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# Critical Event Studies

*Approaches to Research*

Edited by  
IAN R LAMOND  
AND LOUISE PLATT



# Leisure Studies in a Global Era

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Ian R Lamond • Louise Platt  
Editors

# Critical Event Studies

## Approaches to Research

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# Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	1
<i>Ian R. Lamond and Louise Platt</i>	
<b>Part I Critical Considerations</b>	15
<b>2 Problems of Involvement and Detachment: A Critical Approach to Researching Live Event Experiences</b>	17
<i>Daniel Turner and Elliot Pirie</i>	
<b>3 A Qualitative Case Study of the 2010 Football World Cup in South Africa: Practical Considerations and Personal Dilemmas</b>	37
<i>Suzanne Douse</i>	
<b>4 Creating Critical Festival Discourse Through Flexible Mixed Methodological Research Design</b>	59
<i>Allan Jepson and Alan Clarke</i>	

<b>Part II Discursive, Historical, and Ideological Perspectives</b>	85
<b>5 The Rewards and Risks of Historical Events Studies Research</b>	87
<i>Matthew L. McDowell and Fiona Skillen</i>	
<b>6 Space and Memory in the Huashan Event</b>	109
<i>Dominique Ying-Chih Liao</i>	
<b>7 CDA, Critical Events and Critical Event Studies: How to Make Sense of Critical Events in a Society of Radical Change</b>	131
<i>Nicolina Montesano Montessori</i>	
<b>8 Using a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) Approach to Investigate Constructions of Identities in Media Reporting Surrounding Mega Sports Events: The Case of the London Olympics 2012</b>	149
<i>Sylvia Jaworska</i>	
<b>9 Examining Parasport Events Through the Lens of Critical Disability Studies</b>	175
<i>Laura Misener, David McGillivray, Gayle McPherson, and David Legg</i>	
<b>Part III Encountering the Event</b>	193
<b>10 Participatory Research: Case Study of a Community Event</b>	195
<i>Rebecca Finkel and Kate Sang</i>	
<b>11 Researching from the Inside: Autoethnography and Critical Event Studies</b>	213
<i>Katherine Dashper</i>	

<b>12</b>	<b>An Ethnographic Approach to the Taking Place of the Event</b>	231
	<i>Andrea Pavoni and Sebastiano Citroni</i>	
<b>13</b>	<b>Experience Sampling Methods in Critical Event Studies: Theory and Practice</b>	253
	<i>Jonathan Moss</i>	
<b>14</b>	<b>The Strength of Festival Ties: Social Network Analysis and the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival</b>	277
	<i>David Jarman</i>	
	<b>Index</b>	309





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# List of Figures

Fig. 4.1	Five point multimethods, and analysis framework	68
Fig. 4.2	Key research themes and theories surrounding the research phenomenon	72
Fig. 8.1	Concordance lines of 'women' in COR-OLYMP	159
Fig. 8.2	Terms denoting national and regional identity in the three corpora	163
Fig. 8.3	Distribution of gendered lexical items	164
Fig. 8.4	Concordance lines of 'British women' and 'Britain's women' on COR-OLYMP	166
Fig. 14.1	Initial visualisation	294
Fig. 14.2	Indegree centrality	296
Fig. 14.3	Between centrality	297
Fig. 14.4	Cluster sub-group	298
Fig. 14.5	Employment status	299
Fig. 14.6	2014 EISF	300
Fig. 14.7	Employment status	301
Fig. 14.8	Edinburgh Book Festival	302



# List of Tables

Table 2.1	Case study 1 & 2: Introduction and personal significance	27
Table 2.2	Case study 1 & 2: Approach to data collection	29
Table 4.1	To illustrate possible research questions within the festival environment	69
Table 4.2	To illustrate festival goals, data needs, and data-collection methods	69
Table 4.3	The festival periods and the data-collection methods employed	72
Table 4.4	Identification of possible variables within this research	74
Table 4.5	Festival events visited, and data-collection methods used	75
Table 8.1	Corpus data	161
Table 8.2	The 30 most frequent content words and pronouns in the three corpora	162
Table 8.3	The 20 strongest collocations of ‘women’ across the three corpora	165
Table 8.4	Collocations of ‘Ennis’ and ‘Adlington’ in COR-OLYMP	166
Table 9.1	Type of evidence used in comparing Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games with the 2015 Para-pan Am Games	182
Table 10.1	Key research actors	201

# 1

## Introduction

Ian R. Lamond and Louise Platt

The study of events as a specific field of academic inquiry is relatively young. Degree programmes within the field in much of the Anglophone world tend to focus on operational considerations associated with the project management of delivering a range of events. Consequently events are frequently located in a matrix of two dominant dimension; these can be summarised as one of scale and the other of content. Scale encompasses small, highly localised activities with a small geographic reach, to mega-events that mobilise substantial media resources and target a global audience. Content is commonly broken down into a typology of events; there are many variations on the articulation of events typological models—most can be summarised under the headings of sport, cultural, and business. However, that construal of events is being criticised more and more, whilst a neo-liberal agenda that attempts to managerialise and depoliticise de-politicised event typologies is being challenged.

