with smaller circles, this can be seen as a measure of prestige. Algorithms within the software have drawn the sociogram in such a way that connected nodes are positioned close to each other and the larger nodes are generally placed towards the centre of the graph. It would be possible to move the nodes around on the graph while retaining the same network structure: the statistical underpinnings of the graph wouldn't be affected. The Gephi sociograms reveals that node A has the highest indegree centrality rank (15 edges), followed by B (13), then C and D (both with 10). Node E meanwhile has a relatively low indegree centrality of 5. Gephi has also calculated a 'graph density' of 0.021; had every node been connected to every other in a 'complete' network the density would have been 1.

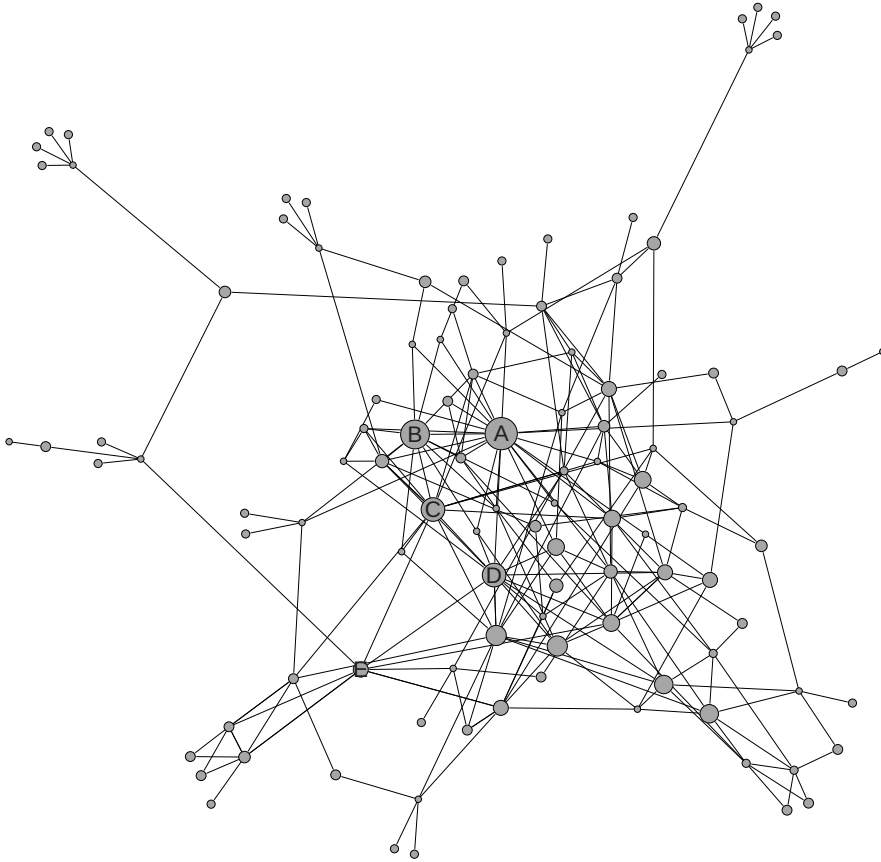


Figure 4.2 Indegree centrality

## Hypothesis 2: Relational Data Can Help Reveal Those People Most Important to the Functioning of the EISF Network

In Figure 4.3 a measure of ‘betweenness centrality’ is illustrated using the same five highlighted nodes. A node is said to have high betweenness centrality if it lies between other points on the graph, thus connecting parts of the network. This alternative form of centrality, developed by Freeman, helps identify those who play intermediary roles in a social network, perhaps acting as a ‘broker’ or ‘gatekeeper’, with the potential for wielding power as a result (Scott, 2013, p. 87). In the EISF illustrations, the previously diminutive node E is now much more noticeable, while B is a fraction of its former size. Given the data available, E is shown to have an important role in linking parts of the network that would otherwise be more distantly connected. B fails to fulfil this role despite its high indegree centrality; it is likely,

however, that they would be much more prominently reflected on this measure had they completed a survey and shown that they can recognise the importance of others as well as being seen as important themselves. The node with the highest betweenness centrality is A at a measure of 188.95, with E at a measure of 186.32. They are both 'locally central' with a high number of connections in their neighbourhood. A distinction may be drawn, however, as A has a greater claim to 'global centrality' because of its prominence within the network as a whole (Scott, 2013, p. 83). (Node B registers a score of 0.00.)

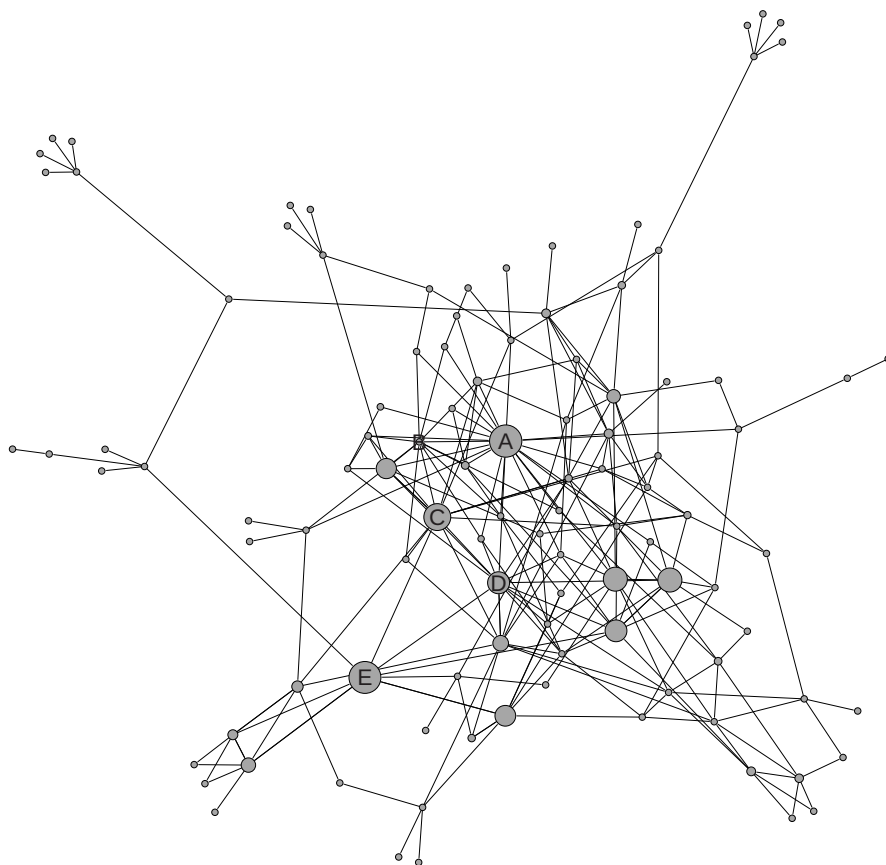


Figure 4.3 Betweenness centrality

Centrality measures can also be presented as a 'normalised' measure, relating each node's position to the overall network as appropriate to the research being undertaken (Borgatti et al., 2013, pp. 82–83). Additionally, Gephi has calculated a

'network diameter' of 7, 'defined as the greatest distance between any pair of [the network's] points' (Scott, 2013, p. 76). The 'average path length', taking into account the distances between all the nodes, is 2.5.

### **Hypothesis 3: On the Eve of the EISF There Will be Distinct Sub-networks Within the Wider Network**

The software used in the preparation of sociograms for this chapter contains tools that will identify groups within the network, defined as areas of higher network density. This can indicate the existence of tighter groupings within the staff, immediately prior to the 2014 festival. Scott takes care to note that computer applications should not be relied upon to deliver 'useful sociological measures' without the researchers having an understanding of the mathematical assumptions that underpin them (Scott, 2013, p. 100). Figure 4.4 begins the process of illustrating groups according to the data available to the software, with a 'cluster' having been identified. Further interrogation of the attribute data associated with each of these nodes could suggest that they have worked together at previous festivals. Additional data collection may reveal that a number of them were recruited by a locally central figure within the cluster. In this area of enquiry SNA could therefore play a part in mixed methods research, with the potential to supplement this analysis with additional data collection. Alongside clusters the language of sub-networks includes 'cliques', 'components', 'cores', and 'circles', each with its own specific interpretation within SNA (Scott, 2013, p. 99).

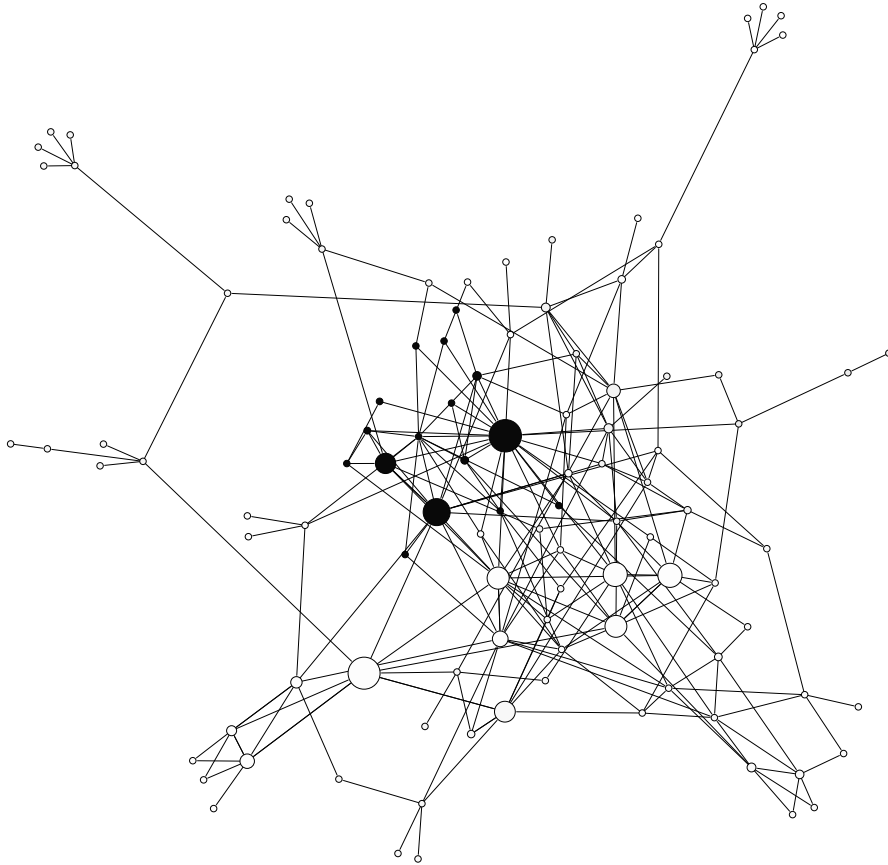


Figure 4.4 Cluster sub-group (sub-group nodes in black)

**Hypothesis 4: Established and Returning Staff Are More Likely than New Recruits to Play a Central Role in the EISF Network**

EISF staff were asked to categorise themselves as permanent staff, temporary on a long-term, short-term, or festival-only basis. Evidence from Figure 4.5 is based on these data and supports the hypothesis: with the nodes labelled according to the responses given, and sized according to the betweenness of the nodes, the majority of the most central people in the network appear to be either permanent or long-term members of staff. (Nodes without labels represent employees who did not submit a survey, but are included solely because they were identified by others.)

Complementary information in Figure 4.6 shows that these same, more central people were also part of the 2013 EISF staff (the preceding year's festival). Though these graphs are based on incomplete representations of the whole network,

potentially reflecting a relatively higher response rate among permanent and returning staff, they have implications for the management of the festival. On the one hand, they provide more tangible evidence of the intuitive perception that returning staff tend to be held in high regard within the festival community, with further research possible to uncover on what this may be based. These results also encourage a broader appreciation of the working environment in which such festivals take place, for if they are to attract such important staff back from one season to the next it is vital that those people are able to sustain themselves during the rest of the year. Where longer-term employment and repeat engagement with a festival may be signs of an employee building a career within the industry, their ability to do so despite (or because of) having to change employers on a regular basis is perhaps a measure of a healthy festival economy.

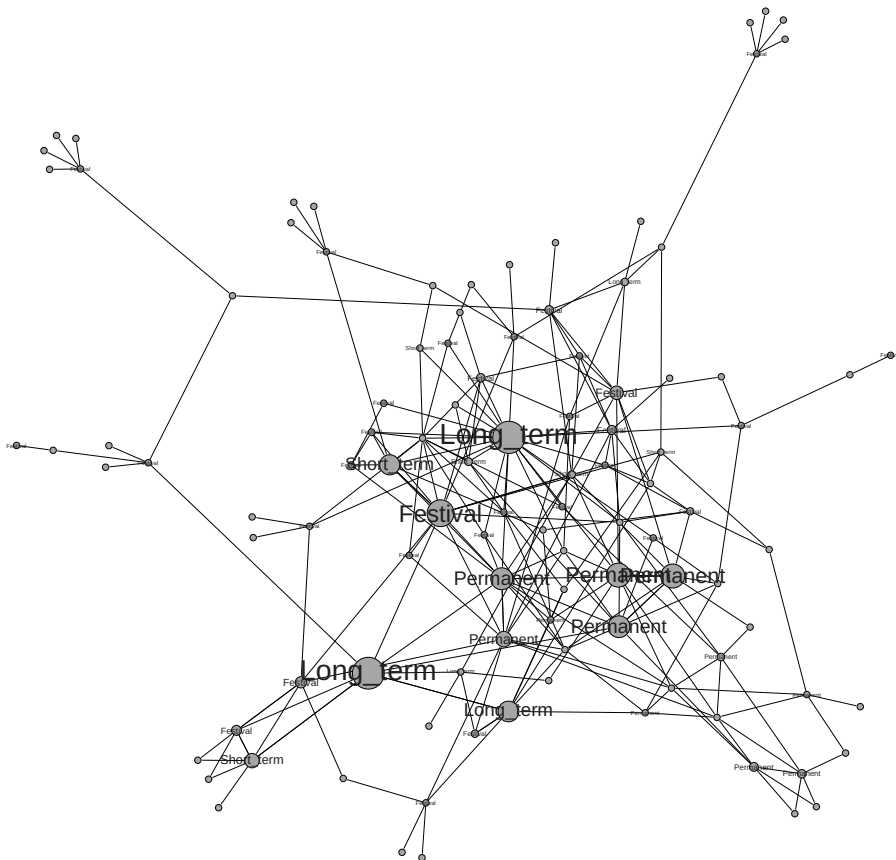


Figure 4.5 2014 employment status (current year)

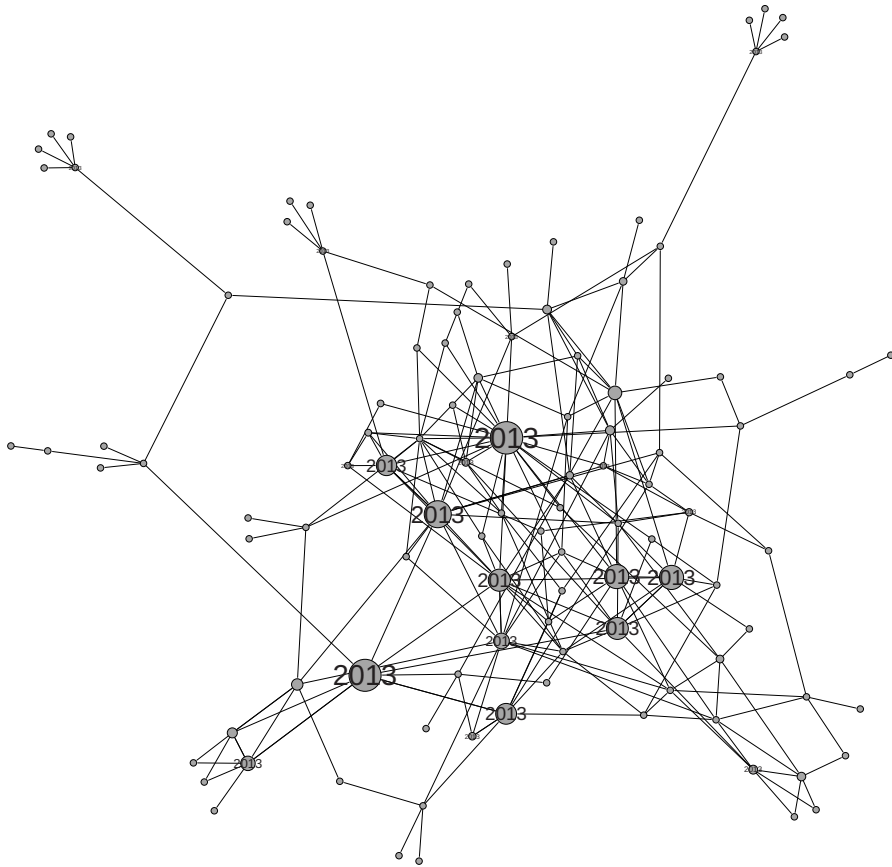


Figure 4.6 2013 EISF employment (previous year)

**Hypothesis 5: The EISF’s Social Network Reflects the Extent to Which People Establish Festival Careers by Moving Between Organisations**

Since the turn of the century, Edinburgh’s festival landscape has adopted an increasingly strategic approach to inter-festival collaboration, manifested in the publication of the first Thundering Hooves report (Consulting, 2006) and the ensuing creation of Festivals Edinburgh (Festivals Edinburgh, 2012). These developments have provided a platform on which 12 of the highest profile festivals can work together, and it is these 12 that featured in the EISF survey. It is evident from Figure 4.7 that Science Festival employees are also taking advantage of the potential to forge connections between multiple festivals, in this case showing that many EISF staff have previous experience of having worked for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Once again, the higher-profile nodes (by way of betweenness, based on being 'most important' to their colleagues) are well represented among those with Fringe experience. Figure 4.8 repeats this with Edinburgh International Book Festival veterans, with similar though less pronounced results among those most central to the EISF. Further research could reveal the existence of a typical career path for such staff, with the potential for some festivals to be acting as recruitment and training grounds for the broader Edinburgh festival economy. This could grant those organisations considerable power in relation to their peers, though alternative interpretations may reveal much greater equality and a more fluid exchange of staff between the festivals.

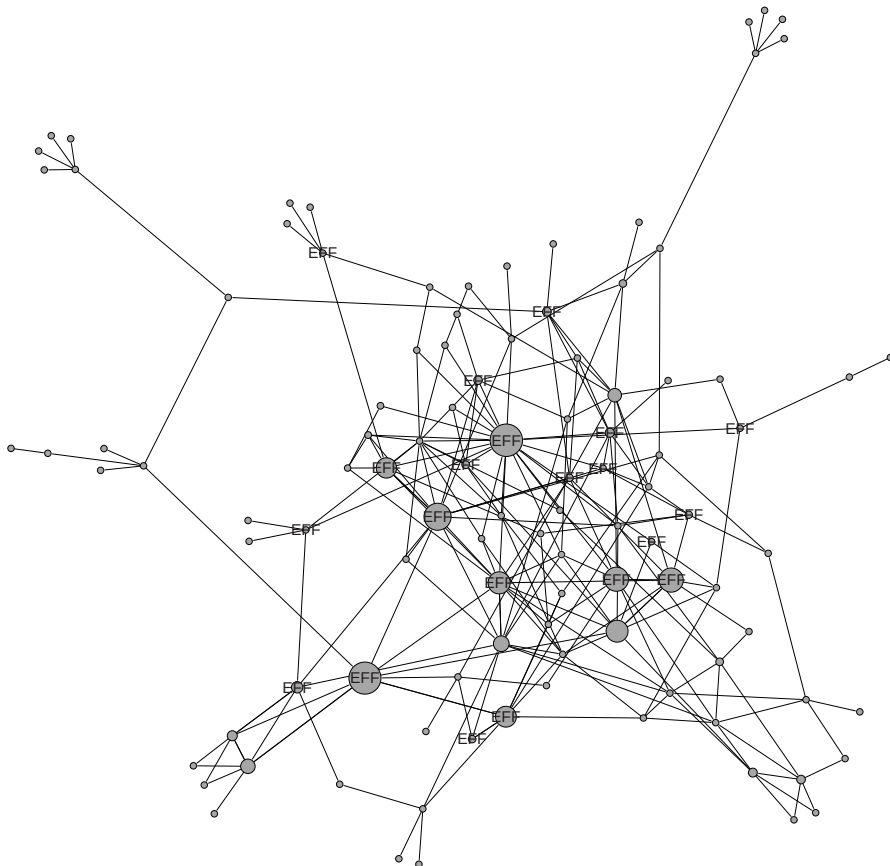


Figure 4.7 Past employment with the Edinburgh Festival Fringe

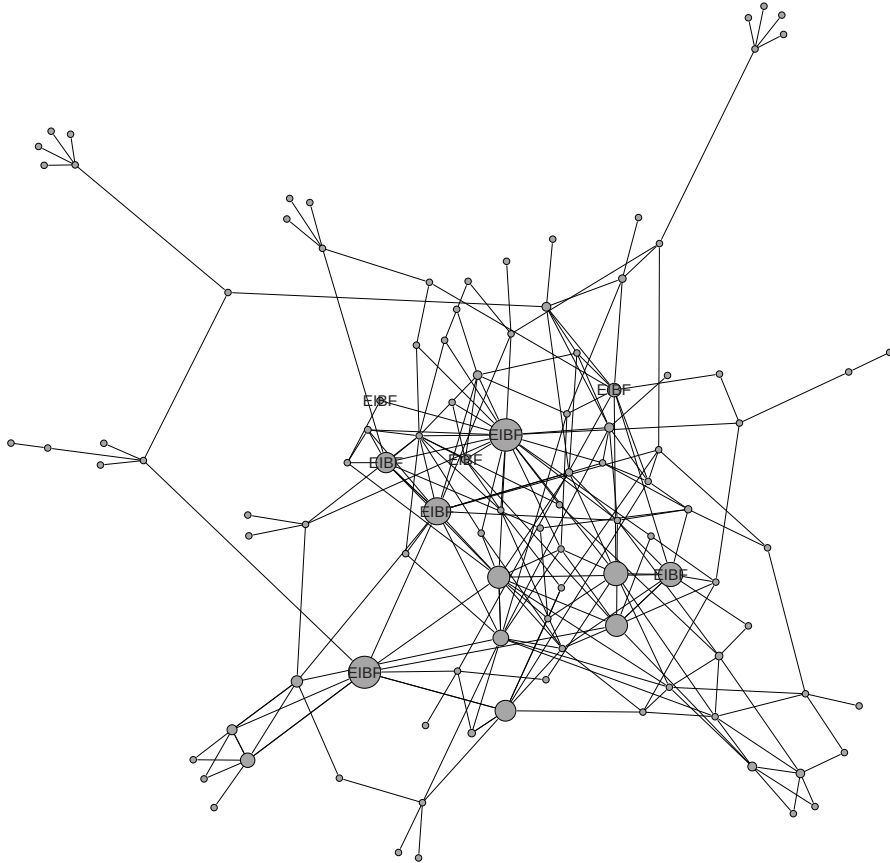


Figure 4.8 Past employment with the Edinburgh International Book Festival

## Critical Discussion and Further Research

Over the course of this chapter the case for considering SNA as an event studies research method has been made around two interrelated arguments: its inherent opportunities, as demonstrated in a range of fields, and the potential for SNA to help overcome limitations in our existing knowledge. Where stakeholder analysis risks treating organisations and institutions as unified and homogenous groupings, SNA helps reveal the personal connections that underpin the connections between competitors and collaborators. The chosen case study focused on the 2014 EISF and sought to identify and illustrate connections between their paid staff in the days leading up to the festival. It showed that the topics explored have implications for festival staff, their managements, and those seeking to provide strategic overview for diverse, multi-partner festival economies. The study itself had limitations of its own, which in turn pose further questions: what impact would a 100 % return rate have

had on the network, what would alternative relational questions have revealed and which additional attribute data could be gathered from the staff to broaden the range of themes that could then be explored? Other hurdles to be overcome include incomplete survey completion and initial lack of familiarisation with the software. Issues of anonymity have implications for the effective coding of participants and the management of any follow-up research involving further rounds of data collection. Anonymity is a fundamental concern with whole network analyses as individuals can often be identified by their connections. The motivation to seek more data, based on either the participant's position in the network or the formal hierarchy within the organisation, reinforces the notion that SNA is complementary to other forms of social research.

There are a number of means by which the case study research could be extended, which should be considered by those using SNA in other festival and event circumstances. Longitudinal research could mark the impact of a festival's season on the social connections of its staff: the same relational question asked at the end of the science festival would likely have revealed a dramatically different network, reflecting the establishment of new connections that supersede those that were formerly held in high regard. This relates to the SNA concept of 'transitivity', describing the closure of 'triads': over time 'one tends to become friends with one's friends' friends' (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 133). Actors in the core and periphery of a network can change position: how many of those who start on the periphery of a festival network make their way to more central positions, and do they realise this is taking place? Do those in central positions within the network have access to the information and resources they need to fulfil an intermediary role for the good of the festival? The related concept of 'small world networks' describes how tight clusters of activity can connect to the wider network, with clear implications for the dissemination of information through an organisation and its overall management (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 162–164). In a similar vein, the process of 'homophily' brings similar people together in ways that have important implications for managers and employees: birds of a feather may flock together, but what of festival staff and audiences (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 108–109)?

Complementary data collection offers the potential to better appreciate life within the network, and in more depth. Qualitative research, such as interviews and focus groups, would help explore the perceived importance of personal connections to those carrying out festival work and building careers in this environment. Rather than relying on perceptions and surveys, relationships can also be revealed through alternative forms of data, from co-attendance at events to more detailed information from the overlapping employment histories of participants. Email communications and social media connections offer other forms of data, proxies for the establishment of social connections, and the strength of such ties. With sufficiently developed tools

there is scope to extend social media research far beyond the staff of a selected festival and into an online environment of audiences, media, and geographically distant observers. Though such groups may conform to some traditional stakeholder categories, the contributions themselves are personal to those making them. Further questions arise when considering who sits behind a festival's Twitter or Facebook account, representing the organisation to its followers and friends.

Social network analysis presents researchers and students with the means to explore some of the most important current themes in mainstream event studies, from social capital (Foley et al. 2012, pp. 89–101), to power (Rojek 2013), to strategic event creation (Crowther 2014, pp. 3–20). The forces and resources that empower these phenomena are the stuff of social networks. What flows through a network (or is prevented from flowing) is crucial to the inclusive development of communities, the effective deployment of assets in search of personal and corporate advantage, and the conscientious consideration of stakeholder groups. In the generations since the Great Exhibition, audiences have continued to flock to festivals of science and culture, coming to learn and to experience, and returning home to share their memories and enthusiasm with friends and family. The importance of festival networks shows no sign of dissipating either, making this a vital area of study as we seek to better understand the social world around us.

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#### *4.1.5 Personal networks in festival, event and creative communities: Perceptions, connections and collaborations*

Jarman, D. (2017). Personal networks in festival, event and creative communities: perceptions, connections and collaborations. In A. Jepson & A. Clarke (Eds.), *Power, Construction and Meaning in Communities, Festivals and Events* (pp. 65-89). Routledge.

### **Introduction**

The effective planning, delivery and evaluation of local community festivals and events is dependent on the means by which each contributor is afforded opportunities, and support, to play a meaningful role (Foley et al, 2012: 89-101). Recent years have also seen the establishment of the professional strategic event creator (Bostok, 2014), a parallel development to the modern pursuit of memorable and meaningful event experiences (Wilks, 2009). Those who seek to produce and consume events and festivals are often united through shared motivations and characteristics, yet observers must remember that 'we're all individuals' (Chapman et al., 1979). This chapter focuses on the individuals involved in creative communities, as seen in their networked context: the fundamental question driving this chapter is a need to examine personal relationships, with a view to better understanding communities and their events.

'Ego network' based research provides a means by which we might describe and examine the social environments within which festival and event creators operate, as introduced and applied within this chapter. Ego network analysis is a form of social network analysis (SNA), a broader method of enquiry that has seen increased attention and application in recent years (Borgatti et al., 2013; Christakis, & Fowler, 2010; Prell, 2012; Scott, 2013). What makes ego network analysis stand out from other forms of SNA is its attention on specific individuals (egos) and the people they themselves identify as their connections (alters), whereby the nature of those connections is defined by the themes of the research (Crossley et al., 2015: 18-19). As Prell suggests, ego networks are 'defined as they are perceived and reported by respondents... each respondent is seen as the centre of his or her own network' (Prell, 2012: 118). From this vantage point, the observer can draw inferences relating to social capital, power and other key determinants of social influence.

Data collection for ego network research is based upon engagement with egos themselves, with the resulting network data a reflection of the ego's perceptions of their alters. As with most SNA this is a combination of connections and attributes (Scott, 2013: 2-4): valued relationships between people (or the lack thereof), and

those people's relevant characteristics. The basis on which those connections are revealed depends on what the research is trying to discover: professional connections, sources of advice, and shared projects have been identified as relevant considerations when studying creative 'ecosystems' (Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value, 2015). The ego's views of their alters' attributes are also key, revealing something about the sorts of people they are associating with, and resources that the ego does or does not have access to as a result. It follows that research of this kind opens up means by which social capital can be examined (Crossley et al., 2015: 25-43), as will be discussed next. If an individual's perceptions of the social world around them influence the ways they interact with it, then the more those perceptions are understood the better as such interactions can be predicted, planned for, resourced and supported.

Over the following pages this chapter explores a variety of themes, concepts and case studies, to justify the relevance of ego network analysis in pursuing a better understanding of the social environments in which festival, event and creative practitioners operate. Two case studies are explored, presenting research into egos at the conspicuous heart of networked communities in a Scottish city. Awareness of the importance of creative communities has grown in Scotland in recent years, as seen in the publication of research (Cunningham, 2015; Desire Lines, 2015), the prominence of networking organisations (Creative Dundee; Creative Edinburgh), and the support for new co-working spaces (The Whisky Bond). Such publications and organisations highlight the contributions of both creative people and the institutions (both digital and physical) that support their work: reflections on both individuals and networks. The primary research outlined next draws from these communities, focusing on two people who hold high profile professional positions within their networked communities. Their experiences will illustrate this chapter's introduction to ego network analysis as a foundation for exploring communities, festivals and events and future research in this area.

### **A stakeholder focused inheritance: the primacy of perception**

Much of the existing academic literature on festivals and events reveals a tacit awareness of ego to alter connections, without using the terminology of SNA. The dominant language is that of 'stakeholders', with the data collected in such research often taken from the perspective of key individuals (Getz et al., 2007; Getz, & Andersson, 2010; Izzo et al., 2012). Having often been identified according to their formal position within an institutional hierarchy, respondents are then charged with representing their organisation, rather than themselves. This is despite a broadly understood and frequently articulated awareness among events academics, and their students, of the short-term nature of much work in this industry (Bowdin et al.,

2011: 323-364). While both commercial and community events are often able to sustain longer-term and permanent positions, the reality for many is a more itinerant existence, without long-standing ties to a particular organisation. In this interpretation, employees and volunteers move from role to role, accumulating experiences and connections as they go (Jarman, 2016). Unless and until stakeholder-based analysis of festivals and events is able to accommodate a finer grained level of data, the unit of analysis will too often remain blurred, clumping people together into seemingly homogenous stakeholder groupings and organisations.

The underlying value and worth of a 'stakeholder centric approach' to festival and events management becomes more apparent when it helps to shape the way industry practitioners undertake their work (Bostok, 2014). Focusing on the needs and desires of one's stakeholders lies at the heart of widely accepted definitions of strategic management (Johnson et al., 2008: 3), and there is growing pressure on the broader creative industries to conform to such an approach (Higgins, 2012). This trend can imply a contractual basis to inter-stakeholder relationships, bound up with an instrumentalist approach to public policy in the arts and culture (Belfiore, 2012). However, in a sign of its pervasive success in shaping the discussion, the vocabulary of stakeholders is also used by those advocating a collaborative and socially sustainable approach to the management of festivals and events, in order to benefit the less empowered within their communities (Bostok, 2014: 23-24; Foley et al., 2012: 163-169). Bostok goes on to reinforce 'the locality as a focus' for this stakeholder centric approach to festival and event management, for it encourages practitioners to 'create value for the greatest number of stakeholders' (Bostok, 2014: 34). The relevance of perceived relationships, relative empowerment and locality are all directly applicable to the current research.

Events analysis framed within a stakeholder paradigm has thus drawn attention to a range of pertinent themes, often emphasising the role of research subjects themselves and their comprehension of the world around them. To these examples may now be added work from a 'critical event studies' standpoint, such as participatory research that emphasises the co-creation of data collection and analysis with participants themselves (Finkel, & Sang, 2016). From the same volume, autoethnographic (Dashper, 2016) and ethnographic (Pavoni, & Citroni, 2016) methods have been examined as potential approaches for events analysts, each in turn emphasising the importance of individuals' and events' relationships to their social environment. Contemporary events researchers are therefore the inheritors of literature that prioritises the subject of analysis in a social setting, emphasising the subject's own interpretations. Such lines of enquiry will be examined further in this chapter, drawing on the egos' own perspectives of their social and professional worlds.

This chapter, and the methods it uses, are cognisant of interpretivism's limitations and its merits, prioritising the experiences and perceptions of its subjects, and benefiting from relationships built up between them and the researcher (Dupuis, 1999: 58). Dupuis goes on to state (in a first-person account) that interpretivist researchers must set out the context and process of their work in detail (ibid), which this chapter seeks to achieve next. Before looking to such topics, discussion will first turn to instances where SNA has already been used to pursue a closer understanding of festival and event communities.

### **Festivals, events and social network analysis**

A recent review of the literature reveals that research into festivals and events has made some use of SNA methods, to the benefit of both practitioners and host communities (Jarman et al., 2014). Work has even been done to apply SNA techniques to networks of researchers in the broader tourism field (Tribe, 2010). SNA's focus on relational data can bring fresh insights to event management issues, from the personal scale of human resources management (Jarman, 2016), to the multi-actor workings of inter-organisational relationships (Mackellar, 2006; Stokes, 2006; Ziakas, & Costa, 2010). SNA has also been brought to bear on larger scale and more conceptual topics, including festivals, events and local development (Izzo et al., 2012; Jones, 2005), and the tourism policy making process (Pforr, 2006). Finally, work that places events within a dynamic 'network society' contributes to a body of literature that sees their potential as contemporary forces for progressive social change (Richards, 2015a; Richards, 2015b). SNA offers fresh perspectives and shifts in emphasis across a range of research themes: it prompts us to ask different questions, and it provides the means by which to seek answers.