The primary purpose of this book is to firmly ground Critical Event Studies as a significant part of the future for research and teaching, at all levels, within the field of Event Studies and Events Management.

Those fields are maturing, moving away from a single focus on operational/functionalist concerns, indicated by the development of an increasing number of modules concentrating on political, social, and cultural trajectories. A book of research approaches for Critical Event Studies is a vital, missing element within the field's progression. At present methodological discussion within event studies is often dominated by the changing demands for refinement of methods suitable for event evaluation. The dominance is a symptom of a neo-liberal economic agenda that seeks to de-politicise and, to some extent, de-culturate many events into some quasi-homogenous, 'Western'-influenced, entertainment. Whilst we agree that there is a vital need for robust empirical event evaluation (which, itself, needs to go beyond the current limitations of approaches that are dominated by a common assumption that event assessments are fundamentally economic impact assessments in various forms of disguise), that domination restricts the range of research philosophies and theoretical frameworks available to scholars. By presenting researchers with a richer range of approaches, insightfully discussed by peers who are trying to develop techniques appropriate to this emerging field, this book works as a signpost to a wider array of tools than are presented within the field as it has previously been construed.

Whilst there are research methods textbooks, which offer undergraduate students the tools and techniques of doing research into events, there remains limited work, which critically examines research approaches that will be useful to postgraduate and research students. Central to how this book locates itself, within the broader oeuvre of texts currently available within event studies and events management, is as a work that develops and enhances skills around socially conscious critical thinking, and critical reflexivity, in the analysis and study of events. As well as setting forth a number of research approaches suitable for Critical Event Studies as an emergent field it also challenges readers to engage in seeking further possible theoretical frameworks and research approaches rather than present a basic methodological 'how to' guide.

What research students, and academics active in trying to develop a critical approach to events studies, are increasingly seeking, is a richer understanding of what is to be understood as an event and what the study

of events actually embraces. Many scholars interested in events, and teaching events management in higher education institutions, come with a background in related disciplines of sociology, anthropology, geography, politics, and so on. This volume emerged as a response to an appetite for a text that addresses the diversity of research approaches to events, one that can aid teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as supporting peers interested in developing the field further. We want to encourage students and fellow academics to pursue research projects that critique the neo-liberal, operational focus currently dominating events management.

The teaching of events management in higher education is at a critical juncture. Traditional courses, which focus on providing training for students in the operational aspects of event delivery, within the field have developed little over the last 10 years. At an undergraduate level what we describe, though not universally explicitly referred to, as Critical Events Studies occurs in a few disparate modules at several UK universities. However, its impact is being felt in a slow, but growing, number of students seeking to do their dissertation within its framework (anecdotally, we are often told by fellow academics how great it is when a student wants to do this rather than, for example, measure motivations!). Where growth is significant is in postgraduate and doctoral research proposals, as well as in the number of academics active in instigating research that is consistent with a Critical Events Studies perspective. These developments are happening globally as the study of events matures beyond its operational roots. In this book, through solid discussion of theoretical lenses, research approaches, and philosophies, all grounded in worked through case studies, those seeking to pursue projects within the area of Critical Events Studies will be shown the strengths, weaknesses, and potentials of a wide variety of perspectives.

## **What Is Critical Event Studies?**

Critical Event Studies radically challenges all preceding formulations of events studies and events management by accepting that there is a central contestation at the heart of all events. A construal of events as part of an

'event industry' is understood to be symptomatic of their colonisation by a dominant cultural political economic hegemony. Donald Getz has suggested that events management needed to widen its reach to become a broader, and theoretically enriched, area of academic scholarship, one he called events studies (Getz 2007). However, little progress was made in developing it as an aspect of event management education.

However, from being relatively low key, often parochial, and commonly of secondary significance to many other aspects of the state and the cultural/economic life of citizens, events have become a key strand in national identity building and acknowledged as a significant driver for economic change and societal development. Such growth has been reflected in the rise, and rise, of event management courses across the world. Over the last decade the number of universities offering a degree courses in events management has increased significantly, as have the numbers of students seeking places on their programmes. Particularly within the Anglophone world, though increasingly in South-East Asia, education in that field has focused on the development a core toolkit, one that students leaving degree courses can apply to the delivery of events that are compliant with those dimension of the standard events typological models we identified earlier. However, the growth in the significance of events has come at a cost that many, especially in the area of mega-sporting events such as the World Cup and Olympic Games, would consider overly high. Protests surrounding mega-events such as those seen in the UK (2012 Olympics) and Brazil (2014 World Cup), for example, those concerned with sponsor selection, the cost of hosting such events, their impact on local communities, and the consequences of legislative changes associated with them, have challenged standard models of event analysis. Protest, which is frequently treated as a factor to be mitigated against within a consumerist frame for events management, has increasingly taken on an event-like character. Our socially networked and digitised interconnectedness, which sits at the heart of a de-centred globalised economy, has given the small scale event the potential to have a global makeover (Rojek, 2013).

Critical Event Studies is emerging as a strong strand within the scholarly study of events; placing it firmly within other areas of multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. There is a growing body of scholarship, within Events Management and the wider social sciences, which is



pushing the boundaries on how we, as events scholars, communicate the role of events in society. For example, whilst focusing on sport events, Dashper, Fletcher, and McCullough (2014) introduce their volume with an excellent outline on the emergence of critically underpinned events research. They challenge the assumption that what event scholars are doing is merely ‘borrowing’ social science theory to events; instead they argue events should be placed, ‘at the heart of wider social, cultural, political and economic issues’ (p. 4). Similarly, Andrews and Leopold (2013) place events within the social science context and present a user-friendly introduction, for students, to key social theories and how they can offer a more nuanced understanding of events. Whilst many of these volumes do not explicitly refer to Critical Event Studies, their work has much in common with the trajectory of this book. A critical turn in events research is gathering momentum. Internationally, researchers over the last few years have been pushing the boundaries of what can be considered legitimate areas for events scholarship and, consequently, responses to questions of appropriate methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks are highly current and pertinent.

To that end, Critical Event Studies takes the concept of ‘event’, within the field of events studies, to be essentially contested. It does not shy away from that contestation—nor does it see contestation as a problem to be resolved—instead it recognises this essential contestation as a creative dynamic that powers and enhances research, and understanding, placing it at the forefront of our work as academics interested in events. By extension, Critical Event Studies interprets the acquisition of knowledge, and understanding, pertinent to the study of events as motivated by a desire to engage in an emancipatory and liberatory activity, one rooted in a concern for the people and places impacted by events, not one steered solely by ideas of profit or limited constructions of oppression under some distorted guise of *employability*.

## Outline of the Book

The book is divided in sub-themes in order to help the reader navigate the book more easily. Our hope is that students and researchers will find something here to provoke questions, and raise issues for their own

research practice. This book is not a 'how to' guide offering directions on such topics as questionnaire design, interview protocols and so forth. The market is already awash with such books. To merely place such generic methods into an events context would be a missed opportunity. What the chapters presented here do is offer an insight into the thoughts, reflections, and processes of active event researchers, supplemented with guidance and advice from them, for you to consider in relation to your own research studies.

## **Part I: Critical Considerations**

The chapters in this part of the book deal with some of the key critical considerations that scholars might need to broach before, or during, their research process. The chapters presented here sum up the complexity of managing our own feelings and assumptions, the participants themselves, and how we deal with the data we collect. The chapters here are an acknowledgement of the reflexive nature of researching social phenomena. There is an important balance to be made, as McLean and Leibing point out, when they state that reflexive research should be a, 'measured economy of disclosure [...] exercising discretion' (Leibing & McLean, 2007, p. 13). Therefore, it is less about the confession of the researcher and more about an engagement with the role of the researcher and their subjectivity. Whilst, to lesser or greater extents, all chapters in the volume consider the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of their research, the chapters gathered in this section explicitly explore key concerns that a researcher faces when designing research in events.

This section begins with a consideration of involvement and detachment in the research processes, drawing on two distinct case studies. Turner and Pirie focus upon Norbert Elias' (1978, 1987) contribution to research philosophy, his attempts to resolve the dualism of induction and deduction, and problematises the search for 'objectivity' in social research. The Chap. 2 uses Elias' work here in order to address an issue often prevalent in student research projects in the events terrain, namely, how to maintain analytical insight into issues of significant personal interest. Drawing on two case studies of significant personal interest to the

authors, namely, live music events and the football matches of Scotland's national team, the chapter considers how students can maintain distance from their subject without losing the rich understanding that comes from personal involvement. The case studies are introduced to demonstrate how it is possible, by taking a 'detour via detachment' (Elias, 1987) to create a methodology for the investigation of live event experiences.