The underlying conundrum at the heart of this chapter concerns the experiences of individuals within the networked environments in which they operate, and SNA excels where personal relationships are concerned. It is possible to infer and reveal much from the twin considerations of connection (the presence or absence of the ties that bind us together, as nodes in a network graph) and contagion (representing 'what, if anything, flows across the ties' between those nodes) (Christakis, & Fowler, 2010: 16). SNA of festival, event and creative communities provides a means to better understand the individual relationships that they facilitate. There is also an opportunity, perhaps a requirement, for detailed research of this type to inform tangible attempts to boost network building efforts: the Leith Creative report calls for 'regular forums for connectivity', from which many of their other recommendations might be met (Cunningham 2015). Much of this is instinctively known and understood by the members of creative and cultural communities, and it is incumbent

on researchers to inform the ensuing discussion.

The wide range of situations in which SNA may be usefully applied to academic research has seen its use increase in recent years, accompanied by greater popular awareness of social networks in general (Christakis, & Fowler, 2010: 252-286; Scott, 2013: 1-2). The advent of social media platforms and online collective activity has helped fuel this trend (boyd, & Ellison, 2008), although it is instructive to note the similarities and distinctions between a person's offline and virtual communities (Shirky, 2009). In either environment, SNA can tell us much about the density of a community (how well connected are its members overall), it can identify sub-groups such as clusters and cliques (areas of higher network density), and it can reveal something of the relationship between a community's core and its periphery (Borgatti et al., 2013: 181-206; Prell, 2012: 166-174; Scott, 2013: 83-98). Such analysis is typically pursued via 'whole network' research, where information is sought from or about all members of a population (Baggio, et al. 2010). In this manner, whole networks are distinct from the more concentrated ego network approach, yet the former can still be revealing about individuals (Crossley et al., 2015: 8-16). From a whole network starting point each individual's centrality within a network can be established against a range of criteria, likewise their membership of sub-groups, positions of influence and brokerage, and the extent to which their position in a network reflects where they sit in a formalised hierarchy (Borgatti et al., 2013: 163-180; Prell, 2012: 95-117). SNA, therefore, provides means by which questions and responses can be offered to better understand the effective functioning of communities.

### **Ego network analysis in creative communities: opportunity, anonymity and methodology**

The primary difference between a whole network and an ego network is the latter's focus on a single person: it is 'the network of contacts (alters) that form around a particular node (ego)' (Crossley et al., 2015: 18). Any number of motivations may lie behind the choice of ego, such as the identification of their prominence (or obscurity) in a piece of whole network research. Moreover, the nature of the whole network analysis tends to allow for the extraction of ego network information, facilitated through the judicious removal of extraneous data (ibid). As has been noted, the egos that feature in the case studies that follow have been selected because of their publicly visible and relatively high status positions within their local creative communities. The value of focusing on such individuals reflects a key finding from Edinburgh's 2001 Festivals Strategy, that many 'senior staff have worked for more than one festival or Edinburgh cultural organisation', but that 'this sense of collaboration is not co-ordinated systematically' (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001).

The balance between individual experiences and collective strength was thus recognised by both policy and industry several years ago, but it is still not fully understood. Ego network analysis therefore offers a unique methodology in pursuit of this goal, to learn more about the ways an ego relates to their alters, and hence to their wider community.

## **Methods**

Data collection for SNA, including personal networks, is a relatively open field that can accommodate a variety of data types and forms (Christakis, & Fowler, 2010; Jarman et al., 2014). It is subject to the usual methodological considerations of validity, reliability and adherence to the key themes of the research in question (Bryman, & Bell, 2011: 157-161). With social relationships central to SNA, data capture might focus on social media connections, email and phone records, historical communication through archived letters, or common membership of groups and societies: SNA offers itself wherever 'people do not live in isolation, but in society' (Ormerod, 2012: 7). Attendance at the same events is another established foundation for SNA work, as found in examples of 'two-mode' network analysis (Crossley et al., 2015: 16-17). This approach typically combines two sets of data (the people and the events): individuals' connections to each other are represented by co-attendance at events; while the events are also tied where they share attendees (Prell, 2012: 16-18). Overall, Scott identifies three styles of research that are pertinent to SNA: documentary (evidenced through texts); ethnographic (via observations); and survey research (through questionnaires and interviews), as discussed next (Scott, 2013: 4-5).

Prell emphasises anonymity as among the most important ethical considerations of social research, with particular relevance to SNA (Prell, 2012: 79-81). She reflects upon the 'ownership' of a social relationship, whereby one person's perceptions of connections are being relied upon to account for something that by definition they are not solely responsible for (Prell, 2012: 80). Researchers must be cognisant of the potential for their work to impact on egos' and alters' well-being, professional standing, prospects and privacy, discussing the matter within their institution as appropriate (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 128-136). In the current research both egos were aware of the other's participation, though only one ego and the researcher were present in each interview. As such the identity of any alters identified is known only to the researcher and the respective ego. At an early stage of the data analysis, names and other identifiers were replaced by the researcher's coding. As a corollary to this discussion, during early preparation discussions one ego highlighted the potential value of this work to their own professional interests, which include justifying their network building activities to potential funders (Fox et al., 2014: 8).

Prell would likely agree that discussions around anonymity are influenced by context, which in itself is a major contributor to both the value and validity placed on any piece of social science research.

Individual interviews thus provided the foundation for the case studies below, using specific ego network methods that rely upon the egos' perceptions of their professional relationships. These personal views and experiences are vital, almost regardless of any contradictory or complementary evidence that might be available through other means (Edwards, 2010: 7-8). That being said mixed methods in general offer much to SNA (Crossley, 2010: 1) and preparatory desk research using a range of data has informed the primary data collection. The resulting interviews contained four distinct stages: name generator questions, position and resource generators, name interpreters and name interrelaters. When combined, they provide both the relational and attribute data on which SNA is based.

The following consideration of these methods draws from Borgatti *et al.* (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013: 263-270), and Crossley *et al.* (Crossley *et al.*, 2015: 44-57). These texts set out key considerations, which are considered here alongside existing research from the fields of events, festivals and tourism.

### **Name generators**

In order to build up a picture of an ego's perceptions of their social network, a list of relevant names is required from the ego 'that we can then systematically ask the respondent about' (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013: 263). Both key texts highlight the need to focus on specific types of connections when helping the ego to generate such a list, in line with the aims of the research. Such connections could be based on roles and relationships (such as friendships, or co-working), interactions (including meetings and mediated communication), exchanges (for example, those who provide tangible support), geography (highlighting those with a local interest), or affective ties (maybe those the ego feels particularly close to) (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013: 263; Crossley *et al.*, 2015: 50-52). Using multiple approaches in the same research will tend to result in overlaps between the lists of names that are generated, but it also stands a better chance of uncovering deeper complexities within the ego's perceived network, its density, tie strengths and other factors (Crossley *et al.*, 2015: 51).

Work on the 'Tribes, Territories and Networks' of tourism academics makes use of both interviews and email correspondence to elicit relational data from its respondents, identifying overlapping, 'blurring and interconnectedness' between networks (Tribe, 2010). It is conceivable that the relatively independent nature of academics might be instructive when looking at those in the creative industries, with

each environment encouraging collaborations of varying durations that help to shape an individual's perception of their social world. This work may be time consuming, demand a great deal of the interviewees, and be subject to important limitations. For example there are legitimate risks that some egos will report vast networks that require some containment, such as placing a time limit on the recency of the connections discussed, or a maximum number of alters in each category (Crossley et al., 2015: 51). Alters identified in this manner are rarely asked for consent, which raises interesting ethical considerations. Nonetheless, both in general and with reference to the current two case studies, name generator questions are vital elements in the task of representing real world networks through this form of SNA.

### **Position and resource generators**

Rather than always asking alters to name specific individuals, position and resource generator questions tend to focus on types of people, the resources they have at their disposal, and the ego's access to them (Borgatti et al., 2013: 264). This is an exercise in empirically operationalising and representing social capital (Crossley et al., 2015: 45). Both of these texts emphasise the specificity of relevant 'positions' and 'resources' which are highly applicable to this research. For example, those working in creative communities are likely to benefit more from social connections to directors of relevant public agencies (and their funding programmes) than they might to consultants in a local hospital. Research has also shown that access to one form of resource indicates a higher probability of having access to other resources (Crossley et al., 2015: 48). Reflections on existing work in related areas are therefore vital to the task of defining relevant positions and resources to the task at hand. Festival and event stakeholder analyses are valuable here, for while they tend to look at the connections between organisations (rather than individual people) they often do so from a perspective of access to power and resources (Getz, & Andersson, 2008). This latter paper, for example, draws on a range of conceptual frameworks to examine industry relationships: stakeholder theory, the political market square, new institutionalism, and festivalisation are all reflected upon (Getz, & Andersson, 2008: 8-10). In order to operate effectively in their creative communities, the two case study egos need access to valuable people and resources; therefore, it stands to reason that to others in the community they are themselves performing this role.

### **Name interpreters**

The process of generating a set of alters results in a list of names that the ego and researcher can flesh out with greater detail, revealing the ego's perceptions of their

alters' characteristics through a series of 'name interpreter' questions (Borgatti et al., 2013: 267; Crossley et al., 2015: 54-55). The answers provide the attribute data which can be very revealing in SNA. A key question to ask is whether the ego is most closely connected to others who are perceived to be of a common background, career stage, family situation, age, education, sexuality, race, gender or social class. SNA is an important sociological tool for those seeking to understand 'homophily', whereby we are often attracted to those like us ('selection'), and in turn we can influence each other ('diffusion') (Christakis, & Fowler, 2010: 16; Prell et al., 2010: 36). It follows on that attraction and influence can be mutually reinforcing, with implications for cultural and social capital: an ego may benefit from the close company of likeminded alters, yet this is not necessarily ideal for the receipt and dissemination of innovative ideas should they fail to penetrate a tight social circle (Crossley et al., 2015: 26-30). Knowing something about the individuals represented in a social network diagram allows for analysis of homophily within a festival network, and in addition it allows further analysis to take place and reflect change over time through subsequent data collection (Jarman, 2016). It is this attribute data that transforms SNA from a mathematical puzzle into something with human characteristics.

### **Name interrelaters**

Just as ego network research asks something of the alters' attributes (according to the ego's knowledge of them), it also calls on the ego to outline their understanding of ties between those alters (Borgatti et al., 2013: 268; Crossley et al., 2015: 52-54). The ego is asked to reveal their perceptions of the connections between their connections. If desired, the strength of such connections may also be captured: a researcher might ask if two alters would acknowledge each other if they met on the street; if they are believed to be close friends; or if they have worked together. Depending on the nature of the research it isn't always necessary for the ego to be accurate in their judgements, for it can be their perceptions that matter most (Borgatti et al., 2013: 268). As we navigate our communities we rely upon our understanding of the social world around us, and SNA gives us means by which we might capture those instincts and put them to the test. This element of data capture recognises and emphasises the networked environment in which egos operate – a point highlighted in Baggio & Cooper's characterisation of tourism destinations as networks of organisations (Baggio, & Cooper, 2010: 1758). Without capturing the relationships between alters an ego network diagram would be a star, with all points tied to the centre and only limited structural analysis possible. However once we add the interrelationships some of SNA's most valuable analysis tools become available.

The four stages outlined earlier demonstrate the potential complexity of any ego

network analysis focused on those working within explicitly 'creative' communities. They also suggest the means by which such a research approach may capture an individual's perceptions of their community and networks. This is explored further in the following two case studies.

### **Case studies: justification and data collection**

In order to help justify the place of ego network analysis in this book, and the choice of case study egos to this chapter in particular, it is helpful to refer back to the overarching themes of the current volume. The workings of local communities and their events, through networks and processes of management, are explored in a number of the neighbouring chapters. Themes of sustainability, diversity and power are also present, in tune with existing work from the editors (Clarke, & Jepson, 2011; Jepson, & Clarke, 2014; Jepson, & Clarke, 2016). The methods chosen for the current research offer an accessible means of exploring all of these topics from the unique perspectives of individual people. The two people examined here are known to be socially prominent and culturally important in their respective (overlapping) networks. This section anonymously introduces each case study in turn, alongside the sorts of organisations and projects they are most closely associated with. It then outlines preparatory information that was collected ahead of the data gathering interviews, as well as the resulting questions that formed the basis of those conversations. Initial visualisations of each ego's network are then provided.

#### **Case study A: freelance creative producer, and head of a creative industries networking organisation in Scotland**

Ego A's professional life is focused on creating, building and sustaining networks within cultural communities. The organisation they lead prides itself on being among the largest networks of its kind in the city, supporting its members and promoting both the impact and value of their endeavours. The organisation's work is primarily carried out through running events, mentoring members, and hosting online showcases of their work. Ego A has also contributed to research and policy on creative communities.

#### **Case study B: freelance festival and events producer, director of community arts festival and researcher into local creative communities**

In their most prominent role, ego B's position as director of a community orientated creative arts festival sees them coordinating an annual cycle of events and

workshops, as well as the main festival itself. This person also advises and contributes to research and organisations that identify and better support those involved with the creative industries.

### **Round one interviews: name, position and resource generator questions**

In the first round of interviews both egos were asked to name their 'most important professional connections' when prompted by a range of criteria, thus drawing up a single list of alters around which the subsequent SNA could be carried out. No restrictions were placed on the number of contacts mentioned by an ego, except that they were asked to concentrate on activity carried out over the previous two years (Crossley et al., 2015: 51). From a researcher's perspective, it is important to recognise the considerable investments in time that can be required of egos during such data gathering, which would have been compounded had multiple sets of alters been pursued against different criteria. The decision to focus on a single list of names reduces some of this burden of duplication, and in the chosen context better reflects the fluid nature of employment and activity in the festival, events and creative industries (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001). It was, therefore, anticipated that some alters would be relevant across multiple criteria. In order to draw up a list of alters for each ego the interview focused upon three types of question: (i) name generators based on projects that the ego had been involved in, (ii) name generators based on the ego's engagement with relevant stakeholder groups and (iii) position and resource generator questions highlighting access to alters of significance according to relevant criteria.

- i. The 'name generator (project-based)' questions took the form of, 'Who have been your most important professional connections for support and collaboration across your projects, over the past two years?' A list of potentially relevant projects was drawn up by the researcher in advance to prompt the egos, drawn from desk research into their principle organisations' websites, and their LinkedIn profiles. These lists were systematically worked through in the interviews, with the ego identifying people accordingly and the researcher typing their names concurrently.
- ii. For the 'name generator (stakeholder-based)' questions, each ego was asked 'Who have been your most important professional connections for support and collaboration in the follow categories, over the past two years?' Alters not identified from the first set of project-based questions had a chance to become apparent here, potentially identifying weaker ties (Crossley et al., 2015: 35-36). This question was based upon stakeholder categories identified in 2007 as being important in the production of festivals (Getz et al., 2007): co-producers, facilitators, suppliers and venues, audiences and the impacted,

regulators, and allies and contributors.

- iii. The 'position and resource generator' questions focused on the egos' access to people in positions of influence or status, reflecting both indirect and direct access to relevant resources. It is often appropriate to consider these two separately (Crossley et al., 2015: 45-49), though in this research they have been conflated through the form of the question: 'Who have been your most important professional contacts (if any) over the past two years when accessing people in the following positions or with access to the following resources?' As such this research has gathered data about named alters, via the positions and resources they might provide access to. Mainstream academic events management literature has again inspired the positions and resources investigated, primarily embodied by those in influential positions within key stakeholder groups (Richards, & Palmer, 2010: 152-168). These being: funding opportunities and other support from the public sector, both at national and local level; festival and event producers and artists; creative community organisers; funding opportunities and other support from commercial organisations; influential figures in the mainstream and social media; members of the public able to reflect the views of relevant host communities.

As one might imagine with this initial round of data collection it generated a considerable list of alters' names for each ego, raising the prospect of 'respondent fatigue' which the researcher sought to manage ahead of the second round of interviews (Borgatti et al., 2013: 268). Following the lead of two studies into 'personal networks' (Marin, & Hampton, 2007; McCarty et al., 2007), simple random sampling was employed on each list of alters. As noted, ego network research builds on an ego's perceptions of their alters' attributes, and ego's perceptions of alter-alter connections. A list of fifty alters would require the ego to consider a daunting 1,225 undirected ties. The chosen sampling technique limits this burden and is referred to as the 'multiple generator, random interpreter', or MGRI (Marin, & Hampton, 2007: 181-182). This approach retains the validity benefits of asking multiple name generator questions, which can facilitate a broader picture of an ego's network and a greater chance of uncovering their weaker ties, then takes a random sample from the ensuing list of names (McCarty et al., 2007: 309-310). Both papers comment on the relative effectiveness of this sampling technique in comparison to potential others, noting that 'the MGRI maximizes content validity, reduces respondent burden, and provides a reliable spectrum of network measures' (Marin, & Hampton, 2007: 188). Comparative analysis suggests that from an initial list of forty-five 'free-listed alters' just ten randomly selected alters can produced 'similar structural estimates for several measures' (McCarty et al., 2007: 309). For the purposes of the current research, each ego's initial list of alters was randomly sampled using the

Random Sequence Generator at random.org to produce a list of twenty-five alters for the second round of interviews.

### **Round two interviews: name interpreters and interrelaters**

In a second round of interviews, carried out a few days after the initial lists of alters were drawn up, each ego was asked to comment on the randomly selected set of twenty-five alters produced from those lists: as before, the egos' perceptions are key.

During the 'name interpreter' phase of data collection, the egos provided information about their own attributes and characteristics, and those of their alters. With attribute data to hand, and mindful of limitations ensuing from the sampling process, it is possible to consider aspects of diversity in an ego's network and thus the presence or otherwise of 'homophily' (Christakis, & Fowler, 2010: 95-134). As noted, this concept 'refers to the social situation of actors preferring to have social relationships with others who are similar to themselves' (Prell, 2012: 129). Guidance on which attributes to capture has come from the SNA literature (Prell, 2012: 129-131; Borgatti et al., 2013: 267; Crossley et al., 2015: 54-55) and from characteristics identified in recent analysis of a creative community in Scotland (Cunningham, 2015). The request to each ego was: 'To the best of your knowledge, please provide the following information about yourself and each of the people in the sampled list of your professional connections'. The attribute categories were gender, age, place of work (in geographic relation to the ego's own location), primary field of activity, employment status and employment role (including as an independent creative, or in a leadership position). These data were anonymised against the codes assigned to those alters in the sampled lists of alters.

The final stage of data collection elicited the ego's perceptions of professional connections between their alters, known as 'name interrelaters'. It is this part of the research that allows for further structural information about the network to be captured and analysed (Crossley et al., 2015: 82-3). To capture these data, each ego was presented with a large paper matrix of the sampled alters and asked: 'To the best of your knowledge, which people from the sampled list have collaborated professionally in the past two years?' (Borgatti et al., 2013: 267-269). The egos were asked to consider this question from the point of view of each alter in turn, providing an opportunity for collaborations to be identified from either perspective: a positive response either way was sufficient to count as a connection, and the resulting ties are therefore undirected (McCarty et al., 2007: 305). From the paper matrix, the researcher entered the alter-alter ties into spreadsheet software, against the same anonymised codes used for the name interpreter attribute data.

Following this exhaustive process, case study Ego A's original list of collaborators included 109 alters, reduced to twenty-five through MGRI random sampling. A total of fifty-three ties were identified between the sampled alters. The resulting network can be presented in a 'wheel sociogram' (Figure 4.9).

Ego B's original list contained eighty-two alters, again sampled down to twenty-five for analysis. A total of eighteen ties were identified between the alters, as presented in Figure 4.10.

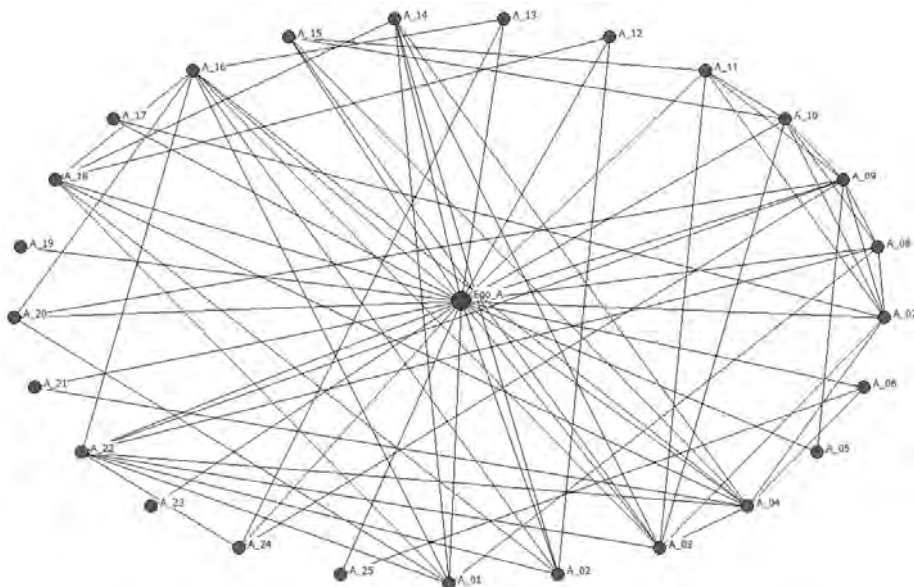


Figure 4.9 Network wheel sociogram for 'Ego A' (Source: Author, 2017)

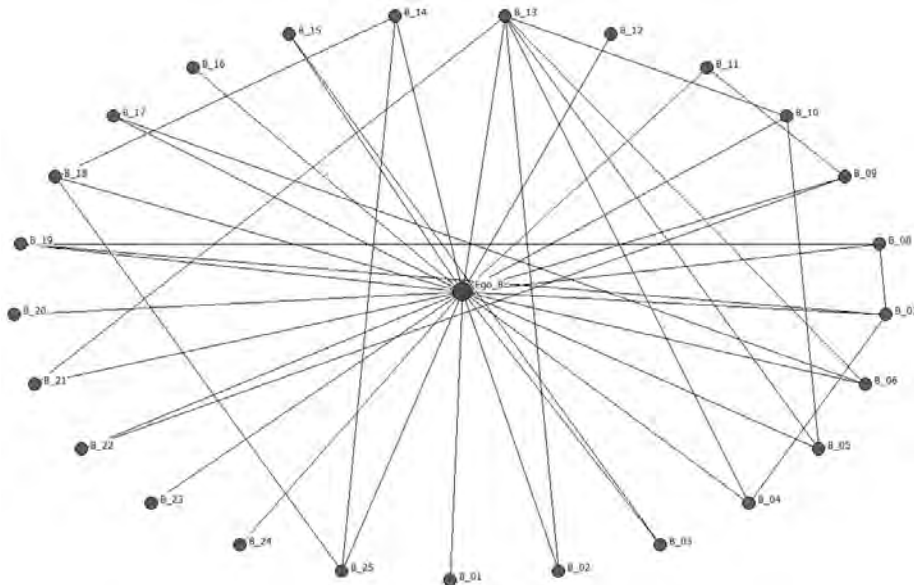


Figure 4.10 Network wheel sociogram for 'Ego B' (Source: Author, 2017)

### Case studies: data analysis of ego network data

Analysis of the data was carried out using E-NET, a software package designed for ego network analysis (Borgatti, 2006). The structure of this section follows the themes of an accompanying introductory article (Halgin, & Borgatti, 2012), in line with other sources (Borgatti et al., 2013: 270-276; Crossley et al., 2015: 76-104). Initial discussion focuses on compositional elements of the two networks, followed by structural considerations.

'Alter central tendency' and 'alter dispersion' measures provide us with a straightforward sense of the proportion of an ego's alters that are perceived to fall into one category or another (Crossley et al., 2015: 79-80). The two case studies reported the following in terms of alters' gender, age, and work location, presented as percentages (Table 4.1).

%	Gender: Female	Gender: Male	Age: 20-29	Age: 30-39	Age: 40-49	Age: 50-59	Work: Local area	Work: Wider city	Work: Outside the city
Ego A	52	48	16	40	32	12	64	28	8
Ego B	64	36	8	48	28	16	8	44	48

Table 4.1 Alter attributes (Source: Author, 2017)

It is apparent that Ego A has a somewhat more balanced network in terms of gender and age, but also one that is more heavily concentrated geographically. In contrast Ego B's connections are notably female, in their 30s, and active across a wider geographical area that extends beyond Ego B's base city. It would appear from these data that the two egos may have forged their networks on differing criteria: one based on location, the other on demographics. E-NET allows for further measures along these lines, investigating for heterogeneity using Blau's index and Agresti's IQV (Halgin, & Borgatti, 2012: 42-44). Both measures reflect greater diversity where the resulting scores are closer to 1, and for these two case studies such results are indeed observed.

Further insight is gained when data about the respondents themselves are also considered, identified as 'ego-alter similarity' (Borgatti et al., 2013: 273-274; Crossley et al., 2015: 80-82). This is an attempt to identify and describe occurrences of homophily, and by contrast heterophily, against different criteria. Both of the cited texts draw on the 'EI index' here, attributing it to Krackhardt and Stern (Krackhardt, & Stern, 1988). The EI index produces results from -1 (where ego only has ties with alters in the same category as them: perfect homophily) to +1 (where ego's ties are all in different categories: perfect heterophily). This is derived from  $EI = E - I / E + I$ . Where E (external) is the number of ties ego has to alters in a different category to them, and I (internal) is the number of ties to alters in the same category as ego. Some notable results for Ego A include an EI for age of 0.2, rising to 0.8 for work location (reflecting heterophily). For Ego B, gender returned an EI of -0.3 (reflecting a degree of homophily), while both age and work location were relatively neutral at 0.0 and +0.1 respectively. Without access to further information, such as longitudinal data, it is not possible to distinguish between the processes of selection and diffusion that might have led to these results, although it is likely that the category of gender is governed more by the former, for example. It is known that Ego A has a more stable location in which to work that could influence the people they connect with: their primary organisation has an office in an area that contains multiple individuals and organisations with shared professional interests to Ego A. Even though their activities are city-wide, with few connections identified outside the city they are primarily associating professionally with those perceived as being based in the local area. Ego B, by contrast, works across multiple projects in a more independent manner, and is less tied to a particular city for professional purposes. These network analyses, from an MGRI inspired sample of the original lists of alters, appear to reflect the lived experiences of these two egos.

During the first round of interviews both egos expressed an interest in noting the strength of their tie to each alter, against criteria that each ego felt to be personally appropriate. This was therefore partly a heuristic device to help the egos classify and clarify their connections. These data were captured, with a score of 1 for the closest

connections and 3 for the weakest. E-NET provides a means of visualising this through sociograms: Figures 4.11 and 4.12 show the egos' networks with the ego-alter tie lengths adjusted to reflect the strength of tie. The same data are also presented in Table 4.2., as percentages of the twenty-five-alter random samples.

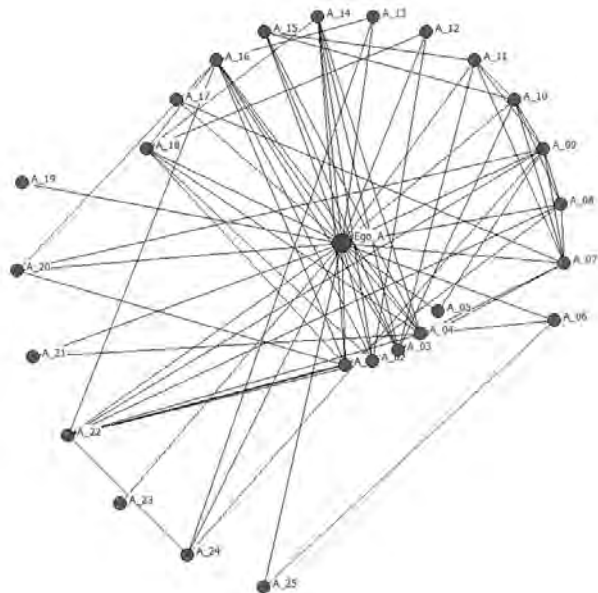


Figure 4.11 Ego A's network with ego-alter tie lengths adjusted to reflect strength of tie (Source: Author, 2017)

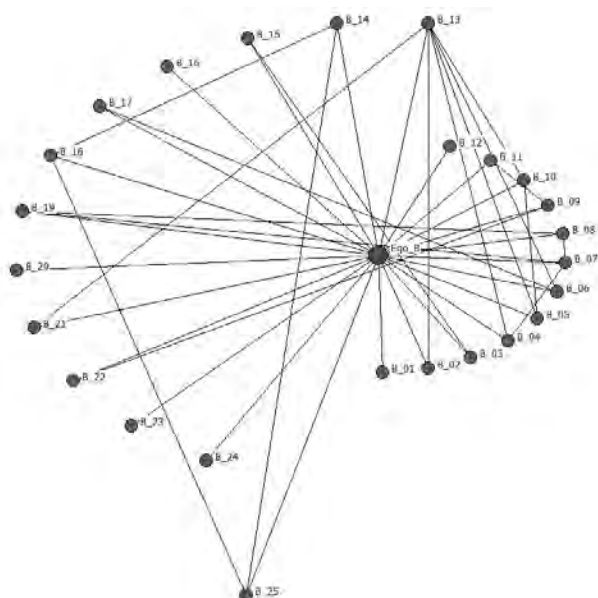


Figure 4.12 Ego B's network with ego-alter tie lengths adjusted to reflect strength of tie (Source: Author, 2017)

%	Tie strength: 1	Tie strength: 2	Tie strength: 3
Ego A	20	52	28
Ego B	48	48	4

Table 4.2 Perceived tie strengths (Source: Author, 2017)

E-NET allows for the filtering of alters, although this can result in some very small sample sizes. It is however notable that when Ego A's alters are filtered for 'local' work location only 12.5% of the remaining sixteen people fell into the strongest tie category, down from the 20% noted in Table 4.2. Of the seven people classed by Ego A as working outside the city, three (42.9%) were among their closest ties. This is evidence to suggest that Ego A has managed to build and maintain strong professional connections to key individuals that persist despite geographical separation, while building effective professional relationships with those working closer to home. Whether there is a potentially damaging vacuum between the two (those working in the wider city that Ego A has a professional interest in supporting) is a topic worth considering for further research.

As these reflections move towards structural approaches to data analysis, the perceived alter-alter ties captured in the second interviews become more important. These were identified on the basis of professional collaborations that the two egos were aware of. Figures 4.13 and 4.14 help to illustrate this, employing E-NET's 'spring embedding' algorithm to reposition the nodes on the two sociogram graphs.

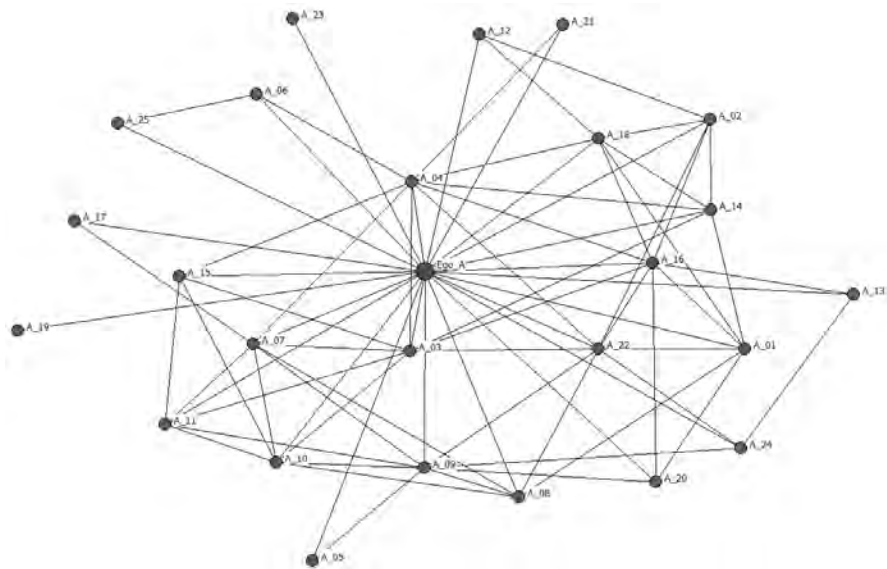


Figure 4.13 Employing E-NET's 'spring embedding' algorithm to reposition the nodes on the sociogram graph (Ego A) (Source: Author, 2017)

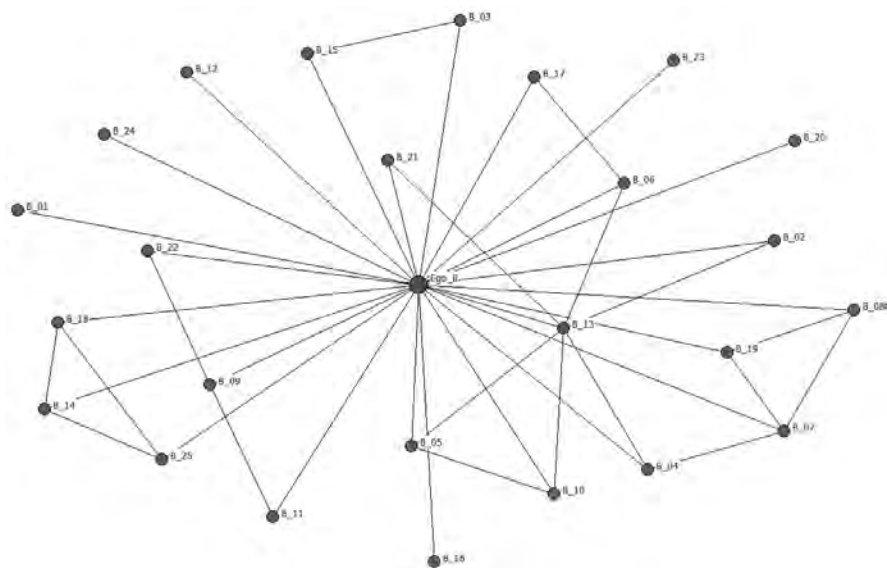


Figure 4.14 Employing E-NET's 'spring embedding' algorithm to reposition the nodes on the sociogram graph (Ego B) (Source: Author, 2017)

These figures help demonstrate the increased complexity of Ego A's network, with its fifty-three alter-alter ties compared to Ego B's eighteen. Ego B's graph also contains six 'isolates' who are not connected to another alter, whereas Ego A has only one.