Dowse develops that discussion of the personal role of the researcher by exploring an ongoing concern, in discussions of qualitative investigation, regarding the effect of an inside or outside position on the researcher's ability to obtain, and appropriately interpret, data. Understanding the challenges and opportunities inherent in such approaches is important, but they present the researcher with a host of practical considerations and private dilemmas. Chapter 3 explores those issues, drawing on her own experience of conducting a case study of a mega-event that included fieldwork in a foreign country. The research findings illuminate the value of qualitative research in developing a nuanced understanding of the specific context(s) that influence complex social events, while the experience itself highlighted how personal insider and outsider statuses may influence the research process.

Finally, in this section, Chap. 4 outlines the complexity of community festivals and explores, from a methodological point of view, how festivals can pose many challenges to researchers. Such challenges include how to capture, record, and analyse the rich qualitative and quantitative data they produce, spanning a variety of time periods and phases of festival planning, production, and consumption. Their research utilises a flexible and reflexive methodological approach that incorporates five data collection techniques, deployed to capture and analyse primary data drawn from across those unique phases of a festival. Their research aimed, in particular, to reveal the distinct relationships between planning, production, and consumption. The chapter outlines the process by examining the philosophical underpinning of the research; how the research questions and data need to be operationalised into practical data collection methods when working in the field; and the integration of the literature reviewed, data gathered, and the triangulation (or in this case quin-tangulation) of primary data, in order to build themes for analysis which, in turn, reveal the contribution to knowledge the research can make. Jepson and

Clarke's chapter provides an excellent examination of how critical events scholars need to carefully consider complexity right from the start of the research process.

## **Part II: Discursive, Historical, and Ideological Perspectives**

In this part of the book we look at approaches that consider the studying of events from different discursive perspectives, particularly those that focus on the significance of history and ideology. A central element of critical event studies is to highlight relationships of power and subordination at work within events. The five chapters that comprise this part of the book look at such relationships through a variety of theoretical and analytical lenses. Here the authors use their various expertise to consider examples drawn from events in cultural, political, and sporting arena, drawing on methodologies as diverse as computer-assisted discourse studies, which employs a computational, and statistically driven, approach to the analysis of a large corpus of lexical data, to techniques that are more qualitative in their pursuit of the social value of complexity.

We begin this part of the book with a chapter by McDowell and Skillen (Chap. 5), two trained historians who have taught on research methods courses in sports and events management courses. Following Doug Matthews' (2012) declaration that events management students needed to understand 'historical spectacle' they propose a toolkit for those undertaking historical research on events, highlighting the strengths and potential problems or pitfalls involved in analysing relevant primary source material. Chapter 5 has two aims. The first is to introduce events practitioners to relevant, accessible literature which can enhance a broader understanding of events studies in their historical context; the second is to stimulate original research. To that later end they discuss, in detail, their work on the 1970 and 1986 Commonwealth Games (both held in Edinburgh). Using many different archival sources they discuss the ways in which they have used that material to piece together the narratives of both events. In conclusion they argue that archival research is a crucial, yet often overlooked, approach vital to historical research on events, whilst noting that archives are a mediated space whose collections

depend on many factors that are frequently beyond the control of the researcher.

Dominique Ying-Chih Liao's chapter (Chap. 6) considers how, in response to contemporary social anxieties, re-enactment in performances has been used to both recall the past and invoke collective memory and identity. Her case study, the Huashan Event, was a theatrical re-enactment of the siege of Troy; a cultural response to the 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis, in which the Chinese government deployed hundreds of missiles, aimed at Taiwan, and conducted missile tests within the Taiwan Strait, as a signal to warn Taiwan off declaring political independence. She shows how this performance triggered a series of cultural and political interventions that turned the performance site, a deserted government property, into an art venue for the public. By applying a cultural materialist approach, alongside a discussion of memory and the social production of space, this chapter focuses on the interconnections between re-enactment, inscription of memory, and the production of meanings in cultural events.

In her chapter (Chap. 7) Nicolina Montesano Montessori argues that critical discourse analysis (CDA) can provide a fruitful methodology for Critical Event Studies. This, she argues, is due to its eclectic, abductive research methodology, that engages in a dialogue between, theory (ies), methodology (ies), data, and the socio-historical context (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). CDA, like other critical approaches, adopts a layered approach to research methodology; moving from global to meso- and micro-aspects of an event. Using her recent study of the Occupy movement in Spain (Montesano Montessori & Morales Lopez, 2015), she illustrates this through a brief description of the discourse-historical dimension in CDA which distinguishes the content analysis, the analysis of discursive and argumentative strategies and, finally, the analysis of linguistic features (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). She shows how a framework that brings together social constructivism, narrative analysis, rhetoric, and the discourse theoretical concept of 'rearticulation' can work together to analyse how the Occupy movement helped Spanish citizens to gain agency and voice.