Taking into account the limitations associated with the MGRI sampling, while also recognising that each ego is operating without full knowledge of their alters' professional activities, there is evidence here that Ego A feels they are operating in a denser social network. There can be advantages to this in the festival, event and creative industries communities, such as the development of trust and efficiency through more frequent or meaningful collaborations within a tighter knit group of people. Yet there are potential disadvantages to a too-tight network that risks cutting itself off from the wider population, leaving it less capable of absorbing new information, ideas, resources and, perhaps, people. With what is known of these two egos from earlier paragraphs, there is perhaps a good fit between the apparent density of their networks and their professional interests.

Consideration of 'structural holes' facilitates analysis of personal networks to the extent that the ego provides an important connection between two alters, and thus potentially between different components of their network (Burt, 1992). It follows that ties to unconnected alters may provide an ego with opportunities to act as a broker between them, conferring on the ego network power that they might be able to use to the advantage of both them and (if they wish it so) their alters. It follows that consideration of structural holes is a valuable contribution to the identification and analysis of social capital (Prell, 2012: 46-47; Borgatti et al., 2013: 274-276; Crossley et al., 2015: 25-43). E-NET provides a variety of measures for structural holes, as applied in Table 4.3, with all ties assumed to be the same weight.

	Degree	Density	Effective size	Efficiency	Constraint
Ego A	25	0.088	20.76	0.830	0.126
Ego B	25	0.030	23.56	0.942	0.096

Table 4.3 Structural holes data (Source: Author, 2017)

Here degree confirms that each network is based on twenty-five alters surrounding the ego. Density relates to the number of perceived ties divided by the total possible number of ties, and here has been calculated without the inclusion of ego's own ties. A lower figure, as seen for Ego B, suggests fewer opportunities for the alters to connect without Ego B's involvement: this could confer greater brokerage potential, and fewer constraints on the ego's behaviour because inconsistencies when dealing with different people are less likely to become apparent (Borgatti et al., 2013: 274). Effective size is a measure of ego's degree (in these cases twenty-five) minus the average degree of the alters, whereby a higher figure (as seen for Ego B) reflects a greater level of disconnection between alters. This calculation is an attempt to account for the redundancy of some ties, where multiple alters might duplicate each

other in providing the ego with access to resources: the ego's network is effectively smaller when this occurs (Crossley et al., 2015: 83-85). In the following column efficiency takes effective size and divides it by degree, suggesting that a more 'efficient' network for the ego is one in which they are maintaining ties with unconnected alters who can give them access to greater resources, which is apparent in the higher score for Ego B. These data also suggest that Ego B is less constrained by their alters, whereby constraint is a measure of the alternatives open to alters to bypass the ego in their dealings (Crossley et al., 2015: 85). An ego who perceives fewer connections between their alters is one who is less constrained by those alters, more free to operate in a brokerage role, and to perceive a greater level of social capital (Borgatti et al., 2013: 275-276).

## **Discussion and conclusions**

Chris Rojek dismisses the 'people power' that is supposedly in evidence when high profile events are pressed into service to rectify some social, economic or political injustice (Rojek, 2013: 184). Likewise, in the conclusion to their paper on events and stakeholder power, Tiew *et al.*, state their belief that 'control of critical resources is more important than network centrality in generating power for the stakeholders in an event organization' (Tiew et al., 2015: 539). To this end it's not who you know that counts, but what you've got and how effectively you can deploy it. Yet to overlook the importance of social connections is to abandon consideration of the primary context in which individuals operate. The festival, event and creative industries are networked communities, and they are only truly intelligible when a broad sense of overview and perspective is matched to the specific perspectives of those who navigate their pathways and connections. Evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates how a snapshot in time of an individual's network can reveal something of their working practices, the relative breadth and variety of people they work with, and the extent to which perceived connections between those people (or the lack thereof) might influence how the individual acts around them. It may often be true that resources can be critical, but as shown earlier a person's social capital can be judged according to both their direct and indirect access to such assets; here it is relationships that matter.

The importance of perceptions in the process of documenting, analysing and understanding networked communities is central to the work described earlier. Data from the two case study egos is likely to be incomplete, for they should not be expected to know of every connection and collaboration between their alters. These data are also likely to be empirically wrong in parts, or at least open to interpretation, such that not every alter would classify the nature or scope of their work in the same way that has been reported by the respondent. How each ego sees their place

among the twenty-five alters analysed here, and the remaining names on their initial list, and indeed everyone else they interact with, influences how they engage with their community. The desire, or perhaps compulsion, to invest in long term relationships offers an individual stability, support and security. Meanwhile a more transactional relationship might present a complex yet intuitively understood opportunity for personal or collective gain, and it is instructive to note that five different forms of broker role can be considered in this regard (Prell, 2012: 125-128). Those pursuing a lower density, higher efficiency network had better have the skills at hand to maintain this pattern of relationships, or at least they should perceive this to be the case.

This chapter opened with a plea that stakeholder level analysis of festivals and events be complemented by more detailed, more nuanced forms of research, that better suit the people and the communities that host, support and manage them. It closes with a realisation that ego network analysis is only part of the answer, to which might be added other forms of SNA, qualitative evidence from the perspectives of both egos and alters, and a better understanding of the data that communities generate about themselves all day every day, including online. Where it is in the gift of researchers to help individuals and communities know themselves and what they are capable of, that could be the most powerful relationship of all.

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#### *4.1.6 Social network analysis and the hunt for homophily: Diversity and equality within festival communities*

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#### **Abstract**

Diversity and equality at a Scottish volunteer-run arts festival are explored in this paper, through a survey-based social network analysis and follow-up interviews. Together they provide an overview of the festival's network structure, and rich evidence of the experiences of individuals in different parts of the network. UCINET software is used to analyse relationships between volunteers, and attribute data based on their demographics, engagement with the festival and responses to Likert-type statements on the study's main themes. Interviewees were sampled as a function of their network centrality, aggregated across a range of measures. A core-periphery network structure was revealed, focused on seven central individuals with established commitments to the organisation. This configuration outweighed alternative arrangements, including the functional departments that interviewees cited as being important to their relationships to the festival. Homophily, the propensity to associate with others with whom we are similar, is explored against 'status' definitions (such as age and gender) and 'value' (including beliefs and attitudes). Peripheral interviewees were shown to have less detailed knowledge of the festival's relationships with its neighbourhood, but a clearer sense of how the festival had benefited them personally. Members of the core group were representative of the broader network on a number of attributes apart from the country of birth, with evidence that better communication from core to periphery could benefit the overall organisation in its mission to represent a diverse mix of influences.

#### **Introduction**

Festivals are collective endeavours uniquely placed to study social diversity and equality, and these themes can be better described and interpreted through the use of social network analysis (SNA). This paper uses 'whole network' research methods (Scott, 2017, p. 74) to study a volunteer-run arts festival in Scotland, to investigate the inherent diversity of its organising team, seeking social structures and hunting for homophily. The annual festival is young enough that key founders remain involved, yet has seen the dynamic growth that has drawn new contributors to the team, and

extended its reach into social and cultural communities across its host city. A diverse range of art forms are included each year (music, film, visual arts, spoken word and theatre predominate), yet consistent values of inclusion, ambition and expression are present throughout its 10 days. This multiplicity of activity, much of it by local artists, represents the potential of the creative industries to 'provide insights into and solutions for the pressing social and economic challenges' recognised by both practitioners and policy-makers (Asia-Europe Foundation, 2014, pp. ii–iv).

Stakeholder relationships feature prominently in festival and event research (Getz & Page, 2016), yet broad stakeholder classifications are undermined by the diversity of their members. The clarity of 'audience', 'employee' or 'volunteer' groupings overlooks what divides as well as unites their members, for we are all individuals (Chapman et al., 1979). In the research below survey data and interviews reveal similarities and differences across the team's network, seeking to contribute finer granularity and detail to the analysis of social relationships among a festival's contributors. This in turn has implications for the understanding and identification of different forms of social diversity and equality, and their impacts on the functioning and management of such organisations. More broadly, individual identity contextualised by postmodern global connectivity has its place in the events literature (Andrews & Leopold, 2013; Richards, 2015b; Richards & Palmer, 2010). The influence of the one on the many can be magnified as never before, and festival organisations must reflect this in their planning, management and delivery (Martin & Cazarre, 2016).

Through a survey, UCINET software (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002) and targeted interviews, this paper responds to the following research questions:

- How can the festival's network structure best be described, and is there evidence of defined subgroups or a core–periphery relationship?
- What evidence of homophily can be found within the festival's social network, and if present what appears to have caused it?

Consideration of homophily and subgroups features regularly in SNA literature (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2013; Christakis & Fowler, 2010; Prell, 2012; Scott, 2017). From homophily comes the phrase 'birds of a feather flock together', seen among humans who 'select' others who are like them in one or more ways. The closely related function of 'diffusion' occurs when 'people's beliefs, attitudes and practices come about in part because of interaction with others' (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 134). Processes of homophily therefore influence diversity within a social network, and SNA can reveal the extent of its presence. The direction of causality can be harder to ascertain from a survey alone, either flowing from the individual to their

network or vice versa, and targeted interviews have therefore informed this paper. Analysis of subgroups within the broader network also draws from both forms of data. Prell identifies a cohesive subgroup where 'a high proportion of the actors ... share strong, direct, mutual, frequent or positive ties' (Prell, 2012, p. 151): these networks within a network inform discussions on equality and power in the (re)negotiation and delivery of a festival's objectives and actions. The literature and primary research below explore social diversity and equality as both a contextual environment for festivals and an influence on their delivery, assessing the validity of SNA methods in revealing life within the networked festival.

## **Literature review**

In the following literature review, initial consideration is given to ways diversity and equality affect relations between festivals and their host communities. This is followed by reflections on SNA as a possible means to understand such social relationships, with a particular focus on homophily as an explanation for both individual and collective actions that in turn affect festival management decisions.

### **Social diversity and equality, in the management and operating contexts of festivals**

Festivals are subject to myriad divisions in their content and appeal (Smith, 2009): from high arts and democratised culture, to multicultural, ethnic or mainstream creative work, popular carnivals and queer celebrations. They can simultaneously unite like-minded people and thrive at the fault lines of contemporary society, accentuating cohesive cultural groups in a field of social diversity. 'Mela' festivals take this on board, as 'overt displays of the rightful existence of communities and culture rather than their being viewed as separate, alien or "other"' (Kaushal & Newbold, 2015, p. 215). Festivals as social markers encourage or deny cultural exchange, just as physical boundaries highlight borders between one set of cultural norms and another (MacLeod, 2014). Events in border regions can demonstrate local distinctiveness and independence, though also be subject to negotiated hegemony by powerful local minority interests (Smith, 1993). On this evidence festivals are markers in the evolution of societies, revelling in the complexities of negotiated social interaction and identity, litmus tests for the state of relations within and between communities. The current research aims to demonstrate how SNA can reveal social groupings and identify links between them, establishing the grounds for further data collection as outlined below.

Festivals play a part in the larger story of local diversity, emphasising a need to

better understand the factors on which this is based, and how it can affect their management. In Derby, the steering group of a one-off celebratory festival failed to include or adequately consult local authorities or community groups (particularly those generally not fluent in English); this exercise of undemocratic power saw broad initial support ebb away (Clarke & Jepson, 2011). Bristol's place-marketing-driven Festival of the Sea facilitated the marginalisation and expulsion of two 'traveller' communities, partly orchestrated through the letters pages of the local newspaper (Atkinson & Laurier, 1998). In northern Australia and in Kansas, festivals have encapsulated debates over who controls local identity and culture, reflecting on efforts to include Aboriginal and Native communities in each case (De Bres & Davis, 2001; Duffy, 2000). These two papers comment on the extent to which women, ethnic minorities and other groups are seeing their experiences reflected more visibly over time (in Australia), or being 'left without a voice' (in Kansas) (2001, p. 333). Finally, research from Korea demonstrates how underrepresented groups capitalised on a festival's attempts to broaden its appeal to international markets, encouraging innovations that marginalised groups stand to benefit from (Jeong & Santos, 2004). As this work demonstrates, the impacts of social diversity on festivals reveal themselves in a variety of ways. West's earlier work on 'the new cultural politics of difference' highlights many of the same themes, as emblems of individual and collective identity, engaged in negotiations of power and dependency (West, 1990). The SNA research outlined below seeks to make sense of these overlapping bases of identification, recognising their significant contributions to each volunteer's motivations to invest in a collective project.

The examples noted above also link diversity to place, where exposure to the 'other' highlighted above by Kaushal and Newbold (2015) is therefore primarily a local consideration, albeit part of a broader narrative. Indeed connections between the local and the global go via individuals, where 'community-based festivals appear to tie together issues of personal choice, identity, status, alienation and culture' (Derrett, 2003, p. 43). Appealing to modern consumers with diverse backgrounds and sets of values presents festivals as opportunities to integrate diverse communities, to become 'the face of local democracy' and generate social capital (2003, p. 38; Richards & Palmer, 2010). Glasgow's West End Festival parade, which transforms a central thoroughfare into a permeable zone for an array of performers, participants and pedestrians (Stevens & Shin, 2014), blurs geographic and temporal boundaries: the distinctions between observers and the observed are negotiable, and everybody is welcome.

Volunteer-run festivals face particular challenges when recruiting from the local community, from attracting appropriate skills and experience, to providing rewards their contributors value (Autissier, 2015; Getz & Page, 2016). It follows that attracting a broad mix of participants has inherent appeal, particularly in light of evidence that

social diversity and equality can make both organisations and people 'smarter': individuals are pushed to explain their ideas more effectively, potentially leading to 'better decision making and problem solving' through collaboration and negotiation (Phillips, 2014). UK public policy encourages social equality through anti-discrimination legislation on a series of 'protected characteristics', including age, marriage status, disability, race and sex ('Discrimination: Your Rights,' n.d.). Meanwhile sector-specific efforts are focused on organisational culture, governance and management approaches, such as the Equality Challenge Unit's work in Higher and Further Education ('Scottish Colleges: The Equality Challenges,' n.d.). Capturing the latent potential of a diverse group of people (festival volunteers, for example) has its challenges and rewards. Events hold out the potential to develop social capital within the host community though, through celebration, improved social cohesiveness, and the development of local resources (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). Quinn concurs with this, while recognising that festivals can also reflect pernicious social inequalities, as when rarefied urban 'islands' of culture appear as distinct zones separated from the rest of the city, presenting a privileged and 'sanitised' image of the host destination (Quinn, 2005, p. 936). The challenges associated with promoting diversity and equality are recognised by policy-makers and festival producers alike, yet the legal, moral and operational impetus to do so carries considerable weight.

### **Festivals, homophily and the structure of social networks**

Homophily is 'the conscious or unconscious tendency to associate with people who resemble us' (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, p. 17), suggesting 'that people like to form ties with others who are similar to themselves or that they are influenced by others to whom they are connected (or both)' (Crossley et al., 2015, p. 14). These processes can be played out at events, as seen when sports fans are drawn together at matches because of their mutual interest in a team (Lock & Heere, 2017); this in turn can correlate with other shared characteristics, from active sports participation (Mehus, 2005) to a predisposition for crowd violence (Spaaij, 2014). Co-attendance at events also has the potential to encourage changes in beliefs and practices, as seen through the knowledge exchanges facilitated by business conferences (Henn & Bathelt, 2015). For McPherson *et al.* homophily limits our social worlds and divides society, it restricts the information we receive and the people we are able and inclined to associate with (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). They distinguish between 'status homophily' (including race, sex and age) and 'value homophily' (relating to 'values, attitudes, and beliefs'), noting that they can influence each other (2001, p. 419). Organisations and economies of all forms are at the mercy of this social network effect, and though homophily may be overcome through ties to non-similar nodes these connections are harder to maintain and are at greater risk of

dissolving. With reference to the festival examined below, voluntary organisations are of particular interest as ‘they represent a unique arena for watching the strong interplay of structurally induced and choice-produced homophily’ (2001, p. 432), which in this case is also bounded by time.

Parallels can be seen between the current research and Gallelli’s analysis of festival networks in Piedmont, Italy (Gallelli, 2016). Organisers representing 87 festivals commented on their relationships with other festivals, based on four criteria: receiving useful information; using others’ performance spaces; co-production of events; and hosting the same artists (2016). Gallelli applied the ‘EI index’ to investigate homophily, selecting an attribute (such as festival genre) and analysing whether connected nodes shared the same characteristic: they may be ‘internal’ connections (I) or ‘external’ (E) in relation to the attribute (Crossley et al., 2015, pp. 80–82). Festivals in Piedmont showed an apparent propensity to restrict their connections to other festivals in a similar genre, turning instead to dissimilar organisations for support rather than perceived competitors. In addition, a core–periphery structure was revealed between Turin, Piedmont’s capital city, and the wider hinterland. Connections, relationships and the density of networks are shown to influence fundamental strategic decisions by festival producers, with implications for both the organisations themselves and the management of regional cultural portfolios. Indeed considering festivals from a networked perspective is complementary to, and potentially more valuable than, adopting a portfolio-based approach (Richards, 2015a). Whereas networks emphasise the importance of connections both within and beyond a city or region, portfolios can become internally focused and miss opportunities to generate bridging social capital with other destinations. Festivals and events can ‘act as hubs, nodes, and temporal markers within networks’, and the better these functions are understood the more successfully their contributions to contemporary modern life can be realised (2015a, p. 564).

## **Summary**

Festivals reflect and represent the social world, from their engagement with places and the passing of an annual calendar, to the ways local interests and relationships are revealed through the groups and individuals that engage with them. The literature presented here highlights the impacts of diversity within festival communities and organisations, not least volunteer teams. It also shows how festivals can draw attention to broader inequalities within society, and presents the means by which they can help address such divisions. Given the importance of homophily and network structures in understanding social worlds, this paper addresses both through an SNA survey and four interviews. This combination of

breadth and depth opens a window onto the social milieu in which grassroots festivals operate, where diversity and equality shape their context, their contents and their contributions to society.

## **Methodology**

Through its combination of SNA survey and follow-up interviews this paper offers both an 'outsider' overview and 'insider' insights into the festival network being studied (Crossley et al., 2015; Edwards, 2010, p. 2). Structuring this work around the experiences and views of the population being examined reflects calls for increased research into disability access and inclusion at events (Darcy, 2012), and also Thomas's appeal for greater representation of women in events education, which helped inspire this special edition (Thomas, 2017).

### **Survey data: SNA of the festival's volunteers**

In consultation with the festival's artistic director 35 prominent volunteers were identified, reflecting a 'realist' approach to network boundary setting that relied on insights from a 'key informant' (Prell, 2012, p. 66). With its focus on 35 potential respondents, the research did not seek to capture information from all the volunteers involved in the festival, who numbered around double that in total. A higher priority was placed on successfully obtaining responses from those people identified by the director, such is the value to SNA of minimising missing data (Borgatti et al., 2013). Given the survey method being used an unavoidable compromise was sought, such that some festival volunteers were excluded in pursuit of a higher response rate and a greater focus on the more important festival participants. Alternative potential forms of relational data might have extended the focal network's boundary, such as email records, co-attendance at preparatory events and social media connections (Edwards, 2010), yet the commitment of the selected volunteers to their festival work supported the reliability of the questionnaire approach. Working with the director also helped to manage the dynamic nature of social networks, to the extent that the 35 chosen individuals were recognised participants in the group, asked to reflect on their overall relationships to others (Scott, 2017). The director's early decisions, over whom to include and exclude, demonstrated their importance to the ensuing research: they acted as a vital broker and gatekeeper, allowing the researcher access to their colleagues in a demonstration of their social capital (Crossley et al., 2015), and defining the network's boundary (Scott, 2017).

The resulting list of volunteers was alphabetised and numbered to produce a roster of names that accompanied the survey questionnaire. Relational data are vital to

SNA, captured here in response to: 'Now, from the list of [festival] volunteers, identify which five are the most important to you in your work with the festival and/or your decision to volunteer with the festival'. Respondents were allowed some flexibility in interpreting what 'most important' meant to them, yet the festival remained the basis of the relationships identified. A variety of attribute data were collected, including demographic categories of the 'status homophily' type. 'Value homophily' indicators were captured through five-point Likert-type questions (McPherson et al., 2001), covering respondents' perceptions of the nature of the festival, its relationship to the surrounding neighbourhood and engagement with its host communities. Ultimately 29 of the potential 35 survey responses were gathered, representing 83% of the bounded network population. Initial responses were via paper surveys, distributed and returned in person at a team meeting one month before the festival. Those not present at the meeting were contacted by email in the following days, generating further responses. Timing the data collection in this way allowed the subsequent analysis to consider how important the festival's formal hierarchy and the departmental structure was felt to be, alongside other potential influences on the network's shape and characteristics. The 29 respondents made 11 references to the six non-respondents and these were deleted from the SNA data, reducing the number of usable ties from 145 to 134. This removal of data is regrettable (it excluded the eighth most referenced individual); however, it provided a more valid picture of connections between the remaining 29 (Borgatti et al., 2013).

### **Interview data: capturing the insider's view**

Sampling for the interviews used UCINET software, applying four 'centrality' measures to the survey data (Borgatti et al., 2002, pp. 163–80):

- Degree centrality: a count of how many ties a network node has. 'Indegree' has been used here, reflecting directed data as one festival volunteer nominates another.
- Eigenvector centrality: similar to degree centrality in counting an individual's adjacent nodes, with each node weighted according to its own centrality. UCINET 'symmetrizes' the data, removing the direction of flow and resulting in an undirected graph.
- Beta centrality: reflects the potential influence of one person on others in the network, including their diminishing influence on more distant connections.
- Betweenness centrality: reflecting the presence or absence of a given node on the shortest paths between each other pair of nodes. High betweenness centrality increases the potential to act as a gatekeeper for information and resources.

From these four measures an aggregated centrality ranking of all 29 people was drawn up, with each approach weighted equally in line with Valente *et al.*'s correlation of centrality measures (Valente, Coronges, Lakon, & Costenbader, 2008). The resulting list was split into four categories: group A (six people) returned high centrality across all four measures; group B (eight) were mostly in the second quartiles of centrality; group C (nine) mostly in the third quartiles; while group D (six) only contained people with 0.00 indegree or betweenness centrality. A member of each group was interviewed, following a call to those survey respondents who had indicated their willingness to participate further in the research. Each of the four private conversations was recorded and transcribed, then analysed thematically to identify similarities and differences of opinion to illustrate and seek to explain the underlying SNA. The interviews offered personal insights into four contributors' involvement with the festival, and taken as a whole they represented variegated experiences from across the social network. A semi-structured approach was used for the interviews (Fox, Gouthro, Morakabati, & Brackstone, 2014), with questions informed by the diversity, equality and community-based themes noted above. Integrating SNA into a mixed methods approach has received important support in recent years (Edwards, 2010), with the four interviews adding a rich source of data to complement the SNA findings.

An initial visualisation of the network revealed the structure seen in Figure 4.15, with nodes sized according to their aggregated centrality group (A being largest, D smallest). The graph also highlights the four interview participants, as white nodes.

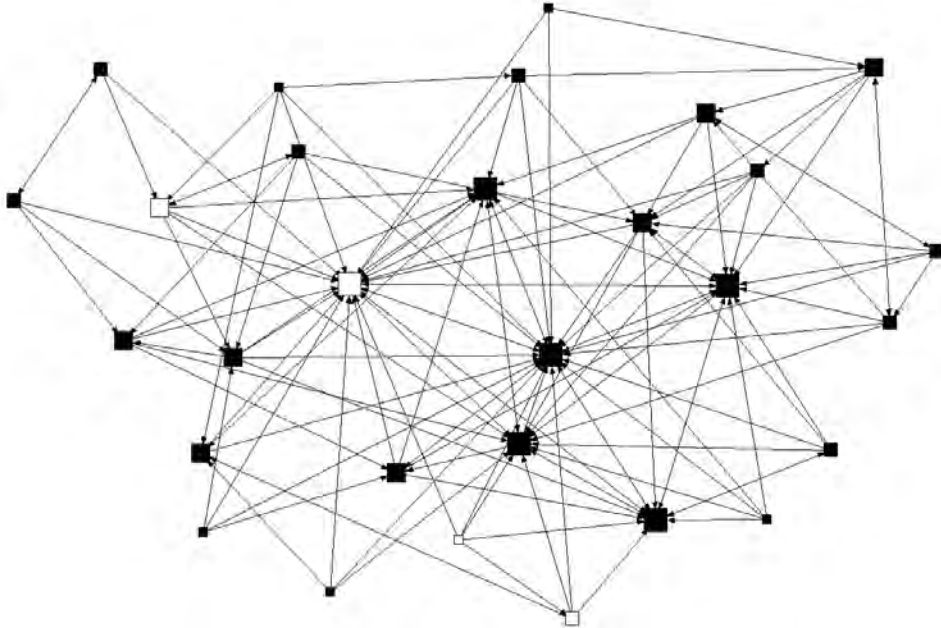


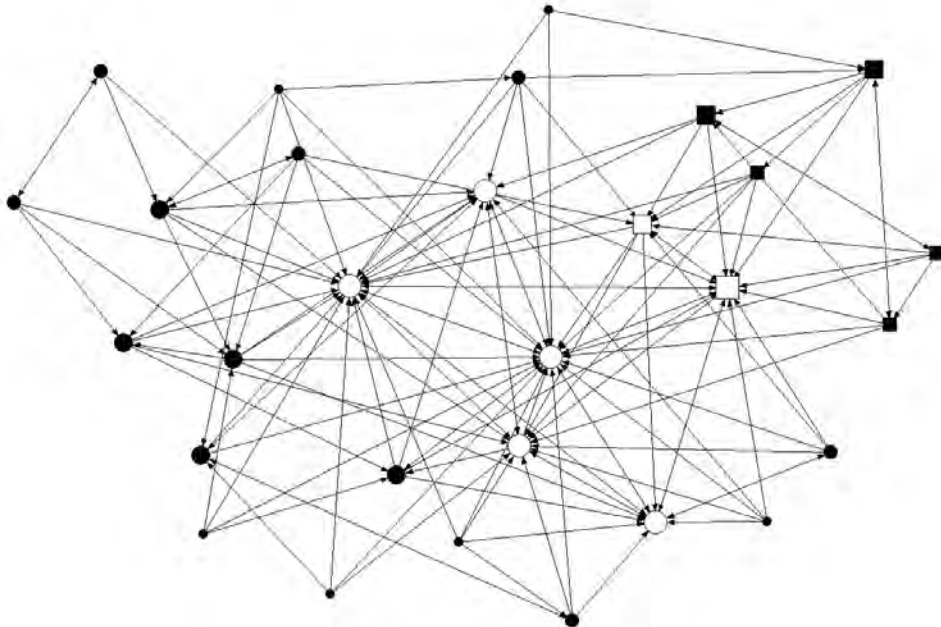
Figure 4.15 Visualisation of festival social network graph

## Findings and discussion

Findings from the SNA survey and subsequent interviews are discussed below in response to the two research questions. These findings also present SNA as both a research method and a reflection of the lived experience of festival production.

### **How can the festival’s network structure best be described, and is there evidence of defined subgroups or a core–periphery relationship?**

UCINET and other SNA software applications offer two primary means of displaying and analysing network data: in graph form, and through statistical returns (Scott, 2017). Figure 4.16 demonstrates the flexibility of SNA software, with multiple pieces of information shown. Node size continues to represent the aggregated centrality category, with white nodes now identifying a core group of seven people among a periphery of 22 in black. Most nodes are now circles, with seven square nodes in the top right signifying people who identified themselves as part of the Finance team.



*Figure 4.16 Network visualisation showing each node's aggregated centrality category, the presence of core and peripheral groups and the festival's Finance team*

UCINET's correlation methodology indicated the possible presence of a core group (Borgatti et al., 2013), which could be corroborated or discounted through further analysis. The software's recommendation results from the density of ties, as a proportion of the maximum possible number of connections:

- The core group of seven has a network density of 73.8%, despite each person being restricted to a maximum of five choices. Ties within the peripheral group have a density of 6.7%, with the network as a whole returning a 16.5% density.
- Ties from the core group to the periphery have a low density at just 2.6%, while from the periphery to core it is 44.2%.

When considering who is most important to their festival work almost everyone turned to the seven members of the core group, therefore the characteristics of these central individuals are of particular interest. They reported each other as being important, and only rarely turned to more peripheral figures. Those on the periphery looked to the core, though they also formed some connections to each other.

Further methods support the core–periphery proposal, including the Girvan-Newman test: ties with the highest betweenness scores are systematically removed, revealing cohesive subgroups (2013). For the festival a large main subgroup is identified, which becomes progressively more focused on the core individuals in consecutive iterations of the test. Cliques can also reflect important structural characteristics of a network, defined as occurrences where all members of a clique are connected to one another (2013). Several cliques of four nodes or more were identified in the festival network, and core group members dominated most of them; peripheral nodes were present, but only through their ties to better-connected parts of the network. (UCINET requests that a minimum clique size be set, and symmetrises the ties to present undirected data.) The core nodes also filled the first seven positions in the aggregated centrality rankings, and represent four of the five people who identified themselves as being part of the festival’s overall management team.

Fulfilling the festival’s aim of benefiting from a diverse mix of contributions therefore appears to be reliant on people in the core group, and the extent to which they can represent the characteristics, interests and views of the wider network. The formal departmental structure of the festival is relevant here as the declared framework within which this might take place. Volunteers are matched to one of five functional departments, which all have their own leadership: Content, Promotion, Finance, Site and Bars. All four interviewees placed a high importance on the departmental system when asked to describe the organisation, as it helped them identify with the festival and their roles within it. Their descriptions included ‘tiers’ of management, and of a ‘macro system’ containing ‘micro systems’ with their own responsibilities. From the SNA survey, at least one member of the network’s core group associated themselves with either Content, Promotion, Finance or Site, and although none represented Bars only one person in the whole network did so. However, of the four well-represented departments only the seven Finance nodes displayed a cohesive presence in the network: some four-member cliques were identified, and UCINET’s faction algorithm placed six of them into a distinct subgroup (the seventh being found in the core faction) (2013). With a month to go before the festival a lack of coherence is in evidence within most of the departments, which could limit the extent to which volunteers identify with others in their operational neighbourhood. Identification with a functional department of the festival was important to the volunteers, yet SNA evidence suggests this was not the strongest motivation for volunteers to forge ‘most important’ connections with each other.

If the festival’s core leadership group was to reflect the breadth of the wider volunteer network, it therefore could not rely on the official departmental framework to do so, for that was not a fair reflection of the social relationships across the 29 respondents to the survey. This contrasts with Clarke and Jepson’s interpretation of the ways formal structures of power were deployed by the central steering group in

Derby, though this approach hampered broader engagement and support for their vision (Clarke & Jepson, 2011). Conversely, SNA data from the focal festival here perhaps show that committed volunteers can operate effectively at a departmental level, while also being somewhat aware of the broader structure of the organisation. Derrett (2003) and Stevens and Shin (2014) both highlight the value of having festivals emerge from and engage with the local community, building on existing connections. SNA offers a means of revealing just such established relationships which may otherwise be hidden from those present in the network. The mixed methods used here illustrated this further as one interviewee described the ‘friend of mine who was in the promo team’ that underpinned their initial tie to other volunteers, and thence to the festival itself. It is to the festival’s credit that the most peripheral of the interviewees felt able to become involved without a pre-existing connections, for they described having ‘missed ... being part of a community ... and wanted to be part of it [the festival]’.

### **What evidence of homophily can be found within the festival’s social network, and if present what appears to have caused it?**

For the core group to function effectively as a management cohort for the festival, evidence from the literature highlights inclusivity (Clarke & Jepson, 2011) and diversity (Phillips, 2014). Analysis of the survey data reveals evidence of both shared and divergent characteristics across the network, suggesting the presence or absence of homophily. A comparable gender mix existed between core and periphery, with only a moderately higher age among the core. The other chronological variable, of working with the festival in previous years, revealed core individuals as having the most established relationships with the organisation. Their wholly white ethnicity reflected the network’s predominant characteristic, as did noting Scotland or England as their country of birth. Longevity is correlated with centrality: slightly older native contributors seeming to have had the time, motivation and commitment to establish themselves within the team.

Non-British volunteers, 10 of the 29 survey respondents, were noticeably peripheral and few attracted ties from their British colleagues. Restrictions on presenting a non-British perspective to the festival’s core group might have been compounded by the limited influence of functional departments as forums for activity and influence. Ties between the 10 non-Britons were also limited, comprising a subgroup of four, one pair, and four isolates. Anecdotal evidence gathered during the festival endorsed the high esteem in which non-British contributors were held, though their influence may lie somewhat dormant during the planning stages at least.

Turning to statistical tests, homophily at a whole network level can be addressed

using the EI Index, as used by Gallelli in Piedmont (Gallelli, 2016). Table 4.4 presents EI findings from UCINET for those who identified as part of the Finance, Content, Site and Promotion departments, alongside 'overall management'. Ties have been symmetrised for this analysis, which assesses the extent to which those in each category reported or received ties with others in the same category (internal), or those beyond it (external):  $EI = E - I/E + I$  (Crossley et al., 2015).

	Internal	External	Total	EI
Finance (7 people)	32	25	57	-0.123
Content (12)	54	47	101	-0.069
Site (6)	12	29	41	0.415
Overall (5)	20	56	76	0.474
Promotion (6)	8	33	41	0.610

Table 4.4 EI index among functional departments, ordered from most homophilous to least

EI scores always range from -1 (perfect homophily, with connections limited to those in the same group), to +1 (perfect heterophily). Members of the Finance department show a greater propensity to turn to each other rather than other sections of the festival, as do Content although their homophily is more marginal. The remaining three functional categories display a marked heterophily by contrast: people identifying themselves against these categories are referring to external contacts far more frequently than those who share the same identifier. The same test can be applied to other variables, such as previous years of involvement and gender, as in Table 4.5.