The next chapter (Chap. 8) continues a theme of the importance of discourse analysis to critical event studies. Sylvia Jaworska shows how a combination of critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistic methodology can be

used to study global sports events, especially their impact on the representations of identities. She shows how media texts around global events, such as the 2012 London Olympics and the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, can yield important insights into identities which are ideologically normalised in the reporting of such events, and those which are devalued or excluded. *Media* representations generated at such times can be seen to be high-impact reflections of cultural assumptions, tailored to coincide with the expectations and beliefs of the audiences of the mass media. This chapter demonstrates the synergistic relationship possible in Computer Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), showing how systematic linguistic analysis can yield ideological insights while resting on a quantitative base of statistically significant relationships and patterns in language use.

In the final chapter (Chap. 9) of this part of the book Laura Misener, David McGillivray, Gayle McPherson, and David Legg consider how parasport (disability sport) is generally understood as striving to alter perceptions towards disability, and change attitudes about the potential of disability sport. Given the complexity of understanding attitudes, perceptions, and awareness, they argue, it is necessary to employ multiple overlapping methods to critically examine the various social, economic, and infrastructural arrangements that affect accessibility, mobility, and access to resources. By mixing qualitative ethnographic approaches and quantitative statistical measures the authors suggest a way to interrogate social values, institutional priorities, and political will for social change, over a longer time period. This chapter discusses the complexity of such an approach using their work on the 2014 Commonwealth Games (Glasgow, Scotland) and the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games (Toronto, Ontario, Canada). For each case they employ exploratory multiple case study designs using ethnographic interviews, document analyses, media analyses, and direct observations, all informed by the lived experiences of persons with disability. They discuss the nuances of a mixed methods approach with particular focus on the role of critical disability theory, which challenges ableist assumptions often embedded in social research designs. In so doing they aim to draw attention to the intricacies and peculiarities of such a complex approach with the aim of storying the research experience and the research process, thereby challenging researchers to see social value in complexity.

### Part III: Encountering the Event

The chapters in this final section address being in the ‘thick of it’, and examining the nuances of how events function. There are a range of perspectives presented here that will offer event scholars and students an insight into how they might go about researching events from a critical perspective. Each chapter presented here presents a novel and nuanced approach that can offer a deeper and richer insight into the planning, staging, and experiencing of an event.

Participatory research is examined by Finkel and Sang. This chapter (Chap. 10) sets out the main methodological approaches for participatory research in an events context, including various methods which can be employed. Participatory research views research participants as experts in the field of study and, as such, involves them in the knowledge-production process; thus, research projects are co-designed from inception through to completion. This can be applied to events studies by examining the culture of the event through observation, participation, stakeholder meetings, collective reflection and analysis, and other sensory and visual techniques. The ‘group’ and ‘culture’ being examined are the events audiences and environments. A case study is set out based on participatory research conducted at a community event located near Edinburgh, Scotland. The research is based on stakeholder meetings, survey questionnaires, the collection of visual data and visitors’ experiences (including photos and videos of the event environment), and the researchers’ personal observations and interactions. This methodology demonstrates how societal, economic, and cultural dimensions and discourses of community events can be highlighted in events studies. It also democratises the research process; as research is conducted *with* participants, rather than *on* a community.

Staying with observational research, but taking a different approach, Dashper explores the potential of autoethnography. Such an approach, she argues, allows the researcher to use highly personal, often emotional and evocative, accounts to try and engage the reader in the event experience. Personal stories can be powerful ways in which to discuss wider social issues; they have the potential to enrich critical event studies by providing alternative and revealing accounts of events. Dashper demonstrates

various ways in which autoethnography can be used to provide insight into the experience of events, drawing on the perspectives of both event spectators/attendees and event participants (in this case sporting competitors). Vignettes illustrate how personal stories can be crafted to reveal more than just an interesting story and can, in fact, act as a springboard to a discussion of wider issues within event studies. Chapter 11 shows how autoethnography requires a thorough consideration of how a personal story ('auto') links to wider social issues ('ethno') through carefully crafted writing ('graphy').

Andrea Pavoni and Sebastiano Citroni, in their chapter (Chap. 12), use ethnography to account for the contested contingency of urban events. Their approach marks a difference vis-à-vis more conventional ways to explore urban events, which tend to frame them through static, outcome-oriented, managerial and de-materialising perspectives, which miss and pacify their constitutive conflictuality. Following a path opened by a series of recent attempts to address urban events in their material, sensorial, dynamic and contingent unfolding, this chapter presents a methodology focused on the conflictual taking place of the event, as well as the dispositifs put in place to control them. It is such frictions—generated at the encounter between the lines of flight of such events and the attempts to control them, which, they argue, an ethnographic approach enables us to unpack and describe. Significantly, their research methodology is shown to be applicable to different types of events at different scales, which they illustrate through a comparative analysis of two very different urban event case studies. Their analysis illuminates the value of ethnographic methods in highlighting the emancipatory potential of such events across different scales and typologies.

An alternative approach to examining the event experience is examined by Jonathan Moss. He explores experience sampling methods (ESM) in a critical event studies context. His research employs Critical Realism as a perspective to inform a Phenomenological approach to research enquiry. In his chapter (Chap. 13) he debates how considerations of methodological execution can be met and mediated to help ensure that the data, and the subsequent results, are consistent and valid. The chapter provides a critical overview of (descriptive) experience sampling methods. This includes the history and development of the method, a shift towards a critical



philosophical position and, based on the author's experiences, the methodological considerations for its use in primary research. In doing so, it provides the reader with a deeper understanding of this method and how it can contribute to critical event studies.

The final chapter (Chap. 14) in this section, by David Jarman, examines how social network analysis (SNA) can provide a more nuanced approach to understanding event stakeholders and key players. He contends that the development of event studies, as a field of research and education, has misunderstood and misrepresented the social networks that underpin the industry. Such relationships are too often characterised in terms of stakeholders, which prioritises institutions over individuals. This is at odds with the lived experience of events: whether as a paid employee building a festival career, a willing volunteer seeking to make a unique contribution, an audience member co-creating their vacation, or a representative of an industry supplier, working across numerous clients in multiple environments. The chapter provides a background to SNA as a research method from its antecedents to modern techniques and software that permit analysis of online and offline networks. Critical arguments are presented for investing in further research, to the benefit of both event producers and industry observers. The case study, which presents data gathered during the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival, illustrates both the opportunities and limitations of this approach, whilst offering recommendations for further research.

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# Part I

## Critical Considerations

# 2

## Problems of Involvement and Detachment: A Critical Approach to Researching Live Event Experiences

Daniel Turner and Elliot Pirie

### Introduction

This chapter deals with a concern often encountered with undergraduate and postgraduate research projects in the Critical Event Studies terrain. Having both taught research methods and supervised dissertations in the Events field over a number of years, we regularly witness students struggling to critically analyse a subject area to which they are personally attached. Seeking to make use of their detailed, first-hand understanding of the situation, students often select dissertation topics that relate to live event experiences they have attended, worked at, or delivered. Often these ‘passion projects’, are seen as attractive topics that will sustain interest over the time period of completing a dissertation, or something that will be ‘easier’ to study due to access to data, or simply, personal knowledge of the events. However, as a result of this involvement in the subject area, students often face the pitfall of being unable to form an objective opinion thus impacting on the analysis of the research topic, and as such, they can be prone to producing overly descriptive, even biased work as a result.

This chapter seeks to offer ways and means of overcoming this challenge. By selecting two research settings to which we are personally

attached: live music events and Scotland national team football matches as illustrative case studies, we have put ourselves in the same position as students, namely, trying to investigate objectively something that we are deeply passionate about. In the chapter we will use the often ignored figurational sociology of Norbert Elias (1939, 1956, 1987), specifically his notion of ‘involvement and detachment’, to offer a pathway to undertaking research into live event experiences which allows for the development of reflective, reflexive methodologies, which capture the richness of personal involvement in a manner which is academically rigorous. The chapter begins by highlighting the typical philosophical and methodological issues students encounter whilst undertaking primary research, before suggesting how Elias’ work offers a more nuanced approach for students to consider. This is followed by a detailed discussion of Elias’ theory of knowledge, which outlines how this can be achieved, with particular attention paid to his notion of ‘detachment’ and how to obtain this. From here, we introduce the case studies that will illustrate these issues and the methodological journey we have taken when researching these cases in an Eliasian fashion. Finally, we offer reflection on how this framework can assist students in the Critical Event Studies field when undertaking research. Our intention here is to offer students a road map, ensuring they can research their own ‘passion projects’ without losing a critical edge.