	Internal	External	Total	EI
2016 (18 people)	126	45	171	-0.474
2015 (13)	86	60	146	-0.178
2014 (7)	28	65	93	0.398
2013 (2)	2	41	43	0.907
Female (18)	76	62	138	-0.101
Male (9)	16	60	76	0.579
Gender declined (2)	0	16	16	1.000

Table 4.5 EI index for those who had also volunteered in previous years, and by gender

Against previous years' involvement, the passage of time and weight of numbers have a bearing on whom festival volunteers rated most important. With nearly two-

thirds of the 29 respondents having worked with the festival in 2016 there is intuitive logic to seeing them report important connections to each other. The 13 survivors from 2015 also displayed a marked level of homophily, though this was reversed for 2014 as the number of representatives fell to seven. The importance of the two longest-serving team members is evident from the imbalance between internal ties (each nominates the other) and external ties (a collective 41 ties attracted from other people). With female volunteers outnumbering male 2:1 it is no great surprise to see them report a higher absolute number of ties among themselves. In relative terms, with a large number of ties reported between females and males, the resulting EI scores show males as having heterophilous networks, markedly different to females. Relational data and SNA show how diversity within a group can be explored with greater insights than absolute numbers would allow.

Moving from the study of groups and subgroups to the experiences of individuals, 'ego network' analysis can be applied to discrete people, such as the four interviewees. Though some research projects specifically set out to collect ego data (Jarman, 2018), it is also possible to extract it from a whole network (Borgatti et al., 2013; Crossley et al., 2015; Prell, 2012). Applying the EI index to individual nodes (again with symmetrised ties) is illustrated here with the most central interviewee's ties: 21 coming in, sometimes reciprocated by the five going out. Heterophilous relationships can be identified on grounds of gender (0.048), age category (0.143) and country of birth (0.333), showing that their immediate connections were primarily outwith their own category against these variables. In this instance access to information about the wider network can also be exploited, accounting for those alters not directly connected to the focal ego. The Yules Q test adapts the EI Index to provide this context, with perfect homophily now scoring +1, and heterophily -1 (2015). The most central interviewee returned heterophilous scores for gender (-1.000) and age (-0.778) that are more marked than before: their immediate connections are more diverse than the whole network's characteristics would predict against these variables. Against country of birth (scoring 0.111) the ego's immediate connections are now seen to be marginally homophilous in their wider context, potentially substantiating the notion of a disconnect between the network's core and the non-British members of its periphery.

Demographic categories comprise elements of 'status homophily', yet the survey also gathered 'value homophily' data (McPherson et al., 2001, p. 420). This latter type, based on 'values, attitudes, and beliefs', have greater potential to be transmitted from one person to another, representing homophily by diffusion rather than selection. Combining interview evidence with data from the survey's Likert statements helps to illustrate this, such as responses to: '[Festival] "fits in" here in [neighbourhood]'. The most central interviewee strongly agreed with this statement (as did six out of the seven in the network's core group), but there was less

enthusiasm from the peripheral group where four of 22 strongly agreed, 15 agreed and three were neutral. The interviewee's personal EI score on this count was 0.333, indicating heterophily among their direct connections. However, their Yules Q score was 0.111: their local region was actually relatively homophilous in the context of the wider network. If the core group of seven were indeed influential across the broader network, interview data could help reveal evidence of diffusion of the Likert statement theme between the pre-festival completion of the surveys and the post-festival interviews. A general trend among the interviews was to see the two in more central positions able to speak with more detail and confidence about community engagement, such that they had more evidence of whether the festival 'fitted in' to its neighbourhood. Their anecdotes reflected on visits by locals and offers of help: 'I remember one guy coming in after work ... to say I've got a load of tools that you can have'. Also tangible experiences to demonstrate the relationship between the festival and its locality: 'we opened up the space ... and we showed our [archive] footage of [the neighbourhood]'. The more peripheral interviewees offered enthusiastic rhetoric but limited detail. This trend was repeated in relation to the festival's positive impact on its venue's longer-term sustainability, with a peripheral interviewee highlighting the 'great extent' to which the festival has contributed to the viability of the building. This was a stronger statement of support than either of the more central interviewees offered. The survey data therefore largely reflected evidence from the interviews: network centrality, which correlates with longstanding engagement with the festival and a greater sense of influence over its management, also manifested itself in a better informed, yet arguably more sober appraisal of the festival's role within the community. The wider team, beyond the core, could become similarly well informed about the festival if more information was shared with them, but hopefully not at the expense of their championing of its potential as a force for good.

Towards the end of the interviews questions focused on how and why festival volunteers came to work together, similarities and differences between them, and whether they influenced each other's views and opinions. Diversity was a common thread across all four, as each reflected on the mix of personalities and nationalities they experienced, and the range of professional skills brought together within functional departments. These personal experiences were imbued with frequent references to the processes of working on shared projects, where passion for the arts bonded disparate people to a common goal. In a reversal of the neighbourhood engagement theme, discussions around team diversity and dynamics left the more peripheral figures with a greater store of anecdotes and examples to share. Finding a community of like-minded 'alternative' people was held in high regard, particularly by those for whom it was a driving motivation to join this year's festival team. This was homophily around support for the artistic mission of the festival, as observed among volunteers, performers and audience members. It is the same force identified by Desire Lines (Desire Lines, 2015), Leith Creative (Cunningham & Bremner, 2015)

and other grassroots analysis of the event, festival and creative sectors in Scotland and elsewhere.

## Conclusions

SNA offers tools through which the structure of social relationships can be examined, providing an overview of relative diversity across a group of people that is rarely afforded to those within the network itself. Matching this to targeted interviews helped deliver evidence of the insiders' views, for their personal perceptions of diversity and influence within the group. There are social capital implications to the evidence presented above, and indeed this is a common theme in SNA literature from a historical and methodological perspective (Crossley et al., 2015; Prell, 2012). Those volunteers who committed to the festival over an extended period of time joined an influential core group of people, not necessarily through being awarded a job title, but through recognition accrued among colleagues. That core group, with its densely knit overlapping connections, exhibited important bonding social capital traits, although bridging between core and periphery was a largely one-way process that further increased the importance of central individuals (Wilks, 2009). More established relationships can represent stronger ties that are instrumental to the overall success of the network in achieving its objectives: people perform better with those they know, particularly in challenging and creative environments (de Montjoye, Stopczynski, Shmueli, Pentland, & Lehmann, 2014). What this paper has shown is that the biggest social and inter-personal challenge to festival producers, particularly in a voluntary organisation with infrequent meetings and heavy personal demands on its members, is how to engage newcomers in a mutually rewarding manner. To share information about the organisation's work, to increase the engagement and confidence of peripheral figures and to do so while benefiting from the inherent diversity of communities united in their championing of creativity.

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#### 4.1.7 Festival community networks and transformative place-making

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#### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – Festivals are often explicitly connected to the destinations in which they take place, explored here as contributing to broader processes of place-making and engagement with local communities. Place is defined at a local scale, primarily as experienced by volunteer contributors to an arts and cultural festival in urban Scotland. Networked relationships between festival volunteers inform the research methods and analysis, reflecting both observer and insider perspectives. This paper aims to comment on varying attitudes among the contributors, relating these findings to their positions in the festival's social network.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Social network analysis methods were used to capture and examine data from a sample of festival volunteers: a survey instrument was distributed among individuals identified by the creative director, acting as a key informant. These data generated information on connections between the respondents, as well as demographic and opinion-based attribute data. Network centrality measures were used to sample the respondents for four follow-up interviews with festival volunteers.

**Findings** – The resulting network revealed a core-periphery structure to the festival's organising team. The influential core group members were more established volunteers, recognised for their value to the team. The festival was widely endorsed as contributing to local place-making, though not uncritically. Management implications were identified for the dual nature of the festival organisation: a formal hierarchy with clear functional departments, acting as a platform for an intangible yet vital social network.

**Originality/value** – Social relationships are shown to have profound implications for the management and identity of this volunteer festival, in relation to its host neighbourhood. Combining social network analysis with semi-structured interviews has demonstrated the value of this mixed methods approach.

**Keywords** Community, Social network analysis, Festival, Place-making, SNA

**Paper type** Research paper

#### **Introduction**

Relationships between festivals, communities and places are examined in this paper, as experienced by the volunteer organisers of an arts festival in Scotland that

transforms under-used spaces in its host city. Social network analysis (SNA) underpinned the chosen research methods, using pre-festival survey data to reveal the volunteers' connections to each other and their views on place-making and community engagement. Network centrality measures informed the sampling of post-festival interviews, to provide four insiders' perspectives. Community-based definitions of place are explored below (Derrett, 2003a; Friedmann, 2010), as are temporal and geographic boundaries to festival places (Pierce et al., 2011; Stevens and Shin, 2014).

The paper addresses the following research questions, considering in turn the festival's social network, its objectives and priorities and finally influence between members of the festival team:

- RQ1. What form, shape and characteristics does the festival's social network have, and to what extent does the network reflect the formal structure of the organisation?
- RQ2. How important are place-making and community development to the objectives and priorities of the festival?
- RQ3. Through what mechanisms does the festival's central management seek to instil the organisation's values and objectives on other members of the organising team?

The focal festival explicitly describes itself as transforming spaces and making places. In 2017, it took on a 1,000-capacity theatre, which had been a local authority storage facility for a generation. The festival's ensuing success resulted from the efforts of committed volunteers, who created a welcoming environment for artists, performers, audiences, and the local neighbourhood. Not all events identify themselves with a clear sense of place, some are "placeless" (Van Aalst and Van Melik, 2012) and indeed the chosen example tends to move on every year or so to a new venue. What part could the 2017 edition play in a sustainable place-making process, or was it content to focus within its own temporally and geographically limited boundaries? Which community did the festival prioritise: those who engaged with it directly, or local residents confronted by a temporary social hub in their midst? The following research examines a complex and dynamic example of place-making, and advocates for the continued use of SNA in festival and event studies.

## **Literature review**

The following review draws from a rich literature on place and place-making, before considering relationships between places, communities and festivals. The section

concludes with reference to social networks, as contributions to “creative clusters” place-making and an appropriate focus for research.

### **Defining place and the contested nature of place-making**

Places are intrinsic to shared social experiences and are constructed through shared practices and understandings (Andrews and Leopold, 2013). Defining “place” means deciding who gets to contribute to such definitions, how their experiences should be recorded and interpreted, and what impact governments and other institutions might have. This paper is informed by a community-based perspective on place, animated through the activities and rhythms of social interaction at a “pedestrian scale” (Friedmann, 2010). This befits the study of a volunteer festival network, although an “inside out” approach to defining place can be at variance with those framed by external observers (2010). It is also at odds with a familiar process of neoliberal policy-driven instrumental culture-led regeneration and gentrification, which has often used place-making in pursuit of place-marketing (Hudson, 2006; Smith, 2012). Top-down interventions can alienate existing cultural practitioners if investment is perceived to lack legitimacy or to prioritise economic returns over cultural significance (Hudson, 2006). Friedmann’s conceptualisation of urban places highlights both dynamism and tradition: the active excitement of festivities, markets and rituals, which in turn contribute to regular patterns of everyday life (Friedmann, 2010). Through such activity comes attachment to place, which may lead a neighbourhood to mobilise itself against external threats or in pursuit of potential opportunities. This interpretation of place also requires an identified centre (perhaps a building or square), which may have ill-defined and dynamic boundaries, yet offers a space for people to form and reaffirm social connections. The loss of such places, through development or regeneration, can become a violent act on the community, an incident of “place breaking” (2010, p. 158).

Competition to attract mobile capital and wealth is often a backdrop to “post-Fordist” place-making trends in globally connected cities, as central governments retreat from post-1945 obligations to deliver public services (Lepofsky and Fraser, 2003). Under this model, marginalisation awaits those unwilling or unable to contribute to locally accepted models of place-making, leading to detachment from the processes of change and ultimately a diminution of one’s civil rights, political power and citizenship itself (2003). This is the “politics of place”, where communities engage with forces shaping their neighbourhoods and latent attachment to place can become “active and political” (Pierce et al., 2011, pp. 55-6). This being said, “the extant literature inadequately integrates place-making, networking and politics”, focusing instead on any two of these themes (2011, p. 54). By contrast, a “relational place-making” approach is cognisant of social networks and their influence on

conceptions of place (2011, pp. 59-62). This model recognises first that places are heterogeneous mixes of components, incorporating physical features of the natural and built environments, individual people, and collective organisations. Second, each person's conscious and unconscious interactions with these components comprises their own relationship with a place: they "bundle" them together (Massey, 2005). This bundling is compatible with Friedmann's pedestrian perspective of neighbourhoods, prioritising the lived experience and giving community members agency to define their environment (Friedmann, 2010). In stage three a "rough consensus" is formed within social groups as to which bundles have "shared importance", emphasising networked relationships in the social milieu (Pierce et al., 2011, pp. 59-60). This is a dynamic process, for as the components that contribute to each person's bundles change over time, so too must the collective meaning of place to which they contribute. Stimulation for change might come from an external threat, or perhaps the individual and shared experiences of hosting festivals and events.

### **Places, communities and festivals: a three-way relationship**

Much of the extant literature linking festivals to communities and places is optimistic and supportive in tone, while highlighting the complexity of such relationships. Festivals are "the face of local democracy" (Derrett, 2003a, p. 38), they "build pride among local citizens and reinforce the identity of cities" (Lau and Li, 2015, p. 57), while "shaping social experiences in local spaces [ . . . ] to enrich identity and build social bonds" (Stevens and Shin, 2014, p. 1). Festivals both reflect and influence a "sense of community" and a "sense of place" (Derrett, 2003a, pp. 38-9; Derrett, 2003b, pp. 50-2). In the former, festivals develop various facets of social capital, from collective empowerment to informal individual participation (Arcodia and Whitford, 2006). For the latter, a sense of place is something to develop an emotional attachment to, which festivals can achieve if the community allocates them "space within the host destination" (Derrett, 2003a, p. 39).

Two case studies highlight how festivals can define places: Glasgow's West End Festival and its parade along the city's Byres Road (Stevens and Shin, 2014) and the Cheung Chau Bun Festival on one of Hong Kong's smaller islands (Lau and Li, 2015). Both of these articles champion their festival's contribution to local life, acting as "creative, oppositional, liberating and spontaneous events [...] [that] support the redefinition, rediscovery and expansion of local social life" (Stevens and Shin, 2014, p. 1). In Cheung Chau "festivals create, shape, or reinforce the ideology of a place" in ways that generate attachment from the local community, which is in turn projected to outsiders (Lau and Li, 2015, p. 58). Lau and Li conclude their article with a warning that the links between festivals, communities and places can be disrupted and damaged through over-commercialisation, when there is ignorance of the

meanings and values that bind the three together (2015). Meanwhile, the temporary creation of transformative festival spaces in Glasgow guides Stevens and Shin, spaces which shape “playful, transgressive and resistant experiences” through enclosure, centrality, axially, and permeability (Stevens and Shin, 2014, p. 3, 6-14). Formal boundaries are placed on the temporal and spatial dimensions of the parade: local police set up road closures, barriers and signage; parade organisers regulate its route, timings and pace. Within this altered space performers interact with observers, who may keep pace with or even join the parade for a time. The parade’s axial route, Byres Road itself, draws people together in a familiar landscape, yet they are encouraged to perceive, use and experience this civic space differently. Finally, with further echoes of the carnivalesque (Smith, 1993), the activity and the atmosphere extend beyond the parade: side streets, parks, commercial premises and public spaces soak up the event’s overflow for the rest of the day. From Hong Kong to Scotland, festivals provide the means, motive and opportunity for communities to transform familiar spaces and thus create Friedmann’s local centres of activity, centres that in their way help to define places and engender a sense of place for both locals and visitors.

The importance of planning, of public policy, and ultimately the deployment of power and influence in the relationships between place, communities and festivals extends to Edinburgh, where imbalances between core and peripheral festival activities have marginalised local communities across Scotland’s capital in favour of visiting tourists (Jamieson, 2004; Quinn, 2005). Further south, one-off festivals in Derby (Clarke and Jepson, 2011) and in Bristol (Atkinson and Laurier, 1998) also excluded elements of the local community, the former influenced by a powerful Steering Group, the latter by the letters page of the local newspaper. High profile festivals present cities with the tantalising prospect of reaping substantial instrumental benefits, with local authorities and other stakeholders influencing such events for disputed objectives (Foley et al., 2012). The highest profile events, with the grandest claims to “inspire a generation” and deliver on Olympian ambitions of urban renewal, are not immune to the fracturing of relationships between communities and place. A November 2017 London Assembly report into five years of post-Olympic regeneration found limited evidence of the desired “convergence” between deprived host boroughs and the rest of the city (London Assembly Regeneration Committee, 2017). The report highlights a trend among Olympic host cities, where investment in venues and infrastructure plays midwife to rising property prices, gentrification and displacement (2017, p. 12). Caught between the forces of cultural hegemony and economic neoliberalism, the potential for underrepresented sections of society to contribute to urban festival and event place-making can be substantially curtailed.

Conversely, community-driven, bottom-up approaches to defining place through festivity are not without complexity and debate either. In Peebles, in the Borders

region of southern Scotland, allegations of racism were levelled at the annual Beltane festival, initially from a former resident who had moved away, and later from the national media (Smith, 1993). These critiques were met with claims to cultural autonomy, in an attempt to reshape the charge as an “us and them” attack on local place identity (1993, pp. 300-3). Despite, or because of, the intricacies of effective place-making efforts, they have received clear and unambiguous support from public sector agencies, such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the USA (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). The NEA’s policy proposals enthusiastically champion the use of under-utilised buildings, increased local creative and economic activity and training new generations of cultural workers. Personal connections underpin such proposals, networked links that forge grassroots communities and shape their relationships with both places and festivals.

Recent analysis of place-making has captured and highlighted important new perspectives on the potential contributions of festivals, events and the arts, emboldening practitioners to contribute to the making of place. Courage’s focus on “social practice placemaking” integrates themes of collaboration and citizenship, cultural activity and city-making (Courage, 2017, pp. 1-3). She critiques the term “creative placemaking” for being too generalised and fiscally orientated (2017, p. 2), with echoes of Richards’ perception of events moving from place branding to place-making contributions “aimed at holistic improvements in place quality” (Richards, 2017, p. 8). These interpretations retain some of the hopeful and confident spirit highlighted above (Derrett, 2003b), while recognising both the fragility and potential of dynamic urban environments that shift in response to the introduction and presence of new people, new projects and new opportunities for participation. The latent capacity of cities to accommodate vibrant arts scenes is inherent in their “vacant spaces”, those un- or under-used liminal places to which a mix of stakeholders can (or should) contribute (Courage, 2017, pp. 7-9). Vacant space can be empowering, hosting and shaping “wider physical and socioeconomic spatial systems” (2017, p. 7) that Smith would recognise as a formalising of “vague spaces” (Smith, 2012, p. 37). His later work focuses on the uses of urban public spaces as venues for events and festivals, exploring the contested ground of simultaneously animating formal parklands and opening them up for exploitation in search of public and private sector economic gain (Smith, 2017). Producing a music festival in an urban park may well bring new users to that environment but hiding it behind high fences and higher ticket prices does little to encourage the forging of community relationships that more accessible alternative uses might foster.

Festivals that exclude local residents and stakeholders from public spaces do so only temporarily, though the legacy of such actions can extend further if urban environments become seen as reserved only for those who can afford to engage with them (2017). The processes of “privatization, commercialization, and

securitization” are at work here (2017, p. 609). But what of festivals that open up the vacant and vague spaces of urban life? In the case of the festival discussed below, extensive opportunities for independent artists to contribute their own work, paired with free public entry during the day time (if not the evening), attempt to overcome barriers to the inclusion, presentation and viewing of creative work. The venue becomes a place of cultural exchange, again only temporarily but with the potential to have just as powerful a (positive) legacy as those events which seek to shut down their space. The need for security and safety is a vital part of contemporary event production, yet the focal festival has an emphasis on engagement and inclusion, and the forging of community ties, rather than relying on transactional stakeholder relationships built on ticket purchases and expensive merchandise. It is telling that Courage, Richards and Smith all make reference to social relationships in their work, with some explicit references to networked connections, such as when wrestling with the complementary concepts of the “neighbourhood and the community” (Courage, 2017, p. 4). SNA may offer an important lens through which to explore each of these themes and their roles in place-making.

### **Festival networks and creative clusters**

A developing literature is using network visualisations and analysis to describe and examine festival networks (Jarman et al., 2014). Network nodes and their connections can represent various units of analysis, such as festivals and their stakeholders, though a focus on SNA prioritises relationships between people (Prell, 2012; Borgatti et al., 2013; Scott, 2017). Alongside this are festival analyses that present a conceptual or strategic view influenced by network principles. Early work on festivals and social capital valued the forging of social bonds (Arcodia and Whitford, 2006; Wilks, 2009). More latterly, Richards has described leisure, events and festivals in a networked society (Richards, 2010; Richards, 2015a; Richards, 2015b), informed by Castells’ interpretation of “global society operating at two levels: the global “space of flows” and the local “space of places” (2015b, p. 247). In the former, technology and a globalising culture allow us to communicate with distant others instantaneously. Yet our engagement with the latter may be suffering if we are isolated from neighbourhood communities with whom we build and inhabit places. Commensurate with this are “pulsar and iterative events” (2015a, p. 557). Pulsar events have an international reach through global media and mass engagement, with a transformative ability to empower groups and develop bridging social capital. By contrast, iterative events support bonding social capital, regularly bringing communities together at a smaller scale and supporting local talent.

An exploration of the UK’s experiences with “creative cities” policies highlights “community engagement and practice” and “critical exchange” as hoped-for

objectives, emphasising the value of social connections albeit in a relatively instrumentalist way (Pratt, 2010, pp. 17-8). Nesta's work on "creative clusters" is in a similar vein, with references to Porter and Florida (Chapain et al., 2010). Four defining characteristics of a creative cluster are proposed: a community of "creative people"; a "catalysing place"; an environment that supports stimulation and free expression; and "a thick, open and ever-changing network of inter-personal exchanges" (2010, p. 11). There is scope here to consider creative clusters that are bounded temporally and geographically, in analysis from the UK and New York City (Neff, 2005). The introduction of festivals into these connected environments stands to introduce further complexity, with associated pressures for each person who hopes to navigate a world of social connections, attachments to place and communities operating at both local and global scales. Yet such gatherings are vital to the effective operation of community networks, and the critical study of festivals and events must develop its understanding of social networks as both an organising principle of contemporary society and a major influence on the individual lived experience.

## **Research methods**

Research for this paper adopted a whole network approach to gather survey data for a piece of SNA, emphasising its value to the field of event studies (Jarman et al., 2014). Subsequent findings from this SNA informed the sampling of four interviews from the same group of people. The use of SNA to examine the organisational and management structure of a festival is an important contribution to the literature, and it is hoped that these methods will find their way into subsequent work in this and related fields. The addition of qualitative interview data adds a further richness to the available material, increasing the accessibility of this work to both researcher and practitioner audiences.

## **Social network analysis of the festival's core team**

Scott defines SNA as "a broad approach to sociological analysis and a set of methodological techniques that aim to describe and explore the patterns apparent in the social relationships that individuals and groups form with each other" (Scott, 2017, p. 2). Not only this but its illustrative graphs are intuitively appealing. Defining the population of interest is a key precondition for any data collection (Prell, 2012). Some applications of SNA do not restrict respondents in who they wish to identify (Crossley et al., 2015), though in this instance the festival's creative director acted as a "key informant" and identified 35 people deemed fundamental to the festival's success (Prell, 2012, p. 66). Therefore, the ensuing research does not represent the

festival's entire workforce, let alone its performers, partners and other connections. Rather this is an analysis of a team of volunteers, united through their important contributions to the delivery of a shared project.

The 35 names populated a numbered roster, and these people were approached a month before the festival to provide both connection and attribute data via a survey (2012): their connections to other people, and attributes of themselves. Initial responses were provided in person when the researcher attended a team meeting; subsequent approaches via email yielded additional returns. In total, 29 people completed the survey, representing 83 per cent of the population. Relational data revealing social connections can be collected through a range of methods, from email records to co-attendance at events, but it was felt that this self-completed survey of a bounded group of committed volunteers provided reliable insights into their perceived relationships to each other. This being said, it was a snapshot in time, unable to reflect changes in the network. The most recent edition of Scott's seminal text discusses the limitations inherent in this aspect of SNA, while confidently stating that advances in statistical techniques can overcome this static situation, to "see change as a "stochastic" process" (Scott, 2017, p. 158). Efforts were made in the current research to reflect the length of time volunteers were engaged with the festival, including previous years, which both inform the discussion below and suggest opportunities for further research that might reflect dynamism in the network. The post-festival timing of the four interviews also allowed for some perspective.

The survey contained the single question that forms the basis of this study's SNA: "Now, from the list of [festival name] volunteers, identify which five are the most important to you in your work with the festival and/or your decision to volunteer with the festival". The question was targeted towards festival activities, yet it allowed for a degree of interpretation regarding "most important". Respondents turned to the roster to identify themselves by number, and then their five most important connections. Collectively, the respondents made 11 references to the six absent team members, and these references were removed from the data. This removal is regrettable and it represented some 7.6 per cent of the 145 total ties reported; however, the resulting data offer a more valid picture of the 29-respondent network (Borgatti et al., 2013). The remainder of the survey focused on attribute data: respondents' roles within the festival (including department and previous experience), demographic data and 27 Likert style questions exploring place and community. Taken together, these connections and attribute data provide a rich picture of the festival network's structure and the social positions of its members.

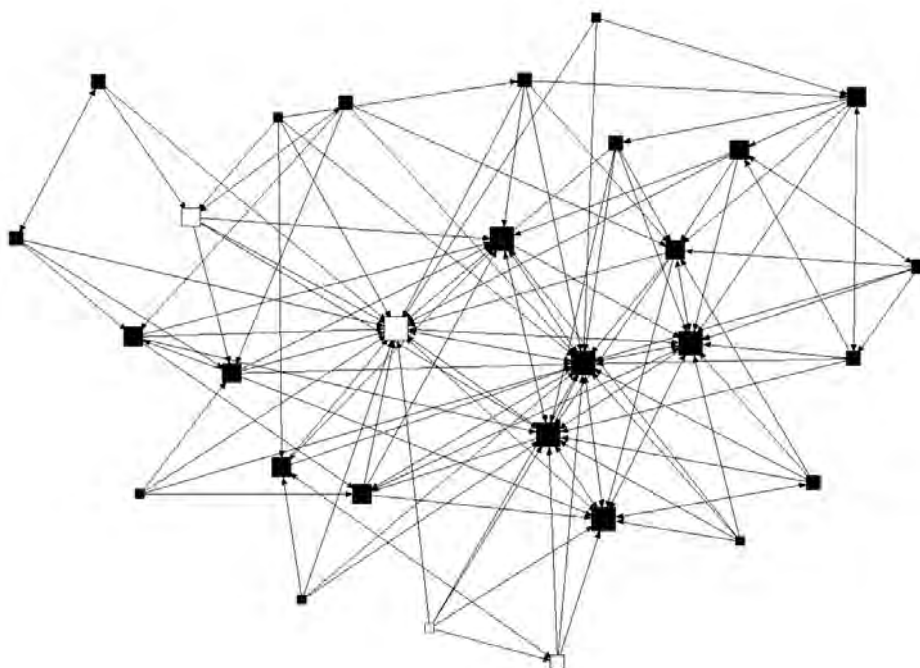
## Using aggregate network centrality to sample for interview candidates

Four interviews were held after the festival to gather richer data than a survey would permit. SNA's contribution to mixed methods research has received recent attention (Edwards, 2010; Crossley et al., 2015; Jørgensen, 2016), here prompting discussions that interested all four interviewees. As the research questions above address social structure and influence, network centrality was used to identify a sample of interviewees. Centrality features prominently in SNA text books (Prell, 2012; Borgatti et al., 2013; Scott, 2017), and there is an intuitive appeal in identifying the "most central" person in a network. UCINET software (Borgatti et al., 2002) was used to report on four measures of centrality, in line with work from Borgatti et al. (2013):

- Degree centrality reflects the quantity of ties a node has. As the survey question resulted in directed data (one person nominating another), "indegree" was used to count the incoming nominations.
- Eigenvector centrality also counts an individual's adjacent nodes, after weighting them according to their own centrality. UCINET "symmetrizes" the data for more meaningful results, leading to an undirected graph.
- Beta centrality addresses a node's potential influence on others in the network, reflecting its diminishing influence as the steps needed to reach other nodes increase.
- Betweenness centrality looks at the presence or absence of a given node on the shortest paths between each other pair of nodes. Nodes with high betweenness centrality have the potential to act as gatekeepers.

The 29 nodes were ranked against these four measures, with the most central under each measure given a score of 1, then 2, and so on. Sometimes nodes returned the same value for a given measure, such as for all those with indegree scores of 0.00 because no one had nominated them. The validity of correlating network centrality measures is discussed by Valente et al. (2008), with broad support for this aggregation approach. Sufficient correlation is presented to reflect comparable phenomena, yet diversity between measures suggests each has its place. After aggregating the four rankings, the nodes were categorised: Group A displayed centrality across all four measures (six members); nodes in Group B were mostly in the second quartiles of centrality (eight members); Group C mostly in the third quartiles (nine members); while Group D contained nodes with 0.00 indegree or betweenness centrality (six members). All volunteers who had expressed an interest were approached for interviews, and from the replies a member of each group was interviewed.

An initial visualisation of the network revealed the structure seen in Figure 4.17. Nodes are sized according to their aggregated centrality group; Group A has the largest nodes and Group D the smallest. The graph also highlights the four interview participants, with white nodes.



*Figure 4.17 Initial visualisation of festival social network graph*

### **Interviews design and focus**

The advent of methods text books targeted at events research provides a suitable inspiration for this paper, and it is a privilege for festival and event researchers to draw from generations of extant social science heritage (Fox et al., 2014). The potential richness of interview data contrasts with the relatively clinical nature of network analysis. A semi-structured approach was thus adopted, with questions drawn from the place-making, community and festival themes identified above. Variations in the attitudes and perspectives of the different interviewees were sought, to provide insights into the experiences of those in different parts of the festival's network. Interviews were held in locations familiar to the four interviewees. When combined with analysis of the network survey, discussion can now turn to the findings themselves.

## Findings and discussion

Three research questions have guided this paper, addressing in turn the structure of the festival's central team, its attitudes to place-making and community engagement and the management's influence over other members of the organising team. As above, references are made to Borgatti *et al.* (2013) in relation to statistical tests and measures, though other texts provide comparable depth.

### **RQ1: Network characteristics and structure**

Data from the survey reveal a core-periphery network structure, as established by UCINET through a correlation analysis (2013):

- The core group recommended by UCINET comprises seven members. The peripheral group contains the remaining 22.
- Ties between core group nodes have a density of 73.8 per cent, from a maximum of 100 per cent had they all named each other. The overall graph's density is 16.5 per cent. The density of ties within the peripheral group is a mere 6.7 per cent.
- The density of connections from periphery to core is 44.2 per cent, yet core to periphery is 2.6 per cent.

A month prior to the festival, seven people were at the heart of the network (Figure 4.18). They rated other core figures among their most important connections, as did those on the periphery; peripheral individuals were rarely listed, in particular by the core seven. Further calculations reinforce this conclusion. The Girvan–Newman test breaks a network into cohesive subgroups, by systematically removing ties with the highest betweenness score (2013). In the festival network, four small peripheral subgroups are quickly identified, leaving a considerably larger subgroup that shrinks as each iteration picks off a single member, ultimately leaving the core group. Identifying cliques also reveals structural information, where a clique is a subgroup whose members are all connected to one another (2013). In applying this test, the ties between pairs of nodes were symmetrized, so it did not matter who listed whom on the survey. For festival cliques with a minimum size of four, it was common to see peripheral people listed, but they were vastly outnumbered by references to the seven core individuals. They also occupied the first seven positions in the aggregated centrality rankings, reported the longest associations with the festival of several years' duration and contributed four of the five who identified themselves as

members of the festival's overall management. The core group all noted Scotland or England as their country of birth (the majority position overall), while non-British volunteers were noticeably peripheral, attracting relatively few ties from their British colleagues.

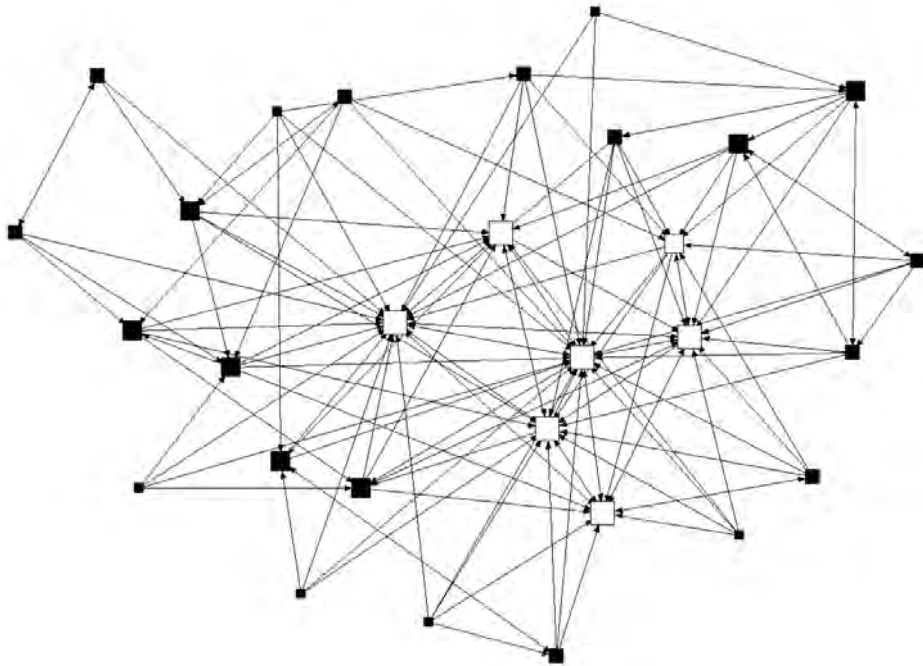


Figure 4.18 Core (white) and peripheral (black) groups, with node size representing aggregated centrality ranking

Longevity appears to engender centrality and importance, benefiting those willing and able to sustain a commitment to the festival. There are personal social capital rewards for this investment, as core group members achieve status and network positions to facilitate the application of influence and power. Bonding social capital appears to be evident within the core team, though bridging between core and periphery is a largely one-way process (Wilks, 2009). The use of social capital terminology as a rhetorical means of framing the social aspirations and impacts of festivals and events is now well established in the mainstream literature, although the emphasis is often on social ties among festival audiences and external stakeholders (Foley et al., 2012; Getz and Page, 2016). The SNA survey used here allowed for a higher resolution image of relationships within the festival organisation itself, as expressed from multiple insider perspectives. Where social capital is an expression of access to resources, expertise and those with network power, this can

be established for each individual (Jarman, 2017). At a larger scale the group's social configuration is laid out pointing to its cohesion, though this brings into focus the relative importance of its formal structure.