## **Research Philosophy: The Problem of Binary Opposites**

Having both delivered research methods courses we have a strong belief that regardless of level, an understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of research is crucial to informing how and why you make your research decisions. This should go beyond the traditional research method delivery approach where qualitative and quantitative discussions are the height of the debate. The following sections give a brief tour of the issues students will typically cover in class and their meaning and influence on student studies.

At a philosophical level, research considerations begin with identifying the author's epistemological (the nature of truth) and ontological (the nature of reality) assumptions (Hughes, 1990; Creswell, 2003). Understanding your position and views in relation to these concepts can give you an excellent insight into why you do what you do. For many students undertaking studies in the events field, research philosophy is often shown to be split between two diametrically opposite positions: that of positivism and interpretivism.

The concept of positivism is often associated originally with French writer Auguste Comte (1798–1857) who, being dissatisfied with the methods used to study social phenomena, wanted to introduce more scientific methods to better understand the issues and give clearer 'answers'. Positivism stems from the 'hard sciences', where the certainty and purity of numbers can be seen as 'facts'—universal truths to which we can all agree (Smith, 1983). Positivism will often result in a logical, structured approach to research that relies on quantity and numbers for much of the analysis and findings (Ruane, 2005). The positivist approach is often seen as highly objective, resulting in unbiased results.

Interpretivism is often seen as the opposite view to this; one of its synonyms is even as direct as 'post-positivism' implying a move away from these scientific methods. Philosophers such as Husserl (1859–1938), Weber (1864–1920), and Bourdieu (1930–2002) have questioned these 'universal truths'. Interpretivists question the idea that there can be an objective reality and instead believe that we each have our own reality that is constructed from the information and world around us, meaning reality itself is different for everyone (Hughes, 1990; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In essence, individuals and groups decide what is important and what is real, the interaction between them and their interpretation of an event, experience or object is what defines it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Importantly, interpretivists acknowledge that the actions they interpret can be highly subjective and personal. When a researcher undertakes an interpretivist approach, it tends to be focused on the respondents' views, actions, and opinions. In the social sciences, increasingly interpretivist approaches are used in the investigation and application of research (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). Critical Event Studies is no different, and given the individual nature of defining 'experience', 'enjoyment' and 'entertainment'

these highly subjective concepts often lend themselves to interpretivist approaches. Having identified their philosophical position, typically the researcher's next step is to discern the research strategy: is it deductive or inductive? The fundamental tenet of this question revolves around the issue of sequencing; deductive approaches begin with a theory and set out to investigate its validity, whereas inductive approaches aim to conduct investigation to result in a theory (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

Deductive approaches set out the research questions or hypothesis and theoretical framework of the study first and then develop a methodology to investigate or test these assumptions (Silverman, 2000). This testing often requires a tangible 'yes/no' result, thus the methods employed tend to incorporate quantitative elements to enable this, linking to the positivist approach identified above. Inductive approaches tend to start with a body of knowledge or data and attempt to establish concepts or theories from this, as such these tend to be in smaller data samples and employ qualitative methods (Patton, 2002). Once the above considerations have been taken into account, the researcher should now be in a position to identify the appropriate set of methods for their chosen study.

As you may have noticed, all of the above discussion tends to operate in 'binary opposites', 'false dichotomies', or 'dualisms', for example, positivism versus interpretivism; inductive versus deductive; quantitative versus qualitative, and we would argue this is one of the fundamental problems faced by students in the critical events terrain. As identified above, the interpretivist approach may have a greater natural tendency for use within studies in our area, but even our own teaching methods, arguably, follow a positivist approach with the constant oversimplification of complex concepts to their extreme polar opposites rather than larger discussion of the middle ground. Too often we discuss the black and white at the exclusion of the grey.

## **Norbert Elias and Problems of Involvement and Detachment**

One possible solution to the challenge identified here is offered by a consideration of the work of German sociologist Norbert Elias. Elias, most famous for his work 'The Theory of the Civilizing Process' (Elias, 1939),

produced a range and scope of work so wide that he was considered by some to be the last of classical sociologists (Van Krieken, 2001). His work was foundational to the development of a sociology of sport and leisure (Elias & Dunning, 1969, 1986), but it also focused on areas as diverse as the development of court societies (Elias, 1983) and analyses of death and dying (Elias, 1985). Elias also focused heavily on research philosophy and what he termed his 'theory of knowledge' (Elias, 1978, 1987). It is this area of his work that is of particular interest to us here, specifically his work on the 'problem of involvement and detachment' (Elias, 1956, 1987).