Combining survey and interview data reveals aspects of the network's evolution. A month before the festival, the seven people who reported being in the Finance team displayed far greater network cohesion than any other department. Every Finance volunteer was identified by at least one other, and several four-member cliques were found between these seven. UCINET's faction algorithm [which forces nodes into discrete groups (Borgatti et al., 2013)] placed six into a distinct subgroup, and the seventh in the core group. The Finance team best illustrates the interviewees' appraisal of the festival's structure when asked to describe it: each prioritised the functional teams (Content, Promotion, Finance, Site and Bars) before any other framework. Each also highlighted their personal identification with a department, through which they connected to the wider festival. Terminology used included "tiers" of management, the importance of "heads of" departments, and a "macro system" containing "micro systems". Further investigation could reveal what made Finance so seemingly coherent a month before the festival: closer early collaboration, responsibilities isolated from other departments, or a lack of reliance on additional volunteer labour may all have contributed. SNA can reveal social structures that may be hidden from those most closely involved, from the relative cohesion of one department to the apparent disarray of others. The potential value of additional targeted interviews lies in their illumination of these localised experiences to examine networks within networks. Future researchers combining SNA with qualitative data must recognise the potential, or perhaps their responsibility, to select interviewees according to the focus and ambitions of their research.

## **RQ2: Place-making and community development**

The festival's structure encourages examination of similarities and differences between the opinions of core and peripheral groups. On place-making, evidence from the Likert-type survey questions reveals broad consistency: a relatively united or divided core was usually matched by a commensurate spread of answers from the periphery. This can be seen in response to statements such as "I am just as committed to [host city] as I am to [festival]" (prompting a very mixed responses) and "[festival] opens up urban spaces as a platform for new and emerging artists" (which received overwhelming support). These are small sample sizes; however, general consistency between core and periphery suggests the central figures are reliably reflecting the whole team's views on place.

By comparison, community statements drew out more marked disparities between

core and periphery. There was greater core support for “[festival] ‘fits in’ here in [neighbourhood]”, likewise “The local community are contributing to [festival] work at [venue]”. Central individuals may have been more aware of planned engagement with the local community, information that might filter through the network as the festival drew closer. By contrast the periphery more strongly agreed that “The only way to fully experience [festival] is to volunteer and be part of the community”. The community most valued by relatively peripheral volunteers appears to have been the festival itself rather than residents of the surrounding neighbourhood, perhaps reflecting the personal benefits they were experiencing. The core group appears more relaxed about needing to welcome others into the festival’s orbit, and maybe their experience has shown them that meaningful engagement with the festival comes in many forms. Further research, with greater numbers of volunteers and public representatives of the neighbourhood, would enhance understanding of the festival’s place in multiple overlapping communities.

In the second phase of data collection, more central interviewees were better informed about the festival’s perspectives on place-making and community. The most central individual stated a determination to work with local communities, to avoid “helicoptering in, doing a thing, then leaving an empty space in our wake”. They also explained how past festival attendance initially prompted many volunteers to get involved, but participation in the collective transformation of a site committed them to the project. The prospect of longer term sustainability for the venue had greater support among the two more peripheral interviewees, who talked of a groundswell of local and national enthusiasm. Others were more circumspect, perhaps better aware of the resources and leadership needed to make it happen. The literature on vague spaces (Smith, 2012) and vacant spaces (Courage, 2017) is instructive here. As to the festival’s role as a local centre of activity and identity (Friedmann, 2010), all four interviewees reported valuable interaction with existing communities. They reported limited festive permeation into local parks and businesses (Stevens and Shin, 2014), though the theatre was adopted as a temporary home for local artists, alongside existing venues and studios. The festival demanded investment from everyone involved, including volunteers and artists, and the visiting members of the public who had to find the venue, negotiate the twisting staircases, and discover the visual arts and live performances. These interactions with the place and its inhabitants create “bundles” of experience (Pierce et al., 2011, pp. 58-9), laying the ground for a broader collective sense of place (Derrett, 2003a). Yet before this could happen the festival’s management needed to establish a common sense of purpose within the team.

### RQ3: Festival management and organisation

Figure 4.19 combines several details: the core group has square nodes, the periphery has circles and node size reflects aggregated centrality ranking. Black nodes are in strong agreement that “I consider myself to be influential in the management of [festival]”, with white disagreeing and two shades of grey in between. All but one of those who feel themselves most influential are ranked and positioned centrally, while those who feel less influential are indeed peripheral. There are anomalies, including an outlier who feels influential, and members of the core group who perhaps do not recognise the influence they wield. Management’s ability to identify these people, and ensure they are aware of the festival’s core values and priorities, could have far reaching benefits. All interviewees emphasised the festival’s leadership and structure, with department heads and the creative director given particular attention for their efforts to capture and share the spirit of the organisation. A manifesto and mission statement were cited, embodying the organisation’s founding principles. Social media groups and whole-team meetings in the venue help those in less central positions to adopt and represent the festival’s priorities. Over time, and also through manifest engagement, audiences were also educated in the ways of the festival, its values and its priorities.

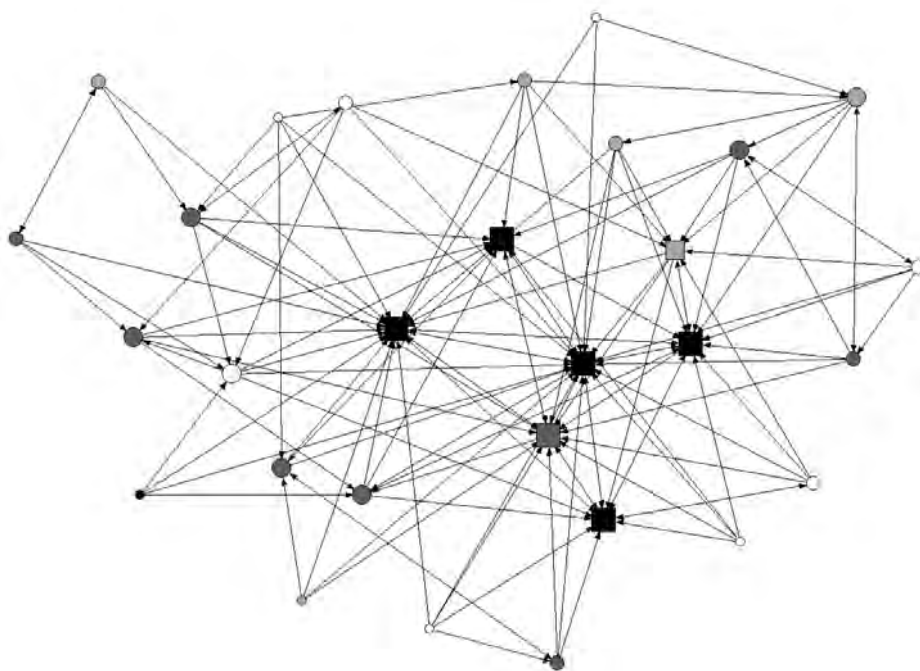


Figure 4.19 Network centrality and perceived influence

This festival exists to present innovative and creative work, from a grassroots community of artists and volunteers, in buildings and spaces that are forgotten, underused and ripe for bringing back into the popular consciousness of their host communities and the wider city. The literature above demonstrates the variety of means and measures by which place might be understood, and evidence from both phases of data collection suggests that the festival's core team are cognisant of what their organisation can achieve in pursuing place-making ambitions. What is less apparent is the extent to which the central management are aware of having to lead two organisations in one: a formally constituted and functionally structured visible hierarchy and a socially vital yet intangible hidden network. When both work in some sort of harmony, exceptional experiences can be created through hard work and coordination. The greatest challenges for this festival, and for other festivals and events, is to welcome the dual identity of the organisations involved: their institutional role within which people find their formal and recognised places and their function as rallying points around which individuals can bring their own creativity and potential. Festivals are place-makers, and while their managements may set a destination and provide a route map, it is through a networked perspective that the collective efforts of individuals are brought to bear on the course which is ultimately followed.

## **Conclusions**

Volunteer teams are a careful balance of individual and collective investment and reward. For the chosen festival to pursue its place-making and community engagement objectives, the management must formulate and communicate its vision throughout such an organisation. SNA has shown the means by which this may happen, identifying and understanding connections between individual people as part of a larger network of relationships. Interviews offered insiders' perspectives to enrich the survey data, validating the creative director's choice of participants while revealing the complexities of their diverse perspectives. The festival has built its identity on community interaction and place transformation, yet such an event has temporal boundaries and cannot singlehandedly deliver sustainable change within a local neighbourhood. This is compounded by the festival's predilection for changing venue every year or two. A temporary centre of activity is valuable nonetheless, a home for the festival team and numerous other communities who contribute to the shared experience. With elements of both the iterative and the pulsar (Richards, 2015a), festivals such as these offer a chance to renegotiate what a place can be and a community can become.

In the course of this research, the festival's management welcomed being a subject of analysis. Though it is not the place of this article to make explicit

recommendations on how the networked characterisation of the organisation can be best developed, a general emphasis on sharing information, recognising everybody's contributions and encouraging team members to learn about each other's connections and attributes will stand them in good stead. The interviewees confirmed, with varying emphasis, the festival's self-perceived role in the process of local place-making, yet it was apparent that the creative and cultural ambitions of the volunteers and contributing artists were not being sacrificed on this altar. They have shown that for the duration of the festival they can make a place that has value and meaning for thousands of people. Providing such a platform, on which others may also project their interpretations of place and the process of place-making, delivered a means of integrating with local communities, and thus presented a path to longer-term sustainability for the gains achieved during the festival period.

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#### 4.1.8 Festival to Festival: Networked Relationships Between Fringe Festivals

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#### **Abstract**

This article aims to demonstrate the importance and value of collaboration between members of a formalized network of Fringe festivals. The research was informed by Castells (the network society, space of flows, and space of places) and Richards (network-centric eventfulness, pulsar and iterative events), as well as publications that critique their work. The article combines theoretical and conceptual frameworks with primary evidence, thus responding to prominent criticisms of the foundation texts. Primary research was focused around an innovative case study, utilizing two-mode social network analysis (SNA), documentary evidence, and interview data. The history and characteristics of the Fringe network in question were found to be influential in the nature and characteristics of its member festivals. A policy of collaboration is in the network's DNA, and was therefore inherited by those festivals established under its supervision (the majority of those in the network). This collaboration has taken the form of shared projects, integrated administrative and management functions, and coordinated touring opportunities between the festivals. The article finds that the network itself is now in a preeminent position in terms of its influence on the member festivals. This has positive implications for the network's overall efficiency and effectiveness. Further research may reveal additional benefits and disadvantages for the member festivals, and their various stakeholders. Replicating the research with other Fringe networks would also be revealing, as each such network has a number of unique characteristics. This is primarily an explorative article of value to critical event studies researchers, it complements existing applications of SNA techniques and approaches to events, and contains additional references to festival communities and places. The article also has practical value for Fringe festival producers in terms of strategic management and inter-Fringe collaborations.

Key words: Fringe festival; Networks; Network society; Eventfulness; Castells

#### **Introduction**

The nature of "Fringe" festivals lends itself to considering this type of event from a network-orientated perspective. The Edinburgh Fringe, recognized as the pioneer of

this form of event, is described as “an open access festival that accommodates anyone with a desire to perform and a venue willing to host them” (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019a). This feat involves performers and producers, working with venue managers, administrators, and technicians, in support of audience members, the media, and arts industry professionals (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b). At its most effective, the decentralized nature of a Fringe accentuates the free association of these contributors, unshackled by the constraints, limitations, and power relations that hierarchical organization can impose (Castells, 2000a, pp. 19–20). It is also apparent that preconceived stakeholder groupings and identities are often of limited relevance, as each individual person will most likely fulfil multiple roles, both during the festival and throughout the year, as recognized in an early strategic analysis of Edinburgh’s festivals (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001). Therefore, network-based research has much to contribute to our understanding of the nature and practice of Fringe festivals, both conceptually, and also analytically through the application of social network analysis [SNA]. And yet, it is apparent that these events are themselves part of networks that extend beyond their own borders, both spatially and temporally (Jarman, 2016). Performers and administrators can have commitments to multiple festivals as they pursue either artistic expression or professional development. Venue managers and festival programmers travel nationally and internationally to present work, promote their organizations, and forge connections with potential partners. And, with particular relevance for this article, those who manage the festivals themselves are increasingly keen to capitalize on the potential advantages of tighter and more formalized networked connections between them (Awde, 2019). Fringe festivals are connecting, communicating, and collaborating. This article presents an exploratory case study into the nature, structure, and value of inter-Fringe networks. Social network analysis is combined with documentary evidence and interview data to demonstrate how Fringe festivals have benefited from closer integration of their administrative processes, calendar dates, and opportunities for mutual support.

The current article is a response to two others, each of which is in turn a development of work by Manuel Castells (Castells, 2000b). Firstly, Anttiroiko (2015) recognized Castells’s preeminent position as a commentator on the “network society” and its effects, yet has questioned the lack of data-driven evidence presented in support of his arguments. There is “almost complete silence” (Anttiroiko, 2015, p. 7) between Castells and the major voices in SNA, despite the potential for each side to benefit from an exchange of theory and practical analysis. Anttiroiko (2015) positioned late-1990s Castells as “possibly the most prominent figure globally in adopting network terminology in social theory,” but noted that he makes “hardly any empirical or methodological contribution to network analysis” (p. 1). This has opened a space for work that combines Castells’s network society theory with the growing application of SNA (Scott, 2017, p. xiii), against a blossoming

of global social media usage, while societies and industries are being reshaped around network principles (Shirky, 2009).

Secondly, Fisker *et al.* (2019) discussed existing applications of Castells's work within events studies. They credit Richards (2010, 2015, 2017) as the most prominent exponent of network society logic within the field, though advocate a more nuanced application of Castells to events research. For Richards, a rise in eventfulness, or "hypereventfulness," has been characterized by a "chaotic cacophony of events," shaped in turn by the network society (Richards, 2010, p. 3). Consideration of the mutual importance of events and networks has since led to the identification of "iterative" and "pulsar" events, and the roles they can fulfil in the "eventful city" (Richards, 2015). Iterative events are here framed as periods of continuity, facilitating bonding social capital, and maintaining local community structures; pulsar events in contrast are a potential challenge to the established order, create an environment suitable for generating bridging social capital, and serve to link the local with the global in dynamic and decisive ways (Richards, 2015). Richards has drawn from Castells's formulations of the "space of places," which reflects traditional life from a place-based perspective, and the "space of flows," which represents life in the network society, where communications technologies have reordered life around flows of information, capital, and interaction (Fisker *et al.*, 2019, p. 4). Fisker *et al.* sought to avoid dogmatic simplification in the interpretation of these two phenomena (Fisker *et al.*, 2019), which is also attempted below through the deductive and exploratory examination of a network of Fringe festivals.

For the purposes of this article Fringes are understood as being inherently valuable and important celebrations for their stakeholders, administered by central organizations that benefit from connections to one another. The case study approach below focuses on a Fringe network where these connections are instrumental to the success of the individual festivals. Case studies have been used elsewhere in the analysis of events, tourism, and networks: Gallelli (2016), used SNA to investigate regional festivals around Piedmont, Italy, and Timur and Getz (2008) used similar techniques in their study of sustainable urban tourism. Three forms of data are used in the current article. Firstly, documents and other materials from the member festival websites has provided a "public-facing" introduction to the network. Secondly, an interview with a key informant focused on motivations to establish both the network and the festivals it encapsulates. Finally, SNA has been used to represent the network, using "two-mode" data to visualize two units of analysis: (1) four Fringe festivals; and (2) applications from those wishing to perform at them in 2018 (Borgatti *et al.*, 2013). It is hoped that the current work will facilitate further application of SNA into festival communities, and provide an empirical response to both Anttiroiko (2015) and Fisker *et al.* (2019).

## Castells and the Network Society

Despite the all-encompassing nature of his conceptualization of the network society Castells welcomed an open dialogue with his ideas (Castells, 2000b), asking that readers adopt “the notion of disposable theory” to use what they value and “discard the rest” (Castells, 2000a, p. 6). He refrained from characterizing the modern world as either an information society or a knowledge society, nor one where technology is the dominant factor; he instead emphasized how all three combine to shape society, through dynamic networks that adapt and reconfigure themselves on a global scale (Castells, 2004). The new technological paradigm drives an economy that is informational, global, and networked (Castells, 2000b), contributing to growing overall productivity, while transforming work and employment to the benefit of some more than others (Castells, 2000a). Greater inequalities are evident between those who can “self-program” and adapt, and those whose work is “generic” and expendable. In the cultural field, as in politics, the media is increasingly influential, driving a greater plurality of experiences and messages that emphasize both a simplified message and growing demands for interactivity and engagement (Castells, 2000a). The state, such as it has traditionally been understood, is having to respond to crises of legitimacy and relevance: supranational bodies such as the European Union pool sovereignty from their members, while regional assemblies and NGOs take on devolved responsibilities at a more local level. To retain support in this environment the nation state transforms itself into a power-sharing, coordinating “network state,” striving to reflect the views and interests of its citizens in the face of great uncertainty at both a personal level and collectively (Castells, 2000a, p. 14).

As if this was not unsettling enough, the network society is reshaping common understandings of both time and space, and herein lie perhaps the greatest implications for festivals and events. Physical space and copresence at destinations are rendered irrelevant in many circumstances through instant global communications, while time is further distorted through always-available media and changes to the typical sequencing of life cycle stages (Castells, 2000a). Where public events have transformative impacts on their host venues and destinations, albeit temporarily (Getz & Page, 2016), they offer social laboratory conditions in which to examine both space and time, described as “the fundamental, material dimensions of human life” (Castells, 2000b, p. 407). Chief among the resulting ideas is the “space of flows” [SoF] hypothesis (Castells, 2000b), which features in Anttiroiko’s (2015) response to Castells, and in turn Fisker *et al.*’s (2019) response to Richards. Castells presents the SoF as “the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows... exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors” (Castells, 2000b, p. 442). In the network society, the SoF is the sphere of activity in which capital, information, politics, and other dominant aspects of social life operate. It is a global realm

inhabited by relatively few, but decisions made here have far-reaching implications. Network society logic enables the SoF to overcome the twin burdens of physical distance and clock time, as communications technologies and executive airport lounges facilitate a rarified global culture (Castells, 2000b). Three layers make up the SoF: the physical infrastructure of telecommunications and high-speed transport; the nodes and hubs of different networks, from cities to organizations; and the “dominant managerial elites” who direct activity in the SoF, making decisions and forging connections between networks (Castells, 2000b). To operate effectively in the network society is to engage successfully with the SoF, whatever the industry or cause involved; exclusion from the SoF can be accompanied by a lack of agency, and a conscious dislocation from the networked loci of power and influence.

In contradistinction to the space of flows is the “space of places” [SoP], framing everyday life for the “overwhelming majority of people, in advanced and traditional societies alike . . . [who] perceive their space as place-based” (Castells, 2000b, p. 453). In this realm “form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity,” in physical neighborhoods, towns, and cities, and in the mental appreciation of those who live and work in them (Castells, 2000b, p. 453). Castells was aware of the tension between these realms, with their differing levels of resources, world views, and priorities.

Where, then, might a Fringe festival locate itself? The place-based reality of attending a festival is generally undeniable: as the Edinburgh Fringe puts it, “This is an international celebration that simply would not be possible without the support, creativity, and passion of Scotland’s capital and its people” (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b, p. 4). This is a thrill for those residents who feel an affinity with the festival and welcome its arrival. The same festival also pledges to “Develop the Fringe’s international reputation as the place to discover talent” (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b, p. 7), an opportunity to present and experience myriad cultures in one place, to an infinitely diverse audience. Edinburgh’s highest profile festivals attract about half a million overnight visitors each year from outside the country (BOP Consulting & Festivals and Events International, 2015, p. 9), with the Fringe among the biggest attractions. This is Scotland’s capital at its most cosmopolitan and cultivated, attracting a complementary audience. Yet not all of Edinburgh’s residents connect with the Fringe, or share the same sense of familiarity and ownership of it. Many residents encounter considerable barriers to engaging with the festival, which require institutional and personal investment to overcome (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b). It is broadly understood that engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders is necessary for a festival to retain local popular support (Bostok, 2014; Getz & Andersson, 2008), and that this can take time, resources, and no small amounts of creativity and ingenuity. Perhaps Fringes are placeless phenomena, able to relocate and replicate on the basis of an open,

adaptable, and networked organizational model. But if they are reliant on resident audiences and locally familiar cultural references this would suggest that they are primarily place bound. Proposing two ideal types in this way—the placeless festival and the one that is place-bound—is not to imply that these aspects of Fringe identity are mutually exclusive, and room can generally be found for both the cosmopolitan and the parochial.

Anttiroiko's (2015) article sees the grand network theory of Castells meet (or rather bypass) the evidence-based social network analysis of a growing field of researchers, active across a range of academic fields and industries. The principle supposition is that Castells is writing from a Marxist-oriented perspective on political economy, and as such concerns himself with institutions, structures, and theoretical class relations; conversely SNA roots itself in empirical relational evidence, which in turn helps detect and illustrate emergent social structures (Anttiroiko, 2015). Regardless of these contrary approaches, complementary themes are present on both sides of the discussion, from communications technologies to industrial stakeholder relations, with attendant opportunities for mutual benefit and deeper understanding. On the one hand, Castells offers theory and discussion at a macro scale, a world view built on network society logic, and a bridge from established Marxist thought to the contemporary world of connections, flows, and decentralized relationships. On the other hand, SNA turns concrete evidence of nodes and ties into graphs and statistics, it views the world from a personal scale, and the unit of analysis is often the individual. The strengths of one match the limitations inherent in the other. Therefore, to better understand life in a Fringe network it is necessary to place it within a broad theoretical framework, while utilizing SNA tools to illustrate and calculate the evidence available.

### **Network-Centric Eventfulness**

The relationship between time, space, and events was given a policy dimension by Richards and Palmer (2010) in their conceptualization of the “eventful city,” a call for urban destinations to recognize the inherent potential in events and festivals to help achieve positive outcomes for different stakeholders. In 2017 Richards introduced three emerging models of this concept, featuring “event-centric,” “sector-centric,” and ultimately “network-centric” strategies (Richards, 2017). These emergent ideal type models use events in different ways, have varying objectives, and should be evaluated in different ways. For example, network-centric approaches should be judged on the creation of “network value’... a measure of the outputs generated by the network as a whole over and above that which the city could achieve on its own” (Richards, 2017, p. 541). A network of Fringe festivals has the potential to achieve benefits beyond what is possible for an isolated festival, or rather there are

advantages to the cities involved as a result of hosting these networked festivals. This approach has SoF connotations where cities, organizations, and key individuals are positioned as nodes in the Fringe sector network, either because they host such a festival or contribute artistic content and other key resources (Castells, 2000b). The current research is focused on the experiences of (1) individual festivals and (2) their formalized networks, though it is recognized that there are tensions inherent in trying to dissociate one from the other. After all, such networks might only reveal their presence and value through the actions of their member festivals.

The elemental urge to categorize events and festivals according to size and content has long had a place in the academic literature (Bowdin et al., 2011), though the formulation of “iterative” and “pulsar” event forms marks a decisive break from previous approaches. Thus, in the network society events exist either to maintain and consolidate local connections and communities, or as transformatory spectacles able to restructure social bonds on a grand scale (Richards, 2015). Iterative events have a cyclical nature and emphasize tradition, bonding social capital, local content, and have an innate conservatism. Their SNA characteristics are predominantly defined by clusters, with ties in place redolent of small world networks (Jarman et al., 2014). Pulsar events are disruptive and they are relatively rare, they operate on a global scale to both generate bridging social capital and advance political agendas. Such events exemplify the role of “switchers,” as nodal points “connecting or disconnecting networks on the basis of certain programs or strategies” (Castells, 2004, p. 224). To be a switcher, is to hold network power. Other network members may have the role of “programmers” with a more localized agenda, whose engagement with even the biggest and most transformatory of events has a more iterative quality. An event’s size and content are both still relevant to its management and meaning, but in the network society they only go so far in demonstrating its value to different stakeholders. Of central importance to the propositions being presented here, and indeed to the narrative of this article, is the extent to which festivals can tie the local to the global, to link the space of places with the space of flows, where events have “new roles in connecting people, cultures and ideas” (Richards, 2015, p. 554).

Fisker *et al.* (2019) identified Richards as developing the only “systematic and sustained appropriation” of Castells’s work in the field of festivals and events, setting up the ideal types of iterative and pulsar events, and thus opening an “avenue for empirical research” that can help to better understand such events and connect them with diverse elements of the network society (pp. 5–6). From this foundation Fisker *et al.* ventured to blur the boundaries between event categories, emphasizing how events can hold multiple characteristics. They may exhibit both pulsar and iterative qualities in varying amounts, with the potential to soften the boundary between the SoF and the SoP. For example, a festival could embody the international SoF culture

in physically tangible place-based hubs and nodes. Simultaneously, the everyday SoP residents would have a means of engaging with global flows of creativity and culture, media attention, and finance (Fisker et al., 2019). Such a festival might both draw from its iterative local heritage to gain community support in the SoP, while also delivering a thematic strand that appeals to visiting audiences and connects the locality to a broader industry in the SoF. Size and scale are not intrinsically determining factors in the success of such projects, rather the ambitions, actions, and achievements of their managements and host communities. Fisker *et al.* (2019) drew on bridge building, place making, and the integration of cultural and social fluidity and fixity in order to build their conceptual framework. They also highlighted the potential for both qualitative and quantitative data to play a part in future research, part of the “double move of dis- and re-entanglement” as festivals are tested against Castells’s and Richards’s dichotomies, before being built back up to reveal a more nuanced whole (Fisker et al., 2019, p. 20).

The consistent thread emerging from the work of these authors is that through complexity greater understanding can be revealed. The various dimensions of SoF and SoP, pulsar and iterative, the network society, and network-centric eventfulness offer means by which festivals and events might be interpreted and perhaps better understood. The current research aims to apply this framework by focusing on a set of geographically dispersed Fringe festivals that are nonetheless firmly connected in a formalized network. Castells granted permission to adopt a reflexive approach to theory, taking that which appears useful and discarding the rest. Fisker *et al.* were confident that a range of data forms have a place in this discussion. Therefore, the field is open to develop an understanding of Fringe networks from conceptual and empirical evidence that considers the meaning and value of these networks to those who shape and inhabit them.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

A case study approach has the potential to deliver a rich understanding of the experiences of those working within a Fringe festival network. This is both exploratory and descriptive research (Brunt et al., 2017), focusing on an environment that has seen little academic attention. A rarely blended mix of methods has been applied, partly to highlight the role that SNA can play in festival networks research (Ramseook-Munhurrin & Durbarry, 2018). The chosen case has also been selected in light of Yin’s (2014) five justifications for such research designs, with a combination of critical, unusual, common, revelatory, and longitudinal characteristics. Chief among these are the case study’s unusual and common dimensions, for while Fringe festivals are now found in hundreds of cities there are relatively few formalized networks, and each of these networks is unique in what it offers the

various stakeholders involved. The case being studied here affords its member festivals considerable benefits at an administrative level, encourages the sharing of information and mutual support, and facilitates a pooling of effort in the search for external resources. The research process has been primarily deductive in nature, drawing from the theoretical frameworks above, though consideration of the primary data has helped to generate the following three research questions in a more iterative manner:

1. What is the experience of working in a Fringe festival network, and to what extent does Castells's conception of a network society help to investigate and explain this?
2. Following Richards's application of network society concepts to festivals and events, what evidence exists of his interpretations?
3. What can SNA offer as a means of exploring and illustrating the role and value of "network society" logic to Fringe festivals?

Targeted answers to these research questions shape the discussion section below. Ahead of that, two sections reflect upon data collection and analysis. Documentary and interview data are discussed first, helping to present the anonymized case study. Secondly, the terminology of social network analysis is linked to Fringe networks, and the specific aspects of SNA used for this research are outlined. Triangulation between these forms of data has informed responses to the research questions (Brunt et al., 2017).

### **Documentary Evidence and Interview Data**

Documents and an interview were used to establish the nature of the Fringe network case study, contextualizing the social network analysis, which in due course provides this article's most notable innovation. Documents reviewed covered the websites and social media accounts of Fringes included in the focal network, plus each festival's printed program, their common guidance for applicants, and their shared online application form, the latter three categories all from 2018. These materials were clearly not drawn up for the purposes of the current research (Yin, 2014), they are instead targeted at key stakeholders in the management and delivery of the festivals. Each of the festivals' websites enthusiastically associated itself with the wider network, with the relevant logo and links to additional information prominently displayed on all of their homepages. The longest established of the Fringes set the tone, informing readers that from its earliest years there has been a desire from performers to combine festival appearances with a regional tour. As other Fringes have been established, reaching five countries and seven cities at the time of writing,

they have recognized and given prominence to their inclusion in the network. On social media the festivals reference each other and their shared projects. These festivals see themselves as part of an international movement and a shared culture, celebrating the Fringe spirit of discovery and artistic diversity that may otherwise be lacking in their destination. This evidence also reveals some of the practical benefits to be had from this coordinated approach, including the longed-for regional touring opportunities that are now feasible because of a concentrated festival “season” across multiple cities.

This is a network of festivals first and foremost, rather than a network of cities or their governments, who have collectively decided to pursue this form of event-based collaboration. While promoting a shared and collective identity, the management of each independent Fringe is also confident of serving their own local audience. For the applicants the process of applying to one festival or another is identical, courtesy of their shared artist guidelines and online application: the application process is presented as an embodiment and manifestation of the network. Consistent guidance on typical show and venue types helps set the mood, alongside practical guidance on travel time and acclimatization between festivals. There is a general expectation that applicants will put themselves forward for more than one festival. The resulting printed programs, produced by each Fringe, are necessarily more targeted towards individual festivals. However, there is recognition that a festival’s printed materials are powerful opportunities to present itself to the world, and as such these documents include invitations to potential new members to join the network of Fringes.

To enrich the documentary evidence an interview was held with a key informant, namely a representative of the most established Fringe festival within the network. This provided an opportunity to corroborate the existing findings, as advocated by Yin (2014). The interview ranged from a history of the network and the motivations of its original founders, to consideration of the various contexts and environments in which the member festivals operate. It was apparent that informal connections to other Fringes out with the region were vital long before the foundation of the network being studied here: opportunities to attend as audiences, performers, and nascent festival directors were all needed to help learn about the culture and management of such festivals. Tangible collaborations were also highlighted as means by which to forge connections, whether through shared projects or in pursuit of common agendas (e.g., sustainable working practices). As can be seen elsewhere (Jarman, 2007), the working through of early arrangements, approaches, and priorities can have considerable influence on the future development of festivals. The interview data here suggests that once the Fringe model had been attempted, modified, and established in the region it became more feasible for interested parties in other regional destinations to take it on as well. This was always a founding ambition

behind the network's first Fringe (to help facilitate touring opportunities and other benefits) and as such the network being studied is effectively older than its members, conceptually at least. Each additional festival then makes good on the network's latent promise to deliver benefits for member festivals and their stakeholders.

Notable strengths of the network highlighted in the interview include nurturing new festivals and sharing collective practices, so that a regional form of "Fringe" is being established. The network takes precedence and stakeholders are encouraged to engage with the festivals as a collective: artists use a shared online application process; joint funding bids are made to regional cross-border bodies; the network produces collective showcases that feature at other festivals around the world. However, there are limitations, from the logistical challenges of aligning dates and organizing transport to the varying levels of resources and support available in each different city and country. These are coupled with the relative novelty of this kind of festival, with its emphasis on experimentation and innovation, that simply takes time to engage local performers and audiences. The network is establishing new platforms for performance and creativity, while taking inspiration from generations of Fringe festivals across the globe. To prioritize the network in such an overt manner is uncommon, but the model is valued by the various festival organizers. The remaining round of primary research in this case study used social network analysis to deepen the picture drawn thus far.

## **Social Network Analysis**

SNA's rich vocabulary provides instructive perspectives on the structure and meaning of social relationships. This section draws on such terms in the process of introducing a number of established Fringe networks, of the type being examined in this article. The opening two paragraphs draw from published information relating to these networks, as well as a range of accessible texts on social network analysis methods and approaches. The discussion then turns to the "two mode" SNA applied to the case study's anonymized primary data.

With its global reach, World Fringe "operates to unite, strengthen & connect the Fringe Festival Sector and global Fringe community through introduction, communication, education and the dissemination of information," and lists some 245 festivals on its site (World Fringe, 2019). Building on these foundations, the Fringe World Congress is a biennial event that "brings together directors and organizers of Fringe festivals from across the globe to share ideas and network" (Adelaide Fringe, 2019). From a network analysis perspective, there is synergy between these organizations' stated ambitions and many of the core principles of SNA (Jarman et

al., 2014). Connections between organizations and individuals are clearly paramount, as is the contagion of resources, information, and opportunities that flow between them (Prell, 2012). Homophily is also implied, with the awareness that these networks bring together similar organizations, with shared characteristics and needs (Jarman, 2017b). To the extent that some Fringes are more established or of a greater scale than others, they may have greater centrality than others, across a range of measures (Borgatti et al., 2013). This in turn may afford them opportunities to provide leadership to the sector, forming bridges between other organizations and acting in a brokerage capacity (Prell, 2012). Both World Fringe and the Congress operate on a worldwide scale, giving them prominence and value as they fill structural holes to the potential benefit of the sector (Burchard & Cornwell, 2018). However, they cannot fulfil every need, and sometimes a degree of geographical propinquity is required to reflect the regional context (McPherson et al., 2001).

Regional networks of Fringes are arguably responsible for deeper connections between their member festivals. In SNA terms, this has implications for tie strength, and the overall density of the networks (Granovetter, 1983; Scott, 2017). Though the global networks highlighted above will inevitably contain clusters of better-connected member festivals (Comunian, 2017), regional networks can increase the density to the extent that every member of a network is connected to every other, whereby a clique can be identified (Prell, 2012). Cliques often have strengths (such as ease of communication and coordination), and sometimes weaknesses (including the potential for isolation and lack of innovation). Examples of regional Fringe networks include the United States Association of Fringe Festivals, who offer a bullet-pointed definition of “Fringes,” and affirm that in the US “no one organization or individual owns, controls or regulates the name ‘Fringe’” (US Association of Fringe Festivals, 2019). This latter point distinguishes the USAFF from its northern counterpart, the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF). In Canada, “Fringe” and “Fringe Festival” are registered trademarks of CAFF, and any festival wishing to identify as such “must abide by the CAFF mandate and the four guiding principles” (Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals, 2019). The open access Fringe ethos lives on in both countries, though the Associations’ operational and logistical differences have consequences for the networks they support. In Northern Europe, the Nordic Fringe Network (NFN) coordinates a growing number of festivals, to “simplify systems and provide touring opportunities for artists applying to one or more of the [region’s] Fringe festivals” (Stockholm Fringe Festival, 2019). By late 2019 seven cities will have hosted NFN Fringes, with a temporal clustering from late August into September courtesy of Bergen, Gothenburg, Lahti, and Stockholm. Each festival is independent, yet the majority have been created under the NFN umbrella, their creators engaging with the preexisting network.

The form of SNA being used in this article is “two mode” social network analysis, so

called because it enables two forms of data, two units of analysis, to exist in the same graphs and calculations (Borgatti et al., 2013; Prell, 2012; Scott, 2017). The oft-cited foundation text for two-mode SNA is *Deep South* (Davis et al., 1941), a study of race and social stratification in Mississippi, where the two modes were (1) social actors and (2) the events they attended. Beyond this, the SNA literature demonstrates how two-mode techniques can be applied to a range of scenarios, from open source software developers and the coding bugs they work on fixing (Conaldi & Lomi, 2013), to heterosexual swingers and the venues they frequent (Niekamp et al., 2013). Two-mode SNA continues to attract researchers' attention, partly due to the widespread availability of potentially suitable data. SNA methods textbooks frequently contain dedicated chapters, and journal special issues have been produced (Agneessens & Everett, 2013).

In the current research, material obtained from the focal Fringe network combines (1) applications submitted to the shared online form in 2018, and (2) the four festivals included on the form in that year. A first look at the ensuing graph (Figure 4.20) immediately demonstrates the density of the resulting two-mode network: most applicants (circles) are connected to more than one festival (squares, labeled for their 2018 chronological order). Three hundred thirty-nine applications are represented here, with considerable interest demonstrated for each festival: (1) 258 applications; (2) 248; (3) 277; (4) 301. Three isolates in the top left corner failed to select any festivals in their application. Three hundred thirty-nine applications mean a potential maximum of 1,356 ties had each applicant selected all four festivals; the actual figure of 1,084 represents a network density of 79.9%. It would appear that these festivals have followed a successful path to attracting applications, particularly in the context of an open-access process that is dependent on people applying to take part. These were of course mere applications, which didn't commit the performers to anything and were submitted months in advance of the programming and delivery of the festivals. However, these are encouraging signs for those promoting the primacy of a networked approach to Fringe management—particularly so when considering that only one of the four festivals had completed more than two editions as the applications came in, and another had never taken place at all! Where eight theater companies gave inspiration to the Fringe template in 1947, this regional network has demonstrated that the resulting festival model can have instant appeal on a grand scale (Borgatti & Everett, 1997).

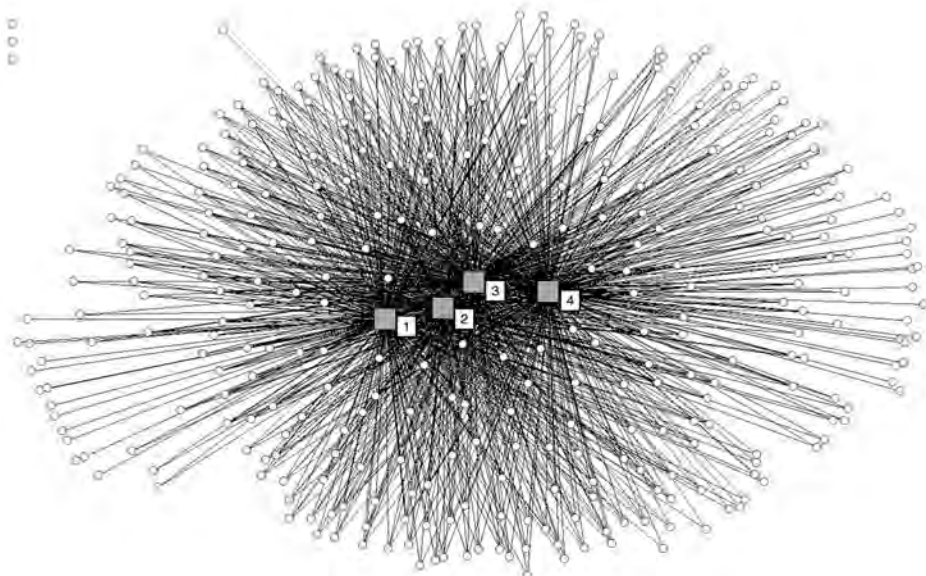


Figure 4.20 Two-mode sociogram of applications to the Fringe network's 2018 shared online application form

Aside from presenting data graphically, SNA allows for statistical analysis as befits the case at hand (Jarman, 2017a; Jarman, 2018), and in two-mode analysis this is often achieved by transforming the data into two one-mode networks (Borgatti & Everett, 1997; Borgatti et al., 2013). Following this approach, the Fringe network data are presented in Figure 4.21, where the four festivals are displayed as nodes labeled 1 to 4, and the applications are not included individually. The ties now lie directly between the festivals, rather than between festivals and applications. The numbers adjacent to each tie signify the number of applications that selected both of the festivals connected by that tie, and the width of the ties also reflects their relative weight. Therefore, the strongest connection is between 3 and 4, with the weakest between 1 and 2. Both figures show that in relative terms the differences are not too great: none of the festivals appears isolated, and there is little sense of a profound “core-periphery” structure.

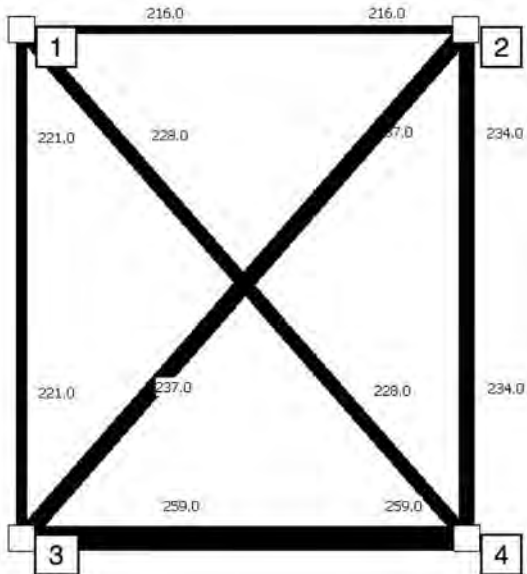


Figure 4.21 One-mode sociogram of applications to the four Fringes featured in the 2018 shared online application form

Borgatti and Everett's wide-ranging 1997 article considers the opportunities and drawbacks inherent in analyzing two-mode networks, including consideration of different measures of centrality. They note that some measures are not suitable for two-mode networks, while others come with caveats and limitations. Taking this on board, the case of festival 1 might be revealing. Festival 1 has the lowest ranking for Eigenvector centrality of 0.474 (where a node's centrality is a function of the centrality of its adjacent nodes, and this festival has relatively weak connections to the other three compared to their ties to each other). Yet festival 1 ranks second in terms of betweenness centrality at 0.244 (a result of a node's position on paths between other nodes) (Prell, 2012). Therefore, this festival appears to be relatively isolated with comparatively few applicants who also want to appear at other festivals. However, this then appears to be a factor in how important the festival is as a link between its applicants and the rest of the network. Festival 1 seems to have an important role in incorporating more peripheral contributors to the network, in ways that are not replicated elsewhere to the same extent.

The relationships between these networked Fringe festivals are based on a wide range of connections, of which shared applications offer an imperfect and incomplete picture. The data do not indicate how many of the applications resulted in actual appearances at the festivals, nor what proportion of applicants appeared at multiple Fringes and thus took concrete advantage of the network. Further data collection,

both qualitative and quantitative, could expand upon those themes. Here, in the final sections of this article, attention will return to the three research questions.

## **Discussion**

### **RQ1: What is the Experience of Working in a Fringe Festival Network, and to What Extent Does Castells's Conception of a Network Society Help to Investigate and Explain This?**

In this Fringe network, festivals share leadership and governance functions for mutual benefit. Member organizations benefit from the pooling of administrative processes and the apparently generous exchange of support. Newcomers stand to gain the most if they engage fully, bypassing slow and organic growth to attract an instant pool of keen applicants. From Castells we see evidence of the combined power of information, knowledge, and technology, with online platforms facilitating engagement between the festivals, and between the network and its stakeholders. Shared online applications are part of the picture, sitting alongside other manifestations of the network's primacy over the individual Fringes. The space of flows is perceptible here, though this is a network of festivals rather than a network of cities. When the network is dominant it has the power to bend space and time around itself: the Fringe network is present when its members deliver their events, but it is also in evidence when its representatives travel to other festivals, to present showcases of work, and appear on discussion panels. The network is a story worth telling and retelling, in person, in news articles and on social media. Physical and virtual copresence are in operation, from the Fringes' host locations to the journeys between them, and the online interactions between all interested parties. Local authorities, national governments, and international organizations all see the potential benefits of supporting the network, with its ability to ignite artistic passions and interests, and to promote (and critique) shared cultural norms and models.

Everyday life, for the most part, is lived in the space of places, which could prove limiting for this network of Fringe festivals. The logistical difficulties of traveling between locations need to be overcome for the benefits of scheduled temporal clusters to be realized. The network counts for little if the festivals struggle to find audiences and the applicants are unable to justify their investment. Should the relationship between a Fringe and its governmental authorities start to fracture then this too could be damaging: Castells' facilitating "network state" (Castells, 2000a, p. 14) could assert its hegemonic and controlling potential, threatening sources of funding and support for these individual organizations. Despite all this, the network society provides Fringes with the means to develop effective and meaningful relationships, creating benefits for the festivals and their key stakeholders.

Information technologies facilitate the administrative and communications links between them, on to which can be built layers of shared artistic and cultural understanding. To interact with one festival is to engage with them all, for this is a network that speaks with both one voice and with many: the application process, the values, and the ethos might be shared, yet they are expressed in many ways, not least of which are the festivals themselves.

## **RQ2: Following Richards' Application of Network Society Concepts to Festivals and Events, What Evidence Exists of his Interpretations?**

Network society thinking underpins network-centric eventfulness (Richards, 2017), and the twin concepts of iterative and pulsar events (Richards, 2015). All three forms of primary data used here support the notion that members of the Fringe network under consideration are both pursuing and achieving positive outcomes that would not be achievable by festivals acting independently: they are benefiting from the realization of network power, primarily in terms of attracting applications and external support, and sharing information and administrative practices. Alternative models of cooperation might well result in similar outcomes, but in this case the network takes precedence over its members, and thus provides the context for further analysis and interpretation. The network sees its tangible manifestation made real in the delivery of its member festivals, but there is also a role reversal in operation. To the extent that the festivals are so closely aligned to the network, their validation and true expression comes through being part of something bigger: the value of each festival is enhanced by the domestic actions of its peers, and their collective work throughout the year to present a coherent identity to the region and the wider world.

Locating these networked festivals within iterative and pulsar interpretations of events is challenging, because for all their dynamism and international interconnectivity, they must rely on local support as do all Fringes. The novelty of the festivals has clearly struck a chord with artists and performers, illustrated by impressive application rates despite their recent creation. This suggests a pulsar-orientated identity, introducing new models of creativity and expression on a foundation of external talent, driven by universal themes of liberal and artistic tolerance. The Fringe model has legitimacy from the countless other cities in which it operates, but for this network of young festivals to be effective it relies on managers and directors who can operate on an intercity and international basis. Their work, in turn, attracts the interest of global cultural communities and media. This is important evidence that the space of flows is a meaningful interpretation of the Fringe environment (Richards, 2015), which in the case study has resulted in a regional interpretation and style that allows for a more place-based experience. To set up a new Fringe as part of the network is to adopt the existing administrative models and

systems that underpin it, as well as its founding characteristics and motivations. This may be part of what motivates so many applicants to express interest in festivals that have little or no track record on which to build, because they have a sense of the dynamic and progressive atmospheres they are likely to encounter there. There is certainly evidence that herein can be found both iterative and pulsar qualities, a model of open access festival that allows for political and social agendas of all kinds to be housed within the same creative program.

### **RQ3: What Can SNA Offer as a Means of Exploring and Illustrating the Role and Value of “Network Society” Logic to Fringe Festivals?**

The form of SNA used in this article is “two-mode,” with four Fringes in the network providing one unit of analysis, and their 339 online applicants the other. SNA’s contribution has been to reveal the structure of the overall network while enabling consideration of its constituent parts, such as was seen above regarding Fringe 1. The 79.9% density noted in the resulting analysis demonstrates a very high appetite for applying to multiple festivals within the network, through the shared online form. Communications technologies have made it possible for potential applicants to research these festivals, decide that they would like to perform at more than one of them, and to submit their applications as they seamlessly engage with the network as a whole, rather than the individual festivals. Castells (2000b) championed the importance of such technologies, stating that this is what separates the current age from others that might justifiably be seen as organized around information and/or networks (Castells, 2000b). He also deploys the language of SNA when he talks about the “interconnected nodes” of a network, and the “distance” between nodes (from zero to infinite) being a function of whether they are operating in the same network(s) as each other (Castells, 2000b). However, from an SNA perspective the terms are used loosely, giving rise to some of the critiques that this article seeks to engage with.

The two key papers that this article is responding to both highlight the need for more empirical research, more engagement with the data, so that when networks are promoted as the vital social morphology of the day these ideas can be investigated and examined (Anttiroiko, 2015; Fisker et al., 2019). Anttiroiko celebrated Castells’s pioneering role in developing a grand social and political network theory, his recognition of the growing importance of technology, and the impacts this has on power relations (Anttiroiko, 2015). However, in critiquing the work, Anttiroiko placed Castells within a Marxist tradition that prioritizes economic and political institutions, and therefore this is the context within which individuals are subsequently situated. SNA generally approaches social relations differently, commencing with data about people and their connections, yet tending to underplay the influence of “macro-level

structures and determination relations” that cannot be derived from network statistics alone (Anttiroiko, 2015, p. 11). The Fringe SNA used in the current article offers a response to this situation, using primary analysis as part of a case study that has a clear conceptual framework. As a theoretical backdrop to the article the network society has guided the data collection and discussion, but it is the SNA that has driven home the ways all the shared planning, promotion, and administration of these festivals have served to benefit them in terms of applications and interest.

The revelatory impact of SNA on festival analysis would likely suit Fisker *et al.* (2019) as they examine network logic through Richards’s analysis of iterative and pulsar events, advocating a nuanced interpretation of his work. The risks of false dichotomies need addressing in their eyes, such that iterative and pulsar qualities are not always synonymous with the space of places and the space of flows as Richards might suggest. The current article has shown that the overall network is taking advantage of dynamic “pulsar” activity between the Fringes, delivering bridging advantages to their managements and stakeholders while challenging accepted norms of cultural expression, in a model where the network predates its member festivals. Yet each festival is also a product of its local circumstances, which moulds its resources and agendas, and in time facilitates the bonding social capital, media interest, local talent, and political support that “iterative” events are capable of (Richards, 2015). SNA’s role in the current article has been to highlight the advantages of a networked approach to festival management, in particular for emerging and nascent Fringes. The wide array of approaches to SNA, the forms it can take, and the data it can incorporate offer myriad opportunities for those researching this field. It utilizes a clearly defined set of terms and methods, combines multiple units of analysis, and addresses their attributes and connections. SNA also draws from a heritage of insights into both communities and events, and has much to offer the contemporary researcher.

## **Conclusion**

In the 21st century, networks matter. They underpin the action and ambition of individuals, and the form and function of communities and organizations. In the network society, information and knowledge combine with all-pervasive communications technologies, unshackling social networks from their previous limitations of “size, complexity, and velocity” (Castells, 2004, p. 221). In the Fringe case study, the basis for today’s network lies in the genesis of its founder member: touring opportunities, mutual recognition and support, collaborative projects, and shared technological administrative solutions have become part of the network’s DNA. Thus, these network resources are inherited by each new independent Fringe that joins the network, while festival managers have established their positions of

influence through their networked roles. Presence in the network gives festivals greater value from the perspective of their performers, and everything that supports a festival's content has the potential to benefit members of each key stakeholder category. Where a lone Fringe festival is a network of contributors, audiences, and media, the significance of a network of Fringes, a network of networks, lies in the broader platform it provides for discourse, identity, and cultural expression.

In response to Anttiroiko (2015), this article has shown that Castells's work on the network society indeed offers important conceptual insights and contexts for those applying social network analysis methods and approaches. This is perhaps of little surprise given the thematic overlaps between his work and mainstream applications of SNA, but with this connection now established in the realm of festivals research future opportunities for SNA-based investigation have been opened up. Thus, the current research claims a place among the emerging critical event studies literature, which is bringing new insights and platforms to the field (Robertson et al., 2018). This article is not the only work to link Castells with events research, of course, and as shown above SNA can also respond to Fisker *et al.*'s (2019) critique of Richards. In Richards's conceptualization of iterative and pulsar events, it is not obvious where a networked Fringe festival should be positioned: established Fringes deliver iterative benefits of bonding social capital; yet it is apparent from the primary research above that brand new Fringes can attract considerable levels of interest, offering pulsar potential. Operating in the space of flows has benefited these Fringes both individually and collectively, allowing each to tap into a collective understanding of what this form of festival can deliver in the local space of places environment.

A Fringe festival is a network based within and around a place. A networked collection of Fringes, formalized through shared operations and mutual understanding, expands the local network beyond its temporal, geographic, and artistic boundaries, to connect with and influence other networks. The case study has shown, through two-mode social network analysis and applications of network society theory, that with careful stewardship such festivals can establish themselves very quickly and begin to realize their cultural potential. For the festivals studied here, perhaps the only way they can achieve their collective ambitions is to commit to and consolidate their networked approach. Their message to other Fringes is to recognize the value of this strategy. For outside observers it is apparent that a creative and complex attitude to research is appropriate, to better understand these festivals and what makes them successful platforms for their many, many stakeholders.

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#### 4.1.9 Events as Platforms, Networks, and Communities

Richards, G., & Jarman, D. (2021). Events as Platforms, Networks and Communities. *Event Management*, 25(1), 1-7.

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#### **Abstract**

This introduction to the special issue on events as platforms, networks, and communities reviews recent research on these subjects. It outlines the previous work of the ATLAS Events Group in developing a “network approach to events,” as well as conceptualizing the differences between event networks and platforms.

Key words: Event networks; Event platforms; Network society; Field configuring events

#### **Introduction**

Because of their power as temporal markers and social catalysts, events are increasingly being used by places as a means to attract attention, form networks, and build communities. This is important not just in terms of developing social cohesion in the contemporary network society (Castells, 2013), but also for the value creation activities of enterprises and the place promotion campaigns of public authorities.

This special issue on “Events as Platforms, Networks, and Communities” presents a selection of articles from the Association for Tourism and Leisure Research and Education (ATLAS) conference in Copenhagen in 2018. We are aware that networks in particular are a frequent subject of events research (e.g., Getz et al., 2006; Misener & Mason, 2006; Todd et al., 2017), but many of these studies rest on a common assumption that events by their very nature as gathering spaces automatically create network, platform, or community effects. What this special issue seeks to examine is how these processes work, and the ways in which events support and in turn are shaped by networks, platforms, and communities. In this special issue we seek to go beyond casual observations of the existence of networks and platforms to examine their type and function, and how they are linked to different offline and online communities.

Our view, based on an extensive body of research related to event networks (Richards, 2017; Richards et al., 2013), is that networks can be viewed as a system

of actors or nodes connected by flows of information and resources. The interconnections provided by the network can provide moments and spaces for events to occur, as well as ordering the hierarchy of events. Analyzing the distribution of event connections and nodes can help identify the relationship between core and periphery network locations, or reveal “small world” structures within networks. Measurement of the centrality of nodes can indicate the relative importance and power of the corresponding actors, for example through techniques such as Social Network Analysis (SNA) (Jarman et al., 2014). The processes through which network links, nodes, and hubs function can also be the object of studies of network value creation (Colombo & Richards, 2017). The ways in which networks are constructed, maintained, and produce social and other effects are attracting growing attention from event scholars. Many of these studies focus on the role of event stakeholders in forming networks (Larson, 2009; Todd et al., 2017).

One challenge that we have faced in researching the event-related roles of networks and platforms is the lack of distinction between these terms. Although events are often described as platforms (e.g., Cervenán, 2017), there is little precision in the definition of the role, structure, or effects of an event-based platform, or how these are distinct from the wider networks of which they form part. In our view, specific hubs within a network can be developed to act as a platform that serves to frame and highlight particular connections and flows in the network. A platform can be defined in physical terms as a flat, raised area or structure, or in virtual terms as an operating system. These ideas include three basic concepts or qualities: the flatness of the surface of a platform that enables movement and interaction, the quality of being raised in relation to other surfaces, and the potential to program and create new content or structures.

This approach to the definition of platforms has some implications for our analysis. In particular, whereas the network can in many cases be seen as a simple connector or carrier of flows, the platform is a space that frames these flows, facilitating performance and visibility through the selection of specific actors and actions. In many cases networks use platforms as essential tools of network maintenance, making the network and its members visible at a certain point in time. The platform will often take the form of an event, or part of an event, which is supported by the flows and activities generated by the network. In many cases the performance role of the platform can be fairly literal, for example the stage at a music festival or an agricultural show (see the article by Langridge-Thomas, Crowther, & Westwood in this issue). In other cases, the platform may be a more embedded part of the event, such as the exhibition floor of a trade event. Paleo and Wijnberg (2006) argued that music festivals and concerts can be global platforms for exhibiting musical talent and for communicating musicians’ cultural newness. Colombo and Richards (2017) also discussed the relationship between the platform provided by the Sónar Festival of

Electronic Music in its home city of Barcelona, and the global network of different editions of the Sónar Festival in different cities around the world.

If we conceptualize the role of the platform as facilitating performance through framing, then questions of power inevitably arise. Who is responsible for the framing, and for the selection of legitimate actors and actions on the platform? Again, at most events this may seem obvious, as the event organizer is usually responsible for programming content. But as the articles in this issue by Langridge-Thomas, Crowther, and Westwood and Colombo, Altuna, and Oliver-Grasiot point out, in many events the program is determined in a more bottom-up fashion, and there may be a wide range of actors involved in selecting and framing the legitimate actors or the platform.

The debate about the nature of platforms is also complicated by the emergence of new technology platforms that link people and things through digital technology. As Nick Srnicek (2017) highlighted in *Platform Capitalism*, the platform is not neutral—companies like Airbnb are actively involved in curating the content of the platform, even if the users are often unaware of this (Bialski, 2016). However, some event platforms do act in a similar way to digital platforms: they facilitate exchanges between producers and consumers, enabling peer-to-peer interaction (e.g., think about car boot sales or vintage record fairs). As Jarman illustrates in his article on fringe festivals in this issue, networks of events can also function as a platform that supports the activities of individual network members.

The growing roles of event networks and platforms as facilitating and framing devices is also leading to more cities and regions recognizing their potential to stimulate growth and innovation (Fisker et al., 2019). As Richards (2017) noted in his analysis of different forms of event governance, network-based approaches to events are becoming more prevalent in cities. In some senses this mirrors the trends in urban governance as a whole, where the “city as platform” concept (Bollier, 2015) is becoming widespread.

Such developments point to a growing knowledge creation and dissemination function for events, which not only animate physical spaces, but which can also help to stimulate and organize other activities related to the knowledge economy, such as big data and open data systems. In the light of these developments it makes sense for cities to adopt a more holistic approach to events and their outputs by constructing platforms that can support events, maximize their knowledge production and circulation potential, and help to generate value-creation activities in the city. Such platforms can also help to support the flows of people and contacts that add vibrancy to places and which can increase “eventfulness.”

In the past, cities wishing to develop positive externalities from (major) events have been largely dependent on achieving synergies between the aims of the city, the media, and event organizers (Rennen, 2007). Increasingly, cities are seeking ways to try and steer events and their networks and reduce the extent to which external parties can control developments. This shift has been supported by the emergence of city networks, or what Fernández de Losada (2019) termed “privately-led city platforms,” such as Eurocities or the Organization of World Heritage Cities. However, smaller cities are rarely invited to be at the forefront of the governance of the new platforms: their visibility often continues to be confined to “dedicated networks” such as those focusing on peripheral cities or intermediary cities. Therefore, small cities have to find specialist niches (Lorentzen & van Heur, 2012) or else try and develop coordinated programs that act as a focus to develop specific fields. Alternatively, they can develop strategies to focus attention and embed networks; for example, by attracting switchers and (inter)national platforms to be active in the city (Richards & Duif, 2018). Therefore, the combination of networks (connections) and platforms (as mechanisms for focusing attention) becomes an attractive option.

Another focus of research in the study of networks and platforms is the relationship between these phenomena and specific economic, cultural, or social fields. Because networks and platforms are often constructed around themes of mutual interest and activity for producers and consumers, they often relate to a specific field. For example, in his article Richards pays particular attention to the role of the field in terms of value creation, while Langridge-Thomas, Crowther, and Westwood analyze the iconic Royal Welsh Show in relation to the field of agriculture. Such events can be seen as “field configuring events” (FCE). FCE are “temporary social organizations such as tradeshow, professional gatherings, technology contests, and business ceremonies that encapsulate and shape the development of professions, technologies, markets, and industries” (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 1026). As Lange *et al.* (2014) explained, FCEs are events that are capable of influencing the (global) field or network they operate in. One of the important aspects of FCEs is that the event serves to support the field, which at the same time increases the importance of the event.

The FCE concept also highlights the role of events as a platform for expression and exchange. Arguably the physical copresence of the event is what helps to bring the event networks to life. Therefore, events function as nodes in the network, where the network orchestrators, actors, and the flows between them become more visible. Such events act as a form of temporary cluster (Comunian, 2017), where knowledge spillovers occur and actors congregate to exchange ideas and establish their position in the network. As Richards shows in his analysis of event networks in this issue, events themselves can act as temporary clusters that in turn can spawn further events. In their study of the global fashion industry, Jansson and Power

(2010) also underlined the importance of events in establishing urban hierarchies in the fashion field, and that fashion events in turn benefit from the hierarchical positions that they help to create. This suggests a high degree of synergy between events and their networks, with networks channeling attention to events as temporal network nodes, and events providing essential support to network processes. This also underlines the essential duality of actors and events, where events serve as foci through which group phenomena can be manifested (Field et al., 2006).

In some ways the FCE concept mirrors Larson's (2009) conceptualization of event networks in terms of the "political market square" (PSQ) metaphor. She identified three ideal types of network, labeled the jungle, the park, and the garden, representing a tumultuous, a dynamic, and an institutionalized event network, respectively. Most attention has been paid to institutionalized networks (the garden), but much less to the tumultuous and dynamic forms of networking. Larson pointed out that in a rapidly changing environment, events that are institutionalized may find it difficult to adapt and innovate, whereas more flexible networks may prosper. She also pointed out that power relationships in event networks are often uneven, and that the political dimension of the network is therefore crucial. Major institutions in the event network will often play a key role in determining the functioning and goals of the event network. This also underlines that organizations join or form networks for a variety of reasons, including the need to gain legitimacy, to serve clients more effectively, to attract more resources, or to address complex problems. In doing so, the network members will try and gain a specific position in the network that maximizes the flow of resources and attention towards themselves. All network organizations seek to achieve goals that they could not achieve independently (Provan & Kenis, 2008), but the achievement of individual goals does not detract from other members of the network. In other words, networking is not a zero-sum game, but rather a process of creating network value (Colombo & Richards, 2017). This is an issue examined in the article by Norman and Nyarko in this issue in the context of a network of small cities.

Networks will also support and be supported by communities. This applies not just to the physical communities that often sustain community events (Jarman, 2018), but it may also relate to the development of online and offline communities around events (Simons, 2019). The development of event communities is highlighted in a number of the contributions in this special issue, including the community developed around cultural activities in Barcelona and Brazil, agricultural shows as a focus for agricultural communities, and the transnational community developed through fringe festivals.

Taken together, the articles in the special issue illustrate the diversity and complexity of event

networks, platforms, and communities. In structuring the issue, we have decided to start with those contributions that deal with a more microlevel of social interaction and community building (social groups and industry sectors), gradually moving towards articles that deal with more macrolevel interaction (cities and events).

In the first article, Lénia Marques, Carla Borba, and Janna Michael introduce the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS). They have focused on the event as social interaction platform, with particular focus given to the dimensions of cocreation, group socialization, and interaction ritual chains. The case study for this work is the festivities of São João in Brazil, through surveys collected from participants in 2016 and 2017. Findings reveal that participation is a precursor for social interaction in a variety of forms, and that those who are most invested in the events are most open to engagement with strangers. Marques *et al.* recognize that the literature provides various insights into events as opportunities for socializing, including business-related networking and the escapism of music festivals. Their contribution to this special issue pursues the relationship between social interaction and the social experience of events. The article builds upon recent work by the ATLAS Events Special Interest Group, to better understand festivals and events as platforms for interplay and exchange in multiple forms (de Geus *et al.*, 2016; Richards *et al.*, 2013). The ESIS is presented as a quantitative tool for the identification and examination of social interaction in a variety of forms, with potential applications across all event types. Public and participant engagement with both known and unknown group members is examined by the authors, with implications for event producers and policy makers seeking to promote events as platforms for social interaction.

Community engagement is at the heart of Weng Si (Clara) Lei and Chun Chen (Claudia) Li's contribution to this special issue, in both online and offline environments. Their work is innovative in both its methods and its focus. For the former the authors applied a combined methods approach, using net-nography to examine an online festival-focused chat group, which led to in-depth interviews with festival attendees who were active members of the online community. Lei and Li's focus is, as they say, distinct from the typical concentration on Facebook and other Western social media; they have chosen contributors to the WeChat online platform, and their interactions about China's MIDI Music Festival. The key themes of this article relate to festival attendance motivations, social network participation motives, postevent sharing of memories and trust building, and catalysts for event attendance and participation in online interaction. Lei and Li demonstrate that the actions of festival organizers after their events can contribute significantly to the continued relevance, activity, and sustainability of online communities.

In their analysis of the Royal Welsh Show, Greg Langridge-Thomas, Phil Crowther,

and Caroline Westwood argue that this long-running agricultural event can be seen as a canopy for a diversity of platforms, through which networks are cocreated between the event organizers and participants. They emphasize that the activities that are framed by the event platforms are organized both in a top-down fashion by the event organizers and in a bottom-up, ad hoc fashion by event participants and partners. Therefore, much content for this major event is generated by the extended stakeholder network of the Show, with the stakeholders contributing in return for the framing provided by the platform and the exchange of knowledge that this can provide. Therefore, the different actors in the event network (organizer, sponsors, exhibitors, suppliers, and attendees) can all extract value from the platforms provided by the event. Again, Langridge-Thomas *et al.* conclude that the networks and platforms are interdependent, but they sketch clearly distinct roles for these different elements of events. One particular element of agricultural shows is the competition aspect of many platforms dedicated to livestock and produce. This provides network members with opportunities for distinguishing themselves and heightens the attention that can be generated among competitors and attendees.

In their contribution to this special issue Alba Colombo, Jaime Altuna, and Esther Oliver-Grasiot analyze the role of Correfoc (literally “fire running”) groups in Catalunya, showing how the pyrotechnic activities engaged in at different events are part of a network that becomes physically visible in the platform or hub provided by La Mercè, the major festival in the capital city of Barcelona. In their analysis they pose the different local Correfoc groups as nodes in a national network. However, when the different groups are brought together in the major event, they have a greater need to distinguish themselves from each other and to reaffirm their local identity at the same time as performing the collective ritual that binds the groups together. Therefore, the article argues that the nodes of the network and the platform provided by the Barcelona festival are interdependent, and that both are essential elements of the ritual. The Correfoc also seems to illustrate McNamee’s (1995) principle that practices have a social history that is transferred through generations of participants.

Towns and smaller cities in the UK are the focus of Mark Norman and Nana Nyarko’s article in this collection. Their work is founded on the application of the business model canvas, and testing its value creating dimensions. Their analysis of 112 surveys from local government organizations identified the importance of “activities” (over “resources” and “partners”) in the creation of value as part of an event tourism strategy. That is to say, the practical operationalization of engagement activities by the local authority, to energize local networks of event stakeholders. The authors are also concerned with determining which attributes and resources might determine a local government organization’s effectiveness as the focal node of its network. The event studies literature is replete with both case studies and economic impact

assessments. Norman and Nyarko have instead delivered a much broader appreciation of the field, and have utilized a network perspective to explore economic value. Their focus on towns and smaller cities means that they can reflect the experiences of destinations with limited resources, while recognizing that such places are pitting themselves against larger and more established centers of eventfulness.

In his analysis of the Bosch 500 program in the Dutch city of 's-Hertogenbosch, Greg Richards continues his analysis of this case study of event networks and platforms (Richards, 2017). The article in this collection highlights the longer-term limitations of the city's stakeholders to generate sustainable activity and benefits from Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch's quincentennial year in 2016. Richards' analysis highlights the contemporary successes generated by the city, as it created network value and established itself as a platform for the presentation and understanding of the artist's work. Subsequent years have not played out so well and elements of "Bosch fatigue" are reported, recasting the legacy of 2016 as a missed opportunity. This longitudinal approach is also an important reminder that the study of dynamic networks is all too often constrained by analyses that rely on snapshots in time. Richards offers a means by which the appreciation of events might ultimately become more sophisticated and nuanced, recognizing their institutional value alongside their intrinsic and instrumental worth.

The nature, structure, and value of networks in the case of Fringe festivals is the subject of the contribution from David Jarman. He analyzes a network created by a formalized transnational group of Fringe festivals, drawing on the theoretical work of Castells (2000) and Richards (2015). He finds Castells' concept of the network society to be a useful tool for examining the functioning of the Fringe festival network because the festivals serve to link the global space of flows with the local space of places. In the network society festivals can work together internationally while at the same time maintaining a local identity, which makes them attractive as a platform for performance. Jarman also finds evidence for Richards' iterative and pulsar qualities of events; arguing, however, that Fringe festivals may combine both of these qualities at the same time. By stimulating innovation, the Fringes act as pulsar events in their local environment, while developing practices of event organization and form that provide iterative continuity for the local and international networks. Jarman's article is based on Social Network Analysis, which helps to examine and illuminate the connections between network partners. This analysis shows that pulsar effects can extend to the whole network, helping to generate bridging capital between festivals, while iterative effects are also evident at local level through the production of bonding social capital and local political support.

Some tentative conclusions can be drawn from the articles presented in this special

issue. Taken together, the articles illustrate the important and varied effects of event networks and platforms, and in particular underline how events support networks, which in turn facilitate the events. The cases presented analyze a wide range of different contexts, which shows that the research on event networks is beginning to move beyond the more common groups of stakeholders, for example into the territory of online networks.

However, it is also clear that most of the articles in this special issue still focus primarily on networks, rather than the platforms or communities that are associated with them. Hopefully these articles will help stimulate a more holistic approach, which considers not just physical networks, but also virtual networks and the platforms and communities associated with event networks. In building a wider vision of these relationships, it is also important to distinguish more clearly between networks and platforms, as these have differential roles and effects. Then it might be possible to understand more about the ways in which networks, platforms, and communities interact and strengthen each other. In the previous literature most work has concentrated on networks (perhaps also because these accord with common forms of stakeholder analysis) and there has been much less attention for the role of platforms.

There seems to be room for future research in analyzing the role of platforms, and their role in global and local networks. However, we can also pose the question of whether “platforms” simply represent a new or updated vocabulary and label for something that has been widely recognized for generations? For example, post-second world war arts festivals saw themselves as platforms for international cultural reconstruction; business events are presented as platforms for networking and conversation as much as hearing keynote speeches; mega-sporting events are platforms for Olympic ideals, international dialogue, and mediated celebrations.

We can also identify a need for new approaches to the study of networks and platforms, particularly as they can be developed and managed in a top-down or bottom-up fashion, as Langridge-Thomas *et al.* indicate. In the special issue articles we also see a distinction between ad hoc and informal networks on the one hand, and those created by and centered on local authorities and other focal organizations on the other. Perhaps networks are formed and reformed in both contexts as their members require, while platforms are only truly realized when given direction and purpose by important and influential individuals and organizations.

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# Chapter 5 Contributions to knowledge

## 5.1 Introduction

This manuscript is advancing knowledge in its field through a consolidated use of social network analysis and its application to festival and creative communities. The systematic use of SNA across different projects has shown that a variety of network-based methods and measures can be used to analyse these communities. Through this overall commentary, these projects suggest the value of a network-orientated understanding of festivals, events, and other phenomena in the field. This chapter's discussion is thus based on the application of SNA in festival communities, framed by two considerations.

- Firstly, the assembled publications will be used to demonstrate the value of employing critical realism more frequently, thoroughly and explicitly in festival and event studies, building on the methodological introduction to this research philosophy in the previous chapter. The development of critical event studies has gained momentum in recent years (Lamond & Platt, 2016; Robertson et al., 2018), with this thesis advancing the discussion below through a framework provided by Buch-Hansen (Buch-Hansen, 2014).
- Secondly, consideration will be given to the development of a network theory of festivals and events. The model for doing so is partly drawn from Van Niekerk & Getz's complementary consideration of stakeholder theories of events (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 33-36).

The novel methods employed through the collected projects are therefore the means by which these advances in understanding have been identified and pursued. Though SNA has been used by festival and events researchers before (Jarman et al., 2014), rarely has it been recognised as a foundation to develop the field. The following sections build on the SNA research in this PhD to reflect upon how festival knowledge can be advanced through both philosophy and theory.

## 5.2 Contributions framed by philosophy: festival studies and critical realism's resonances with SNA

This discussion proposes that through a network-based study of festivals and creative communities, as demonstrated by this book, critical realism's premise of an independent real world can be demonstrated, one that is knowable and (sometimes) open to improvement for those who experience it (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 121). By extension, the PhD has extended knowledge of those festivals and communities, and

the scope of future opportunities for research and understanding. Critical realism is rarely cited as a component of festival and event research, though it has been recognised as a means of exploring the relationships between social events, practices and structures (Jepson et al., 2013, p. 191). Jepson & Stadler subsequently claimed critical realist validation for adopting a mixed methods approach to research into event attendance and quality of life (Jepson & Stadler, 2017). The most overt application of critical realism to structure a piece of festival research was provided by Vestrum, in analysis of a jazz festival's creation in a Norwegian rural community (Vestrum, 2014). Vestrum notes a limitation of their application of critical realism, in that it essentially reduced contributors to stakeholder groupings, and that subsequent "research may develop a more fine-grained framework" (Vestrum, 2014, p. 639). This PhD is well suited to respond to this limitation. To the extent that festivals are a part of the social world, they provide environments in which to study individuals, organisations and communities, and such research can help festival producers create more effective events (Fox et al., 2014, p. 4).

The following sections use the PhD's body of work to review Buch-Hansen's consideration of critical realism's compatibility with social network analysis (Buch-Hansen, 2014). The opening sections of Buch-Hansen's paper note the positivist characteristics of SNA methods, including a reductionist ontology in order that data can be made to conform to the requirements of analytical software and algorithms – an approach at odds with an interest in complex open systems. There is reason to be optimistic however: "It is perfectly possible to apply SNA techniques without using them deductively, without combining them with rational choice theory, without making predictions and generalizations, and without relying on crudely reductionist formal models" (Buch-Hansen, 2014, p. 312). Reference is also made to Crossley & Edwards (Crossley & Edwards, 2016) and their consideration of SNA's role in realist sociology, social mechanisms research, and case study methodologies. What follows here is consideration of six ways in which critical realism and social network analysis "resonate" with one another – six perspectives on the papers presented in this manuscript that show how these collected works have advanced their field.

### *5.2.1 Depth realism*

Critical realism's acknowledgement of deep, potentially unobservable social structures positions them as distinct and independent of the experiences of social actors: structures and mechanisms are at work whether appreciated or not (Buch-Hansen, 2014, pp. 313-314). Papers presented in this book have demonstrated the scope of social networks through numerous sociograms, showing just how limited a

perspective each individual person has of the network's topography. From the staff of the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016), to the hundreds of applications submitted to a network of Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021), SNA has shown itself well suited to graphical illustrations of social complexity. In this regard the ego network research might be seen as an anomaly, with data collection depending on each ego's awareness, interpretation and communication of their network (Jarman, 2017): seeing over the horizon is antithetical to the rationale of such research. However, the egos represented in this paper were at liberty (even encouraged) to draw from the full range of their professional contacts, unbounded by the scope of the research. This positioned each ego within their broader community, not any single organisation or project. When viewed as a whole, the publications in this manuscript reinforce and justify the decision to focus on both "festival" and "creative" communities, generally seeing the former category as existing within the latter, yet each having an independent part to play from a critical realist's deep perception of reality.

Knowledge of festivals has thus been advanced by developing and applying methods that offer fresh perspectives on their social environments. Quinn's attempt to define "festival" as a term is rich in appreciation of this relationship, "drawing on shared histories, shared cultural practices and shared ideals, as well as creating settings for social interactions, festivals engender local continuity" (Quinn, 2013, p. 47). Through network connections this thesis has demonstrated the interpersonal basis for these interactions, providing methods of data capture and analysis that show just how important social relationships are. These same connections facilitate those roles festivals can play in ensuring the local continuity, by representing the ties along which information, engagement and meaning can be communicated (or perhaps be prevented from doing so). This is the contagion of shared histories, cultural practices and ideals, flowing through the social network, and identifiable by researchers equipped with appropriate methodologies.

The application of SNA in festivals research facilitates varying depths of social complexity as befits the project at hand. Distinctions between the researcher's "outsider" view of a network and the ego's "insider" observations (Edwards, 2010), for example, can reveal otherwise hidden characteristics of life in the network. Constructing the topography of a social network based on personal allegiances (Jarman, 2018b), and comparing it to the formalised structure of an organisational hierarchy, is revealing for those subject to both, yet previously unable to rationalise the two. For the festival volunteer they have an opportunity to see how their position compares to others, and to see who sits where between core and periphery. For the festival's manager, SNA is a means to try and understand the network personal allegiances that sit alongside, or perhaps merge with, their attempts to formalise organisational relationships. At a wider scale, deeper social structures affecting a

range of personal attributes have been considered in this book, from gender to nationality, to engagement with governmental agencies and aspects of public policy. Adherence to critical realism means recognising the importance of these factors, and SNA provides a means of exploring their influence, in the context of festivals and creative communities.

### *5.2.2 Agency and structure*

SNA is perhaps tailor-made to represent and consider the relationship between agency and structure, partly inspired by a need for “storing and analysing relational data” that allowed its pioneers to identify, explore and visualise “emergent (social) structure within these data – both for analytic and communicative purposes” (Crossley & Edwards, 2016, p. 5). With the agency-structure relationship not conclusively defined in relation to SNA, some applications of these methods are “more structuralist and [others] more individualist”, though the importance of both is not generally in question (Buch-Hansen, 2014, p. 314). Likewise, SNA shares critical realism’s appreciation of the constraining and facilitating impacts of social structure on the individual, based partly on their position in the network, and partly on the legacy of previous action to reproduce, modify or transform such structures.

From the PhD publications, agency and structure are reflected in the Science Festival project’s interest in participants’ employment status within the organisation (job title, length of contract, previous involvement, etc.), and how this is reflected in the resulting social network (Jarman, 2016). From the ego network research, a key comparative factor lay in the density of the two egos’ networks, with implications for (e.g.) how each ego saw their role as a potential broker, connector or gatekeeper between different parts of their network (Jarman, 2017). Meanwhile a core-periphery structure was clearly discernible amongst those involved in the volunteer-run arts festival (Jarman, 2018a), with implications for the transmission of information and opinions between core and periphery, and organisational decision-making. In each case, individuals had capacity to make independent decisions on how their involvement with a project or community would play out, yet these decisions were framed by the wider structures within which each person found themselves. Some of these structures may have been visible, experienced and appreciated by the agent in question (such as those within the arts festival’s relatively cohesive finance department), while others were seemingly hidden from view (in that none of the interviewees seemed to prioritise the core-periphery topography, whatever their position in the network) (Jarman, 2018b).

The chief contribution to knowledge being made here lies in recognising and

demonstrating how an individual's actions and experiences are shaped by the structures within which they operate, and that in a festival context there are particular factors at work in this regard. Short term contracts, dynamic employment markets, and rapidly evolving professional and social contexts all mean that underlying structures have frequent opportunities to influence the way a festival community (re)forms and operates. Equally important is that such dynamism can provide people (individually or collectively) with opportunities to influence such structures, creating and breaking social ties, exhibiting the influence of homophily, heterophily and other terms familiar to SNA. To the festival freelancer or contract worker, moving from role to role, the ability to find work might rely on what they can glean from colleagues and managers: opportunities based on who they know, not necessarily what they can achieve. The network-oriented methods and mindset outlined in this book are a way to clarify how such a festival ecology operates. Through SNA it is now feasible to show how individuals in a network are more or less likely to receive information or resources, and which attributes might help to explain both their network position and their capability of utilising whatever flows their way.

### *5.2.3 Emergence*

Emergence in critical realism is an appreciation that the constituent parts of an entity combine in ways that give the overall whole emergent properties, and that these properties are influenced by, but cannot be reduced to, those parts (Sayer, 2000, pp. 12-13). SNA is well placed to foster and understand the foundations underpinning emergence, because it emphasises nodes and ties: those nodes have attributes of their own, and it is through their connections that the overall properties emerge. This is just as applicable in a festival setting as any other. This PhD has shown that Fringe festivals emerge from festival producers supporting each other in formalised networks, and the hundreds of applications they receive from performers (Jarman, 2021), in addition to thousands of audience members and other contributors. The volunteer arts festival, meanwhile, was the product of a long-term core team, an enthusiastic periphery of contributors, an organisational ethos of engaging with the host community, and a sense of place embodied in the choice of a previously neglected venue (Jarman, 2018a). The festivals that emerged from these processes were the sum of their parts, yet with their own distinct properties that cannot be distilled or attributed to those parts alone.

This consideration of emergence aligns with one of this book's earliest proposals, that SNA offers a level of detail surpassing typical stakeholder analyses (Jarman et al., 2014, pp. 317-318). A network approach presents social actors as appreciably part of a whole. In network sociograms, for example, it is conceivable to view the

topography of a social system, according to whatever connections and contagion it has been designed to represent (Scott, 2017, pp. 13-16). In this manuscript such sociograms have shown the hundreds of applications received by the Fringe festival network noted above, but also how this same information can be transformed, reorientated and simplified without necessarily losing any structural information (Jarman, 2021, pp. 107-108). The reductionism of stakeholder groupings in festivals research (e.g. “audience” or “sponsors”) denies each individual person or organisation their place in the network. They are subsumed somewhat arbitrarily, and not represented as distinct units of analysis. SNA can provide a richer understanding of different parts of a festival network, delivering both finer details and greater complexity, with substantial clarity. This in turn substantiates and validates the identification of emergent properties from the whole.

Quinn proclaims that “celebration is a central meaning of festival” (Quinn, 2013, p. 47), and generating a celebratory atmosphere is important for festival participants: it an emergent property that many find attractive. However, this book demonstrates that festivals are not purely the consequence of their producers’ vision but rather the culmination of multiple contributions, and through SNA it is possible to recognise them all individually. If this is acknowledged, then the festival producer who seeks to foster a celebration (or any other experience) is therefore charged with attempting to create an appropriate environment in which it can emerge. An environment where all contributors feel willing and able to participate, in planned and unplanned ways, to create potentially unique and unforgettable events. SNA enables this to be described through a methodology that identifies relevant social actors, and considers the various means by which they interact, then analyses the communities and processes embodied by those actors. The examples in this book show that when appropriate questions are asked and the necessary data captured then the relationships that underpin a festival can be revealed. Those relationships may bear similarity to the formal departments of an organisation, or relatively transactional connections between audiences and performers, but equally they may not. There is no guarantee that a festival organisation, or its senior leadership, need sit at the heart of such relationships and networks. It might be the case that festival’s leaders are content to allow an open access spirit to mould the event, as occurs at Fringe festivals (Jarman, 2021), or they may drive their operation more overtly from the centre as with a Science Festival (Jarman, 2016). Either way, SNA is capable of reflecting the component parts that ultimately deliver different yet equally celebratory wholes.

#### *5.2.4 Open systems*

For Buch-Hansen, seeking resonance between critical realism’s closed and open

systems and a social network analysis equivalent is problematic (Buch-Hansen, 2014, pp. 316-317). A closed system being one with limited variables akin to a laboratory, where “an event of type a is invariably accompanied by an event of type b” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 70). The social world is generally more open than this, one where theories might help to explain a situation but they cannot describe it with precision (Bhaskar, 2008, pp. 117-118). The SNA analogy that Buch-Hansen finds is between bounded and unbounded networks: a bounded network could be one limited to colleagues from an organisation (Jarman, 2018b); while unbounded networks have no such limits, as seen when an ego is able to identify important connections without constraint (Jarman, 2017). Of the papers presented for the PhD a further consideration can be proposed, that as bounded networks have something in common with closed systems, so they also represent something of an outsider’s view of a network. Research into the Science Festival involved looking down on a social system (Jarman, 2016), whose boundaries had been defined in consultation with the organisation’s senior leadership. Investigation into an unbounded ego network encountered more of the complexities of an open system, in a process that was more co-creational with the participants themselves (Jarman, 2017, pp. 74-77). This latter approach was more attuned to the insider perspectives of those within the network, who were granted more freedom and flexibility to define the network’s scope (Edwards, 2010).

These themes all have roles in developing the study of festivals, insofar as they prompt the researcher to question the nature of the social grouping that they are setting out to investigate. Having adopted a critical realist stance, this section of the PhD commentary has highlighted instances where different projects have explicitly engaged in decisions regarding insider and outsider perspectives, closed and open systems, and bounded and unbounded networks. This is a self-aware and overtly engaged approach to festival research. The critical realist SNA researcher is required to consider the scope of their research, from setting festival network boundaries, to specifying the nature of connections between social actors. This is not just as a reflection on how complex or broad the research should be, but also as recognition of the lived experience of life in the network. So for all that it might have been logistically necessary to place boundaries on the Science Festival community, to aid data collection and conform to an organisational duty of care (Jarman, 2016, pp. 288-289), to those research participants providing data there will have been varying degrees of relevance in the eventual list of names produced. Indeed this consideration alone helps to validate SNA as a companion to stakeholder based analyses, where the latter tend to ignore or discount the scale and nature of the limits to their stakeholder labels, and thus the varying experiences of those categorised in this way.

Where Buch-Hansen reported difficulties aligning critical realism and SNA on the

theme of closed and open systems (Buch-Hansen, 2014, pp. 316-317), this PhD's festival focus provides a way forward. Festivals can be defined by relatively identifiable populations, places and times, tending to be structured around focused cultural interests, perhaps "the ultimate, most intense manifestation of the collective being" (Quinn, 2013, p. 47). Within a festival structure and process are both strictly formalised transactions (such as to permit ticket sales), and also dynamic open conversations (as seen on social media and in face to face interactions). Festivals therefore permit the making and remaking of social bonds in a comparatively controlled environment, approaching in a social context the closed systems that critical realists state must otherwise be "experimentally established" (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 33). SNA and critical realism have much to offer the study of festivals, and this thesis is demonstrating the benefits of using festivals in turn to advance those research traditions.

#### *5.2.5 Fallible and social knowledge*

Characterising the generation of knowledge as both fallible (open to "rational criticism" (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 43)), and an essentially social project, allows Buch-Hansen to present a fifth area of resonance between critical realism and SNA (Buch-Hansen, 2014, p. 317). Knowledge is here built on a foundation of prior understanding, in a social context that acknowledges the role of previous researchers, and the potential for future repudiation and refinement. Crossley & Edwards appear equally supportive of such a working environment, advocating a research approach that is rich in variety, in pursuit of richer understanding (Crossley & Edwards, 2016, pp. 11-12). Over the course of this PhD progression from one project to another has demonstrated such fallibility, with knowledge and understanding developing over time. Empirical and conceptual work has been presented at conferences, and published in journal special issues and edited volumes, to consolidate the twin research interests of festivals and networks. Refinement over time has come through data collection, data analysis, the use of computer applications, and the ambition to generate work that is valuable to both the researcher and the researched.

In this context, it can be argued that these PhD publications have made a meaningful contribution to the study of festivals and events. This is exemplified in Mair & Duffy's adoption of SNA, and the methodological inspiration taken from the papers being presented in this book (Mair & Duffy, 2020). They note, for example, that "our research questions centred on the two initial questions suggested by Jarman (2016)—who is considered by those in the network to be most important to the Festival, and who is most associated with its functioning" (Mair & Duffy, 2020, p.

100). These themes are important to the production and delivery of any festival, and this book presents SNA as a valid means of responding to them. It is instructive to note that citations of the first SNA paper being submitted (Jarman et al., 2014) range from studies of events and places (Adongo & Kim, 2018) to event design (Orefice, 2018), from festival co-creation (Chen et al., 2020) to analysis of social media communities using netnography (Fenton & Procter, 2019). An evolving conversation is therefore in progress regarding the place of SNA as a tool and an approach for the study of festivals and creative communities, and papers from this thesis have contributed to it. It is perhaps the dual appeal of methods and perspectives that has facilitated interest in festival and event networks, providing researchers with a choice of approaches as befits their projects. There is considerable potential for SNA to contribute more to the festivals body of knowledge.

### 5.2.6 Social science

The sixth and final “resonance” theme of Buch-Hansen’s paper concerns the nature and purpose of social scientific research itself (Buch-Hansen, 2014, pp. 317-318). He concludes that “Although network distance [the degrees of separation between two nodes] is generally not what critical realists have in mind when they talk about structures not being observable, the ambition of SNA scholars to disclose structural patterns resonates well with critical realism” (Buch-Hansen, 2014, p. 318). Pursuing the hidden mechanisms and structures of the “real domain” is firmly established as a tenet of critical realism, just as SNA researchers are alive to revealing connections beyond the “friends’, friends’, friends” communities that people are typically influenced by (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 26-30). The evolution of event studies literature (Getz & Page, 2020, pp. 17-22), and now *critical* event studies (Lamond & Platt, 2016), has firmly established social science’s influence on the field. With dedicated volumes also exploring *Events and the Social Sciences* (Andrews & Leopold, 2013) and the aforementioned *Event Stakeholders* (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019), a concerted effort is underway to explore how knowledge of social structures and events can inform understanding of each other.

This book is well placed to advance the social scientific understanding of festivals and events. Amongst the work being presented, for example, it has been shown that even a relatively small volunteer team combined several overlapping social structures (Jarman, 2018a). Without SNA driven research, such complexity could easily be overlooked. An insider’s intuitive understanding of pre-existing relationships within a festival team, or the evolution of connections between participants, can only be a starting point when trying to understand the nature and meaning of the social network they are drawn from. SNA has various means of delivering a clearer

appreciation, not for its own sake but as a means of framing and analysing the real domain's hidden structures. This is just as apparent in ego network research, where the systematic gathering and analysing of data from a single person provides a means by which the ego participant can better appreciate their own perception of their social environment, and hence better understand a crucial context shaping the decisions they make (Jarman, 2017). From the application of two mode network analysis (Jarman, 2021), it has been shown that valuable SNA data can be extracted from unlikely sources, such as applications to a network of Fringe festivals. For all that the members of this particular network might promote their close working, the demonstration that their applicants have taken advantage of this collaboration offers valuable endorsement of their efforts.

Social reality is complex, yet this thesis has demonstrated that methodologies are available to account for many of its intricacies, within a festival and creative context. In line with critical realist epistemology, it is important to reflect upon the role of social science in suggesting and revealing otherwise undisclosed "deep" structures (Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 122-123). In the examples noted above this could include the friendships carried over from previous projects that influence the social relationships reported by a festival's participants (Jarman, 2016), but at a more fundamental level forces such as homophily can be examined to seek explanations for what stimulated those friendships in the first place (Jarman, 2017). These relationships, these networks, might be hidden from some because they don't have access to the information, and hidden from others because no systematic analysis of the data has been carried out. The tools exist to carry out this work, whether cross-sectional to capture a moment in time, or longitudinal if attempting to track change over time as a festival community progresses from planning to delivery of their event. This relates back to Bhaskar's three levels of a stratified reality: the empirical; the actual; and the real (Benton & Craib, 2011, pp. 125-126). Through SNA and critical realism, this thesis shows that researchers have the opportunity to investigate and appreciate how these levels influence the creation and experience of festivals and events.

### **5.3 Critical realism as emancipatory research**

Within Albert's introduction to critical realism she asks "What is the point of social science... why are we doing it?" (Albert, 2020a). For Bhaskar, "there is a necessary connection between critical realist philosophy and emancipatory politics" (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 137). Much of the work submitted for this PhD shares critical realism's interest in social structures, mechanisms and their causal tendencies, not least those which are not immediately apparent to the observer or the observed. Adopting a critical realist stance encourages (perhaps obliges) a researcher to

pursue an ontology that is neither neutral nor dispassionate. Where there are opportunities to increase knowledge of the lives of people and of society, there is a path towards “human emancipation, or freedom from domination” (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 137). This might be presented in two phases: a “deconstructive” task to raise awareness of power structures and social inequalities, in order to identify opportunities for transformatory change; and a “reconstructive” effort that nurtures positive personal and collective elements, in pursuit of a better world (Albert, 2020a).

Four examples from this book can help to demonstrate the importance of critical realism’s emancipatory function. Data captured in the early research with Edinburgh’s Festival City Theatres Trust saw individuals required to portray the views of a stakeholder category: they were essentially denied the opportunity to present their personal experiences, analyses and opinions on their own terms (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011). Secondly, the core-periphery structure of the volunteer festival community showed just how marginal the majority of people seemed to be: asking respondents to identify their “most important” connections revealed a centralised management and decision making cluster (Jarman, 2018b). Next, in the ego network paper, SNA methods prioritised each ego’s own perceptions of their network as they experienced it: the research revealed the egos’ appreciation of the structural opportunities and constraints they were operating within when in need of resources, powerful people, and project partners (Jarman, 2017). Finally, the Fringe network analysis demonstrated to the member festivals just how important their interconnected relationships and identity are: people can always create a new Fringe under that umbrella, bringing considerable benefits and opportunities, but also bearing obligations and responsibilities (Jarman, 2021). As each of these papers deconstructed the properties and topographies of influential social structures, so each one increased knowledge and understanding of how such structures influenced the opportunities and decisions of the research subjects involved.

An emancipatory approach to festival and event studies is not uncommon, but it is novel to see either SNA or critical realism having overt and explicit roles in shaping and informing such analysis. Pioneering contributions to emancipatory festival and event research have reflected upon space and regeneration (Smith, 2012), a locality orientated approach to stakeholder relationships (Bostok, 2014), and the pivotal influence of policy on event strategy and delivery (Foley et al., 2012). Such themes can be revisited with the assistance of SNA based methodologies to enrich their insights. There is also ample potential to further develop each of the SNA projects in this book, to pursue greater understanding of the structures and mechanisms at work in each context.

Social network analysis has helped map out connections and relationships in a range of examples for the purposes of this PhD, but SNA alone says little about the

functioning of those ties. Questions remain over what such relationships mean to different people, how fragile or temporary they might be, or whether they have much bearing outside of the contexts in which they were reported in the research. Further analysis could also reveal whether the individuals involved perceive a need to be emancipated: they may be happy with their roles, accepting the positions in which they find themselves. That said, revealing the extent of someone's marginalisation could prove transformative. This latter point is related to living with "false beliefs" about one's relationships within a social structure, such that these structures might be constructed and experienced expressly to the benefit of some over others (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 137). A critical realist approach keeps the researcher alive to this, and mindful of the influence on people and communities. This thesis is a step towards affirming the importance of personal experiences in festival and event research, while demonstrating the potential of SNA to deliver novel insights, to the benefit of research subjects and festival participants.

The subjective values, politics and ethics of the researcher are inevitably influential when pursuing critical realist priorities in the pursuit of a better world. However, a general critical realist principle that "it is better, other things being equal, to have true rather than false beliefs" is instructive (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 138). Over the course of this PhD each empirical project has been motivated by a desire to show research subjects what their social networks look like, where they are personally located in relation to others, and what this can mean in terms of opportunities and constraints. Contributors had a general willingness to engage with the research, and its outcomes: social structures are important to people, both those they can perceive and affect, and those that reside primarily in the real domain, obscured yet influential. As a body of work, this book has therefore applied the marriage of critical realism and social network analysis advocated by Buch-Hansen, for "it may be 'a match made in heaven' as the two schools of thought have considerable potential to enrich one another" (Buch-Hansen, 2014, p. 322). SNA methods can be revealing to the critical realist seeking to know more about social relationships, while critical realism offers SNA a more solid philosophical footing than alternative traditions. Thus the study of festivals and creative communities, and perhaps society in general, can be developed through the methods of SNA and the philosophy of critical realism.

#### **5.4 Contributions framed by theory development: a network theory of festivals**

Social network analysis has much to contribute to a theoretical knowledge and understanding of festivals and creative communities, with the following section demonstrating advances made here in this manuscript. SNA has a somewhat

ambiguous relationship with theory, described in the *SAGE Handbook of SNA* as “a ‘paradigm’, rather than a theory or a method”, an approach to research that frames the data, methods and questions at the heart of social scientific thought (Carrington & Scott, 2014, pp. 5-6). SNA’s emphasis on personal connections can contribute to many forms of research, and thus it “provides a vocabulary and set of measures for relational analysis but it does not imply the acceptance of any one particular theory of social structure” (Scott, 2017, p. 8). Across this thesis, SNA has been seen as a component of both personal (Jarman, 2017) and collective (Jarman, 2018a) social capital, it has enabled an empirical analysis of Castells’s network society (Jarman, 2021), and it has helped open up conceptual conversations on the effective management of festival organisations (Jarman, 2016; Mair & Duffy, 2020). To this list of potential candidates for a “network theory” Scott adds mathematical theorems, exchange theory, actor-network theory, and relational sociology (Scott, 2017, pp. 6-8). Each has its place, yet none captures the full extent of SNA’s potential as a basis of theory.

The *SAGE Handbook’s* chapter on Network Theory establishes theory as describing “the unseen mechanism that generates an outcome from initial conditions” (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014, p. 40). Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell’s chapter incorporates a number of well-established network theories that have featured in this book, including Granovetter’s “strength of weak ties” (Jarman et al., 2014, pp. 313-315), and “small world networks” (Jarman, 2016, p. 304; Richards, 2015a, pp. 554-555) as explored by Milgram and others. Commonalities between these theories are presented, such that they are shown to conform to a “network flow model” of three layers (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014): a deep layer that establishes how social systems can be perceived as networks of nodes and ties, along which information and resources flow; a middle layer in which mathematics and simulations can be used to explore the characteristics of such networks; and a surface layer, where the mathematical model is applied through variables and situations from the empirical social world. The authors link this to a “network architecture model”, whose interest includes how people in similar positions within a network can have similar experiences (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014). From these network flow and network architecture models, questions pertinent to this PhD can be asked, such as:

- In a festival organisation setting, what factors might affect an individual’s exposure to new information? This was considered in whole network analysis with the Edinburgh International Science Festival (Jarman, 2016), and the volunteer arts festival (Jarman, 2018a).
- What personal characteristics and attributes affect a person’s influence and status within a festival organisation? This was particularly prominent in the volunteer arts festival research (Jarman, 2018b), as well as the ego network paper (Jarman, 2017).

- How can people influence the spread of information, resources and opportunities through a festival or creative community, either to increase dissemination, or limit it? This question considers SNA terms such as weak ties and “brokerage” and “bridges”, and was relevant to both the ego network (Jarman, 2017) and Science Festival (Jarman, 2016) projects.

These enquiries are all relevant to the overall research question of this thesis: What can social network analysis, and a network-orientated perspective, contribute to understanding the relationships within festival and creative communities? Seemingly, from the evidence of this PhD’s research and analysis, SNA can contribute a great deal. It has the flexibility to consider different types of relationships, in various circumstances and contexts, from a multitude of perspectives. This is a network theory focused study of society and community, where the “network construct is the independent variable, and the theory considers the consequences of network phenomena” (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014, p. 40). Work for this manuscript also conforms to the four dimensions of structuralist theory development highlighted in Marin & Wellman’s introduction to SNA in the *SAGE Handbook* (Marin & Wellman, 2014). The authors introduce these four dimensions by emphasising that SNA has a place in social research wherever relationships matter.

The first approach noted by Marin & Wellman (Marin & Wellman, 2014) is the redefining of key concepts in terms of terms of networks, and thus a re-framing of familiar situations. Second is the testing of existing theory. Through this book the most explicit examples of these have been in the preceding chapters, and their explication of resonances between festivals, networks, social capital, and place (as outlined in Table 2.1). There is a paradigmatic novelty to viewing the social world of festivals as a network, amalgamating methodology and theory. In its way, this manuscript is therefore making a contribution to an evolution that Prell describes towards a more “deductive, theory-driven approach” to SNA (Prell, 2012, p. 61), as the field matures and is applied in more settings. The third and fourth dimensions to Marin & Wellman’s structural development of theory are to look at the network causes, and then the network effects, of the social phenomena of interest (Marin & Wellman, 2014). The Fringe festival paper in this book (Jarman, 2021) reveals that when a network is prioritised and promoted above the individual components that make it up, it can be demonstrably and almost irresistibly appealing to the desired audience. These findings did not rely on norm-based explanations of what attracted performers to a particular festival, but rather demonstrated that it was the structural elements of the network that drew them in. Finally from Marin & Wellman (Marin & Wellman, 2014), a focus on network effects gives prominence to the range of social connections identified for study here. The formation of ostensibly transactional stakeholder relationships, such as past employment with specified organisations

(Jarman, 2016), professional collaborations (Jarman, 2017), and the Fringe network applications (Jarman, 2021), can be seen as starting points for deeper SNA based research, and not ends in themselves.

The sections below further explore the development of a network theory of festival and creative communities, with reference to comparable work by Van Niekerk & Getz and their consideration of a stakeholder based theory of events (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 33-34). Four approaches to theory development are thus explored: descriptive or empirical; instrumental; managerial; and normative.

#### *5.4.1 Theory development: descriptive or empirical*

A descriptive or empirical base for theory development is one based on “what happens in the real world”, and Van Niekerk & Getz place their emphasis on how organisations, their managers and stakeholders respond to their working environment (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, p. 33). This book has demonstrated that SNA offers a rich and cogent array of methods and approaches to describe social relationships within festival and creative communities, and that through aligning them with appropriate research questions novel insights can be gained. Whole network research has demonstrated that the underlying social and professional connections within a festival organisation can vary greatly from its apparent departmental structure (Jarman, 2018b), and that particular characteristics can lead to people holding status within such networks regardless of their official role (Jarman, 2016). In the ego network research, SNA provided a means of capturing a snapshot of an individual’s dynamic past and current relationships (Jarman, 2017), presenting them in a variety of ways that value both the individual and the researcher. To this end, SNA brings academic rigour and insight to bear on relationships that are often intuitively recognised by festival practitioners, yet can be difficult to capture beyond even one or two degrees of separation. The overall methodology applied across the PhD includes multiple approaches, methods and concepts, yet there is coherence in the resulting analysis that delivers on the early promise identified in the foundational paper (Jarman et al., 2014).

Relationships matter to those working in festivals and the communities that support them, and there is value in prioritising interpersonal ties when developing research methodologies in this environment. Before deeper theoretical themes are pursued, the act of describing a social network is vital to understanding the topography and characteristics of the network at hand. These are some of the initial conditions on which Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell’s unseen mechanisms work, to generate particular outcomes (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014). Merely through viewing empirical

evidence, influential network structures can be revealed: the core-periphery structure of an arts festival (Jarman, 2018a), or the differing densities of two ego networks (Jarman, 2017). This has advanced the field of festival studies, by demonstrating how SNA and network-orientated approaches can offer innovative illustrations and understandings of individual case studies, and from them to broader discussions.

#### *5.4.2 Theory development: instrumental*

Theory based on instrumental motivations is linked by Van Niekerk & Getz to an organisation's ambitions: how do "stakeholder relationships and their management actually affect the organization and achievement of its goals?" (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, p. 33). It follows that an instrumental *network* theory of festivals would prioritise establishing what a festival, or its contributors, are trying to achieve, then consider how social networks have influenced the development of those goals, their delivery, and their evaluation. From the projects in this manuscript, examples of networks having instrumental consequences include the Fringe network's attempts to attract participants (Jarman, 2021), and the Scottish volunteer arts festival developing links to its local host community (Jarman, 2018a). From the former, the overt presentation of multiple Fringe festivals under a single network identity generated considerable attention from potential applicants, who responded to a cohesive and inclusive brand that they felt encouraged to engage with. Volunteers at the Scottish arts festival, meanwhile, developed a complex relationship with their hosts. Local place-making was more important to senior figures than relative newcomers to the team, "yet it was apparent that the creative and cultural ambitions of the volunteers and contributing artists were not being sacrificed on this altar" (Jarman, 2018a, p. 347). In both projects, networks were a foundation for environments in which participants could develop their own meaning and value from these festivals.

Evidence from this thesis suggests that members of a social network will find a way to achieve their aims, through a combination of individual agency and collaboration. An instrumental network theory would recognise the interests and ambitions of both individuals and social groupings, without pigeonholing them according to assigned stakeholder categories. Festival producers would do well to reflect this in establishing and pursuing the stated objectives of their events, and researchers should seek ways to identify this influence. In proposing that festivals be recognised as networked communities in themselves, it follows that the creation and sustaining of such a community should become an objective and a measure of success for festivals. This reflects aspects of Bostok's approach to event stakeholder mapping, whereby the "locality of the event" is placed at the heart of the map, surrounded by

categories of stakeholders, all of whom are encouraged to collaborate for maximal sustainability and well-being (Bostok, 2014, p. 33). The difference here is that a network perspective can be more dynamic in its actions, reflect the contributions of each individual actor, and demonstrate to a festival's management how, where and via whom their organisation is engaging with other parties to affect its ambitions.

#### *5.4.3 Theory development: managerial*

A managerial approach to theory development is described as one seeking “general applicability across most or all situations”, that might be manifested in “managerial guidelines, recommended practices, structures, and attitudes to be adopted by managers” (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, p. 33). A managerial network theory of festivals should therefore encourage opportunities to codify and formally implement a networked approach to management. The Fringe network research in this book demonstrated the management value of prioritising a networked approach (Jarman, 2021), to the benefit of member festivals of varying vintages. The more established members saw the expansion of their network to other destinations as the means to providing participants with attractive reasons to become involved, motivations such as touring opportunities that “have become part of the network's DNA” (Jarman, 2021, p. 111). Those producing newer member festivals benefited from the established operating procedures and know-how of their established collaborators, while retaining agency and autonomy in the network environment. This freedom might have been compromised under more hierarchical arrangements. Fringe festival managers and leaders strive to create conditions within which participants feel able to create work and find new audiences, and as such they are setting the networked initial conditions from which their desired outcomes will hopefully emerge. Festivals are “set aside certain times and spaces for celebratory use” (Quinn, 2013, p. 47), but they are also markers of persistent communities, and this has managerial implications for those in a position to forge and maintain social and professional ties.

In terms of the management of human resources in a festival and creative environment, initial training, continual professional development, and organisational policy development should emphasise the potential benefits of adopting a network-orientated perspective to festival delivery. Research for this PhD has shown that people can be recognised for their individual personal characteristics, network position, and membership of subgroups, while still being appreciated as important members of a team (Jarman, 2016). As nodes in a network people have ties to each other, through which can flow information and resources, and this manuscript demonstrates just how important it is for leaders and managers to factor this into the way they construct and utilise interpersonal connections. In the cycle of a festival's

delivery therefore, such considerations should play a role in both recruitment, and in the establishment of practices that allow leaders and contributors to learn more about the underlying social networks in and around the festival. The presence of weaker ties, for example, through which novel information can reach an otherwise comparatively isolated part of a network as identified by Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell above (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014), and explored further in this book's examination of ego networks (Jarman, 2017). Research methodologies developed for this PhD have demonstrated that data focused on relationships and attributes can be captured from both new and well-established volunteers and employees (Jarman, 2018b). This would give each participant an opportunity to consider and report how they might best contribute to the festival communities and teams of which they are connected.

Those in leadership positions, tasked with making decisions and deploying resources, should recognise the existence of social networks that do not conform to the departments and hierarchies of their organisations, as illustrated most starkly in this book through sociograms generated with data from the volunteer arts festival (Jarman, 2018a). Here, when participants reported their "most important" organisational contacts, clusters of higher network density were identified in two areas: the Finance team, and a central core of seven. Other functional departments were not discernible from the network data, despite such departments being used to describe the organisation in four subsequent interviews with volunteers (Jarman, 2018a). There were in effect multiple overlapping social structures present: the departments that volunteers were assigned to and claimed allegiance to; the social network that reflected which individuals they felt closest affinity to; and within that network the dominance of a core-periphery structure.

Festival leaders need to appreciate that these might be the initial conditions they are working with, from which they must forge both an effective community and an efficient organisation (from the same group of people) who can deliver the event. Managers have the power and opportunity to encourage social engagement amongst their colleagues, through ways of working and socialising, which they might refer to as team-building. This manuscript demonstrates that SNA can reveal what that process looks like in terms of social connections, across teams, communities, organisations, and other forms of network. Management tools, techniques and software should be used to gather and present this data to managers, at different points in a festival's delivery cycle. This could help them to identify opportune moments and means by which to encourage beneficial social relationships and networks. That might mean integrating newcomers to their departmental teams. It could also enhance necessary connections between teams if seeking a small world network structure, of the kind highlighted amongst Broadway producers (Christakis & Fowler, 2010, pp. 162-164). Effective collaboration within and between organisations

should not be left to top-down direction from management, but recognised as a product of effective connections between people at various levels: from administrative staff to creative practitioners and frontline workers.

#### *5.4.4 Theory development: normative*

The fourth and final approach to theory development noted by Van Niekerk & Getz is the normative perspective, and is based on values, morals and ethics (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, p. 34). Their aim is to account for when festival and event producers should recognise stakeholders with a “legitimate interests in the focal organisation... especially the public at large” (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, p. 34). By emphasising what festivals “should” do there are resonances with sustainable development, accountability, corporate social responsibility. From a network and SNA informed perspective, a first step towards normative theory development is to set aside stakeholder categorisation and to recognise individual people as a primary unit of analysis (Jarman et al., 2014). There may be many reasons why a person’s network position and attributes influence their legitimate interest in a festival’s activities, as explored among volunteers at a Scottish arts festival (Jarman, 2018a). Here, people were selected for interview based on the relative centrality of their network position, and each revealed different reasons for involvement that balanced altruistic and utilitarian motivations (Barron & Rihova, 2011, pp. 205-207). The complex relationship between a person and the organisations and communities to which they contribute can thus be approached in network-orientated terms. The unseen mechanisms affecting each person’s involvement with a festival are personal to them and can cut across traditional stakeholder categories, and it is important that managers recognise this if they are to successfully benefit both the festival and the contributor.

This book’s development of a normative approach to festival network theory provides an important demonstration of the complementary nature of network and stakeholder perspectives: the legitimate interests of a stakeholder grouping rest with the individuals involved, not their broad categories, assigned labels, or association with particular organisations. This was seen when egos willingly identified people rather than organisations (such as funding organisations) when assessing their access to resources and opportunities (Jarman, 2017, pp. 71-72). Likewise members of the public who embodied the place-making activities of the volunteer run festival did so on their own terms, rather than formally representing the host community in some way; they negotiated the “twisting staircases” of the venue to create “bundles’ of experience” that informed each personal sense of place, before it could contribute to a broader collective memory (Jarman, 2018a, pp. 345-346). Meanwhile from the

earliest empirical network evidence, it has been demonstrated that on the eve of the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival employees retained strong allegiances to prior connections, rather than those within the functional departments to which they had been assigned (Jarman, 2016, pp. 295-303). These examples sometimes drew from stakeholder categories for inspiration, to help define the terms of research, yet the appreciable benefits gained from pursuing further investigation from a network perspective demonstrates the complementary value of these approaches to both festivals and communities.

A note of caution is sounded by Marin & Wellman in their introduction to SNA from the *SAGE Handbook*, which presents network-based accounts of social phenomena as “fundamentally different from explanations that rely on individual-level or group attributes”, such as static, internalised norms (Marin & Wellman, 2014, p. 17). In this context, despite having “little tolerance for norm-based explanations”, there can still be a place for them as dynamic “memes”, created and diffused according to people’s network positions and connections (Marin & Wellman, 2014, p. 17). The examples above can thus be reframed, such as proposing that regardless of a festival’s formal stated ambition to engage with the local community, for this goal to be delivered it is important to consider how such a norm can be communicated and adopted through the network (Jarman, 2018a). As such it becomes a social, rather than a personal or psychological enquiry. From a theoretical perspective the network emphasis is thus placed on the means of identifying and using appropriate network connections such that this contagion can take place, perhaps via the same “most important” connections underpinning this book’s whole network research (Jarman, 2016; Jarman, 2018b).

Establishing a normative network theory of festivals, that balances the personal and the social, can also be informed from a critical realist perspective, if considering its belief in social science’s emancipatory potential (Sayer, 2000, p. 18). This combination of influences legitimises the involvement of those with different interests in a festival, and attempts to encourage openness from management when sharing information and making decisions. In this context a marked core-periphery network structure of the kind identified at the volunteer arts festival is a potential problem (Jarman, 2018b, pp. 125-128). Without efforts to build trust, support and reciprocity, and to recognise existing connections between people, opportunities can be missed to strengthen a festival network. This can have consequences for the diffusion of norms desired norms from leaders to the wider festival network, from core to periphery. The arts festival’s core leadership team were seemingly more motivated by, and perhaps better informed of, the event’s attempts to engage with the local community (Jarman, 2018a, p. 345). The most emancipatory festival form is arguably the Fringe, and this manuscript has reflected on how a “spirit of discovery and artistic diversity” is celebrated across members of a Fringe network (Jarman, 2021, p. 105).

In applying to participate in the network performers actively sign-up to this spirit: they internalise the meme as a cultural norm. Thus whether a volunteer within a festival organisation, or a performer on a festival stage, the norms of the environment are indeed a dynamic part of the experience. Leaders may help to establish such norms, often seeking an emancipatory outcome, but enforcement is a socially contextualised negotiation, framed by the connections and contagions of the network.

In Scott's view, as noted above, SNA provides "measures" and "vocabulary" suitable for considering social relationships, without mandating a specific theoretical framework for their application (Scott, 2017, p. 8). This is comparable to Buch-Hansen's "foundation" and "superstructure" appreciation of SNA in relation to critical realism (Buch-Hansen, 2014). These terms help to frame the conversation, though in relation to festivals the discussion is in its early stages, with room for development as a theory of festivals based on networks is applied and refined. This PhD is a contribution to such a progression, and in its way capturing some of the evolution of festival and event literature more generally, from descriptive to instrumental accounts, from managerial to normative. In a relatively young field of study, it is important to test novel approaches such as the application of SNA. This should be done both in the name of academic advancement, and in pursuit of more effective festivals that benefit all those associated with them.

## **5.5 Contributions to knowledge conclusion: the value of a network-orientated perspective on festivals**

Social network analysis is fundamental to the arguments being made in this thesis, as an empirical research methodology for various projects and as the basis of adopting a network-orientated perspective on festivals and creative communities. But as this chapter has demonstrated, the contributions to knowledge that this PhD has made recognise SNA as their starting point: a foundation on which they can build in order to demonstrate the further importance of this work. Presenting these contributions with reference to critical realist philosophy (Bhaskar, 2008), and as a response to prior theory development in networks (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2014) and stakeholders (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 33-34), has shown that SNA is a valuable tool for a range of deeper and more fundamental developments in festival studies. SNA "provides a vocabulary and a set of measures for relational analysis" (Scott, 2017, p. 8), that can provide significant insights into the workings and experiences of festivals. There is no single theoretical tradition to which SNA researchers owe allegiance, and thus it is available to all who recognise the importance of interpersonal connections to societies and communities.

A network-orientated analysis of festivals should ultimately take a place alongside other recent advances in festival and event studies, as having helped to shape the context in which knowledge is created and disseminated in the field. Example perspectives to follow include the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), analysis of instrumental and public policy focused applications of events (Foley et al., 2012), and the development of critical event studies (Lamond & Platt, 2016). The network approach to festival and creative community studies explored in this book can complement all of these pre-existing approaches, initially by supplementing and enriching their analysis of case study festivals and destinations, just as it has for research focused on stakeholders (Getz et al., 2007; Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019). The process of carrying out empirical SNA work, by its nature of prioritising the perspectives of individual people, has great potential to illustrate and examine the networked lives of those confronting the workings of the experience economy, and the results of event policy decisions. In due course, in line with Bhaskar's emancipatory critical realism, network focused research can challenge and encourage other research traditions "to show that an alternative, and preferable... form of social life can be achieved (Benton & Craib, 2011, p. 140). The need to study social networks is increasing, as social media platforms proliferate, and connection and contagion are generated by the sharing of news, opportunities and viruses. Adopting SNA, and recognising the importance of social networks to the creation of events, are accessible and important steps for the advancement of festival and creative community studies.

# Chapter 6 Conclusion

## 6.1 Introduction

In the world of festivals and creative communities, relationships matter. Festival managers and producers understand the overlapping links, both professional and private, amongst their colleagues. Freelancers and graduates developing their careers appreciate that opportunities can come by way of personal connections. The future success of entire festival organisations can depend on forging, maintaining and exploiting associations with collaborators, suppliers and allies. Academic literature in the field of festival studies has sought to better understand the interpersonal dimension of these events, from different conceptual standpoints, in a range of contexts. However, in this festival environment there remains an opportunity, if not a need, to establish the place of network-based research methods and perspectives in the development of academic and industry understandings of social relationships. Networks underpin these connections and communities, from simple ties between pairs of people, to complex webs spanning hundreds of individuals, venues, performing companies, supply chains and audience members. The body of published work in Chapter 4 of this book presents a variety of projects that support a network focused approach, using social network analysis methodologies. The accompanying commentary has built upon these publications in the other chapters above, to explore the implications and opportunities of a network-orientated mindset within festival communities.

This conclusion provides a review of the preceding chapters, with reflections on how well the research ambitions have been met, the limitations encountered through the process, and also recommendations for potential applications and future research directions. The following section (6.2) will address the overall research question, aim and objectives, as originally set out within the Introduction (1.4). In the process key findings from the intervening chapters will be presented, drawing from this PhD's empirical research, and noting its key contributions to knowledge. Limitations are however inherent to the research process, as will be explored in section 6.3. Research limitations can also be a means of proposing further research, as set out in section 6.4.

There is considerable potential to build on and further develop the ideas and interpretations that feature in this book. The work here is predicated on the notion that social network analysis (SNA) is an underused and underdeveloped tool in festival and event studies. This thesis is a response to more established and more common approaches, in particular those focusing on relationships between stakeholder groupings. So there is the potential for a new paradigm to emerge from

this PhD, superseding comparatively reductive models that lack the flexibility of a network approach. SNA can present both finer grained individual experiences, and the grander scale of a whole network population of tens, hundreds or thousands of participants, with personal, organisational and strategic implications.

## **6.2 Overall findings: research question, aim and objectives revisited**

The research question to which this overall submission has been addressed is: *“What can social network analysis, and a network-orientated perspective, contribute to understanding the relationships within festival and creative communities?”* The question pre-supposes that communities exist within such settings, and that therein lie social relationships to be studied. As a starting point this focuses attention on the means by which such relationships might be identified and understood. The empirical research projects in Chapter 4 affirm that SNA based methodologies have a place within festival studies, and that a network-orientated perspective offers revealing insights to both practitioners and researchers. SNA has the flexibility to open individual stories, rich with personal experience, set within the grand topography of complex sociograms, which illustrate the influence of social connections that stretch over the horizon of any single person’s vantage point. Perceiving society as a networked world therefore encompasses both insider and outsider interpretations of communities and relationships.

The research question was developed into the following overall aim: *“To critically analyse social relationships within festival and creative communities, and examine the potential contribution of social network analysis in supporting and developing understanding of these relationships, from a network-orientated perspective.”* To pursue this aim, the published papers and overall commentary have been informed by prominent themes in the festival studies field: stakeholder groupings; social capital; place; and the network society. Resonances between these themes were proposed (see Table 2.1), asserting that knowledge of one theme can aid in understanding others. This helps to locate and establish network-orientated perspectives within the wider literature. In return it encourages and enables different and novel research questions to be asked, informed by a wealth of SNA tools and terms for the study of festivals. This is an opportune moment for this work, as SNA is being applied to a broader range of subjects than ever before, and contemporary society is increasingly aware of social networks. From social media to the transmission of diseases such as Covid-19, connections and networks profoundly affect everyday lives. Though network focused research alone may not be able to reveal the full implications of these forces, an emphasis on personal relationships is fundamental to any attempt to tell the full story.

The chronological development of the papers presented here demonstrates an evolution of thought and methodology, as a range of empirical SNA techniques were explored and applied over some five years, in different environments. The Conceptual context (Chapter 2) analyses this body of work, placing the publications within thematic discussions, and demonstrating how they and other comparable collections of work (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 17-21; Richards & Jarman, 2021) have explored festivals and events from a network perspective. Important gaps in the literature were noted in the process, including a relative lack of applied SNA. This is despite widespread awareness of the importance of networks and interpersonal connections by professionals in the events field. This may be a result of methodological novelty, for although SNA frequently makes use of standard data gathering techniques, researchers may be unfamiliar with SNA's terminology, software and analytical methods.

It is therefore appropriate that a critical examination of the research methods used was presented in the Methodology (Chapter 3). Here, SNA was explored in terms of data collection, measurement and analysis using appropriate software. Interviews, surveys, online social network sites, a focus group and case study documentation all contributed to the empirical evidence discussed in the thesis. The inherent flexibility of SNA has enabled this work to progress iteratively, led by both the researcher's burgeoning awareness of the possibilities of such techniques, and the research opportunities presented by the projects and case studies. For example, the Fringe festivals research (Jarman, 2021) was enabled through collaboration with a key informant, and the repurposing of their existing data that satisfied the requirements of "two mode" SNA. Conducting research through a series of discrete projects has allowed for new opportunities to be pursued and realised. The Methodology also introduced and explored the role of critical realism as the emergent research philosophy of the PhD. By acknowledging the presence of a real world to be studied, independent of the researcher, the empirical work here can be interpreted as attempts to uncover aspects of a reality that can be somewhat hidden from those experiencing it. There is an emancipatory dimension to critical realist thought, and work for this book has been determined to involve research participants and subjects in ways that could ultimately benefit their understanding of the social and professional worlds in which they operate.

In the chapters above, social network analysis has been validated as a significant and creative tool for research in critical events studies. There is evidently scope to encourage its greater use within the academic festival and events literature. The Contributions to knowledge chapter itself (Chapter 5) is structured around two discussions: firstly, insights gained through adopting a critical realist philosophy (Buch-Hansen, 2014); and secondly, the development of a network theory of

festivals (Van Niekerk & Getz, 2019, pp. 17-21). Framed in this way, the thesis has created space for original discussion of fundamental themes in social science and humanities research – such as social capital and place – both within and beyond a festivals context. This opens future opportunities for researchers to contemplate the use of SNA and network themes, while exploring means by which festival practitioners and managers can adopt a network perspective in their work. This PhD shows that an appreciation of SNA and networks can be the basis for knowledge generation, heuristic research development, and ultimately application by individuals and organisations in their festival production activities.

Prominent authors in both events studies (Getz & Page, 2020, p. 17) and SNA (Scott, 2017, pp. 6-8) have urged caution over the feasibility or value of a unified theory in their respective fields, but in combination there is more fertile ground for a network theory of festivals. This book has demonstrated that there is significant potential in this area, through a framework encompassing themes such as personal agency and community structure, emergent properties of phenomena and organisations, leadership applications of the concepts being discussed, and ultimately the establishment of desirable norms and values. A network theory of festivals should be one that appreciates the individual's place and role within the communities and networks of which they are a part, and that provides people with the tools to appreciate and utilise their positions within these social structures. Taken together, these factors combine to present a new paradigm in festival and creative communities research.

### **6.3 Limitations**

Four principal categories of limitation have affected the work being presented: methods and methodologies; approaches and objectives; applications of the work; and exemplars of good practice. Reflecting on them helps to explore the research process and can generate recommendations for future work.

Though standard data collection methods have been used (primarily surveys and interviews), there are methodological considerations that frequently affect SNA projects. Missing data can be a concern, such as in whole network research if a potential respondent has not provided a response: sometimes the missing data can be treated as “non-ties, which is simply incorrect” (Borgatti et al., 2013, p. 73). There was no straightforward way to overcome this in the two whole network investigations, though the Science Festival research response rate of 32.7% (Jarman, 2016, p. 292) was bettered to 82.9% in the subsequent volunteers arts festival project (Jarman, 2018b, p. 124). In addition, the populations that delivered these samples were

themselves still both subsets of the wider festival population though: respectively just the 162 paid staff of the Science Festival, and only the 35 prominent arts festival volunteers identified by the Director for inclusion. Non-engagement was not a concern in the ego network analysis where both respondents generously gave their time, although the resulting paper discussed the decision to take a random sample from the initial list of contacts given by each respondent (Jarman, 2017, p. 76). By reducing the lists of names to 25 for each respondent, following the “multiple generator, random interpreter” approach (MGRI) (Marin & Hampton, 2007), the scope of the data collection became manageable for researcher and respondents alike. By contrast, the two mode network analysis demonstrated the benefits of working with a complete data set: each application received by the network of Fringe festivals was included in the data provided by the organisers (Jarman, 2021). Different projects have thus responded to the issue of missing data in their own ways, helping to explore the implications of this consideration, within a broader iterative research process.

A second notable methodological limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data collected, as opposed to pursuing longitudinal efforts to reflect network changes over time. Despite the publications often drawing attention to the dynamic nature of relationships, and the inherent movement and flow of contagion from one person to another, the empirical data captured for these projects have delivered snapshots, located at particular junctures. Time has nonetheless played a part in the research, such as when explored with volunteers from the multi arts festival (Jarman, 2018a): respondents commented on the evolution of their interpersonal connections from one annual festival to the next. This use of a combined methods approach sought to respond to limitations of the earlier Science Festival research, where rich qualitative data were not collected (Jarman, 2016). The interviews thus helped to refine an initial proof of concept research design, similar to the missing data concerns explored above. The use of multiple forms of SNA, across several discreet projects, has hopefully had a mitigating impact on these various methodological limitations. It has increased the scope of the overall body of work, while enabling each piece of research to provide some compensation for shortcomings elsewhere. Any future use of SNA and network interpretations of festivals will further consolidate this work.

Limitations relating to the general approach taken have, perhaps, only become apparent in retrospect, when considering the consolidated body of work. The empirical focus has primarily been limited to identifying networks potentially worthy of study, then defining their units of analysis and the relevant ties (and non-ties) between them, and finally drawing conclusions. The emphasis has been structural. There has been less consideration of how such networks came into being, and little direct engagement with what might (or might not) be flowing across their ties and connections. Respondents in the ego network research were asked “Who have been

your most important professional connections for support and collaboration across your projects, over the past two years?" (Jarman, 2017, p. 75). Such a question is broad and open to interpretation, and deliberately so. Within the scope of the project, it stood as a proxy for whatever challenges, setbacks and successes the respondents had experienced, and no further data were formally captured to enrich the findings. The publications generated from empirical work have, generally, been limited in their ability to comment on various themes, such as the nature of the social capital, sense of place and community that sit behind the attribute and connection data of an SNA project, likewise enlightening project anecdotes and personalities. The volunteer arts festival stands out here, because of the follow-up interviews that revealed more about life in different parts of the network (Jarman, 2018a, pp. 345-346). Overall, this reinforces the value of mixed methods research, and in doing so highlights the potential of SNA to help identify opportunities for further investigation (Edwards, 2010).

There has been limited consideration of the practical implications of this book: the research was not motivated by a desire to create a practical guide to effective networking for festival and creative industries professionals. The following section (6.4) begins a conversation in this area, setting out some future industry implications of the work. Readers may also wish to draw lessons for themselves, perhaps by comparing themselves to the ego network respondents (Jarman, 2017). There are also opportunities to use these publications to further explore Castells's work, such as his seven consequences of life in the network society (Castells, 2004, pp. 221-224). These consequences range from the advantages of organisational flexibility over hierarchical rigidity, to the growing importance of "networked individualism", where cultural experiences are centred on the individual who is then compelled to share and co-experience them. In terms of the exemplars used from one project to the next potential limitations lie here too, as the case studies were not primarily chosen as representing models of good networking practice. Instead, the emphasis has been on exploring different approaches to SNA, and seizing data collection opportunities as they became available. The Fringe festival network stands somewhat apart from this, as its explicitly network-first approach has informed its growth and development, seemingly to good effect (Jarman, 2021). Overall, this body of empirical work has been exploratory, seeking new opportunities in festivals and creative communities research.

Against this backdrop of limitations, it might have been beneficial to select more overtly "network-centric" forms of eventfulness (Richards, 2017, pp. 539-541), to tell their stories and learn from their experiences. The work submitted reflects an emphasis, first and foremost, on applying novel uses of SNA, motivated by expanding the scope of critical festival and event studies research (Lamond & Platt, 2016). Decisions around the empirical research to facilitate this have had a

serendipitous nature, often following up personal contacts in an exercise shaped by social networks. The desire to view festivals and communities as networks has not wavered though, once it was established as a viable response to the shortcomings of early stakeholder orientated empirical research (Jarman & Theodoraki, 2011; Jarman et al., 2014). There is considerable potential to pursue further studies, that would complement and extend the work presented here.

## **6.4 Recommendations for future research and industry implications**

There is clearly a need to continue developing the use of SNA in festivals research and production. Engagement with new festival and event partners should be sought by researchers, where fresh sources of data and the prospect of longitudinal studies could demonstrate the dynamism of social networks in time and space. Comparing whole network data before and after a festival is likely to show the impacts of colleagues spending time working within and between their roles and departments. Tracking individuals over longer periods of time could show how effectively they use their connections to gain personal and collective advantage, making use of the information, resources and opportunities that flow through their networks. Examining additional forms of data, such as social media connections and email records, could help to expand whole network research beyond the curated lists of names used in this book. This would address the deficiencies of approach noted above, elevating the importance of network *flows* alongside network *structure*. There are then opportunities to further explore how people experience networks, through applying and testing theory such as Castells's consequences of the network society noted above (6.3) (Castells, 2004), and other concepts germane to this thesis. Over time it may be possible to identify general principles, and good practise at both individual and organisational levels, to draw out considered recommendations for practitioners.

Industry implications of the body of work presented here are already significant, with relevance to event producers and others associated with festival production. In this context, as with academic observers, gathering more data on personal and organisational relationships can enhance practitioners' appreciation of the networks that shape their work, and the festivals that result. These networks affect creativity, funding, and management considerations, and are instrumental in the evolution of entire sectors of the cultural economy. Intentional and focused recruitment through networks should also be pursued, applying a degree of SNA-informed procedure to the common practice of festival organisations employing people with relevant existing connections. Within festival teams, it must be recognised that ties and bonds exist between people that are not dictated by institutional hierarchies and departments, and that colleagues turn to each other across organisational

boundaries. It is perfectly feasible to identify the people with beneficial network significance, such as those most central to the social network, and to ensure that they are suitably equipped to help the organisation take advantage of their position. This could include giving them formal leadership responsibilities or sharing information with them in preparation for questions and requests that might come their way. This is a comparatively democratic approach to festival and event management: it considers the importance of interpersonal connections within a team, seeing that they result in clusters and cohesive subgroups, which are themselves not of the management's creation. Again, this can be seen as a formalising of much existing practice, made possible by the tools and approaches explored in this book.

This thesis also has significance for funders, policy makers and other supporters of festivals and creative communities. There are, generally, means to better support local networks of creative professionals. The work of organisations such as Creative Edinburgh has already been noted in this book (see sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.3), with their emphasis on forging connections between freelancers, and helping them to explore collaborations and professional development. Investing in such organisations, and projects with similar ambitions, helps to promote effective creative place-based ecosystems. This can benefit all those engaged in enhancing a sense of place, and expressions of social capital. For the people involved, the freelancers and other egos operating in such networks, greater recognition of the value of their social ties is an achievable path towards new opportunities. These individuals should also appreciate the potential merit and utility of viewing societies and communities as networks: such a perspective prioritises connections, and therefore opportunities to link disparate subgroups, granting potential brokerage power to those prepared to act upon it. Professional networks are dynamic, frequently persistent between projects, and based on shared endeavours, co-presence, digital connections, and myriad other foundations. Networks also underpin the decisions and actions of individual freelancers and collective organisations, which this PhD has shown are both reliant upon personal connections, between social actors.

Academically, a network-orientated perspective can support complementary approaches to festival and creative community research. The "snapshot" nature of SNA, for example, could help to capture moments in time during a period of change, such as the processes and consequences of festivalisation. This concept was used above (in section 2.2) to introduce festivals more generally (Jordan, 2016), but it is an exercise in social development and evolution that SNA would be well suited to illustrating. As a term, festivalisation helps to capture the essence of festivals themselves and why to many they are appealing. It also draws attention to the difficulties and limitations in this area of cultural development. More broadly, SNA might also be employed to uncover antecedents to change, revealing the connections of those involved in pursuing, resisting, regulating and monitoring these

processes, and their access to resources. Another established festival research theme standing to benefit from a fresh, SNA inspired review is social capital. Though work above (in section 2.4.2) reported a relatively settled set of factors contributing to social capital definitions, it is appropriate to consider them afresh in a networked appreciation of festivals and creative communities. SNA is a means by which to explore the presence and influence of trust, norms and values (both harmonious and conflicting). It can therefore contribute to social capital research that has long prioritised both the personal and collective implications of festival relationships (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006).

Finally, there is a need to consider other conceptual and theoretical framings of interpersonal and inter-organisational relationships as they relate to festivals and creative communities. Though the network focused projects explored here were initially envisaged as a reaction to the language and methods of stakeholder groupings-based analysis (Getz et al., 2007), there are undoubtedly benefits to seeing complementary strengths and limitations between the two. Therefore, more could be gained from expanding the range of models applied in the critical festival and event studies literature. Potential opportunities include: actor network theory (Monagle, 2009); project ecologies (Grabher & Ibert, 2011); rhizome theory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987); third place theory (Oldenburg, 1999); the political market square (Richards & Jarman, 2021, p. 4); and communities of interest (Hopkins et al., 2004). From such starting points, there remain opportunities to pursue knowledge and understanding of festivals, events, and their social environments. The critical realist stance taken by the current work offers possibilities to compare different approaches, in pursuit of more fundamental considerations of Bhaskar's domains of the empirical, the actual, and the real (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 56). There is considerable potential in examining the complementary and divergent aspects of these conceptual approaches, giving them a collective appeal. As an academic field, it is now time to develop a Festival and Event Studies Body of Knowledge.

## **6.5 Closing comment**

The principal themes of this PhD submission draw on fundamental elements of contemporary human society, and the role of the individual within it. Interpersonal ties, community networks, organisational frameworks, and an appreciation of social capital and place, all tell a broad story of how people view the topography of their relationships to others, and the social world around them. Festivals play a role in society by manifesting those ties and networks, providing periods of intense shared activity. The empirical work of this submission has provided tools to understand event networks, from the insider perspectives of those in the network, and the

outsider views of researchers looking in. Networks have been shown to be resilient over time and space, offering support to their members. Nevertheless, networks can also be precarious, subject to a loss of contributors and the ensuing breaking of ties that can reveal structural fragilities. The greater the appreciation for the role and influence of networks, the more they can be shown to offer insights and explanations into the experiences of individuals and the projects they pursue.

An appreciation of the influence and importance of networks is a foundation on which to develop significantly fresh insights into festivals and their social environments. A core value of this book lies in its combination of a network-orientated perspective, SNA methodologies, and other factors relevant to the different empirical projects. Further advances have been proposed through a new network theory of festivals, inspired by similar work focusing on the contributions of stakeholder-based research. Responding to such inspiration brings the narrative full circle, while asserting that the study of festivals can shed light more broadly on both the individual and the community. Festivals *in their own right* are networked communities, which extend beyond the temporal and geographic boundaries of the events themselves, influencing the lives of everyone they reach.





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