Like most of his work, Elias' theory of knowledge was developed in opposition to what he saw as an overly simplified analysis of the world, centred upon false dichotomies (Dunning, 1996). Elias argued that, too often, when trying to understand social life, we fall into the habit of creating simple, but unrealistic 'either-or' situations where two basic ideas would be presented as alternatives to one another, constructing ways of thinking which isolate interlinked ideas, missing the complexity of social life and interaction. As highlighted above, this is often the case when considering how students are exposed to research methodologies during their studies. Students are introduced to epistemology and ontology as separate steps in the development of a research philosophy, despite the fact that, in reality, these ideas cannot be separated. As Bloyce (2004:146) describes it:

*It is not that the two conditions are diametrically opposed, rather epistemology and ontology are so integrally related, they are so interdependent, there seems little sense in discussing them separately. That is to say, knowledge and reality are not separate entities; they are part of the same process.*

Similarly, students are introduced to induction and deduction as if it is impossible to operate outside the extremes of these strategies. An exploration of Silverman's (2000) work, typical of many research texts for students, highlights this clearly. Silverman (2000) argues that research is either designed to generate a new theory, an inductive approach; or to test existing theories, a deductive approach. However, Elias (1978) argues that this separation of method from theory is based upon a basic misconception. Instead of viewing human thought in such a rational compartmental style, Elias (1978) viewed human thought as an intricate and continuous process. In the course of this process, theorising cannot



be separated from observation, as both are constant processes influencing and directing one another at the same time. As Elias (1978:58) termed it: *'The development of people's conception of subject matter is found to be inseparable from their conception of the method appropriate to its investigation'*.

Similarly, and perhaps most importantly for our purposes here, Elias' theory of knowledge also rejected the simplification of research philosophy into a choice between 'positivism' and 'interpretivism'. Elias, despite being occasionally criticised for being a positivist himself (Layder, 1992 in Turner & Rojek, 2001), rejected the simple 'rough dichotomy' of true and false that characterises positivistic research as being highly unsuitable for social research. Indeed as Rojek (1995) highlights, Elias' strongest criticisms were reserved for those advocating approaches to knowledge which enabled researchers to lay claim to a pathway to ultimate truth. However, he was also similarly critical of research in the interpretivist tradition that failed to be suitably objective about research findings. In particular, he argued that research influenced by political or personal agenda should be criticised for privileging interpretations that the researcher wished to advance: *'Anyone who, under the pretext of saying what science is, is really saying what he thinks it ideally should be, is deceiving both himself and other people.'* (Elias, 1978:52).

Elias' theory of knowledge could therefore be seen as an alternative to the simplistic reduction to opposites and dualisms discussed above. He sought a research philosophy that did not succumb to the overly 'involved' perspective of the social scientist who focused on their own interpretations and preconceptions regarding the research topic. However, instead of objective 'truth', Elias searched for what could be termed the most 'reality congruent' answer (Bloyce, 2004). This 'reality congruence' signifies an answer that is presented as more accurate than previous knowledge, therefore better, but is not heralded as the final 'truth': in simple terms, the best answer currently available, but not necessarily the definitive answer. Yet, Elias' theory of knowledge retained a focus on a scientific method that would be familiar in terms of its process and underpinning to a natural scientist in the positivist tradition (see Elias, 1956).

Elias' scientific method was not, however, a simple method or tool for data collection such as a survey, nor a simple methodology, such as 'quantitative' or 'qualitative' for gathering data. Rather it represented a way of

thinking about the conduct of research. He conceptualised research as *'a form of detachment represented by the scientist's work... Embodied in the conceptual tools, the basic assumptions, the methods of speaking and thinking which scientists use'* (Elias, 1956:229). It is this 'scientific method', this form of self-consciously distancing oneself from the object of study (Bloyce, 2004) through a 'detour via detachment' (Elias, 1987). Elias believed this detour could be replicated in the social sciences, of which Critical Event Studies is part, in order to discover more reality congruent means of understanding the social world. In short, a balance between involvement and detachment is possible as the researcher attempts to navigate between the two extremes and adopt a position whereby: *'the sociologist-as-participant must be able to stand back and become sociologist-as-observer-and-interpreter'* (Maguire, 1988:190). It is worthy of note that this concept of 'detachment' is very similar to that of 'reflexivity' often discussed in ethnographic research. Elias' work is significant in that it actually predates the reflexive turn in social science research, but for a variety of complex social and political reasons his work did not directly inform or interact with this movement (as a German Jew writing in the 1930s and 1940s, the translation and rise in prominence of much of his work was restricted until much later in his career out with the Leicester School of academics and researchers). The issue that remains, however, is exactly how to translate this concept into an actual research method to collect data and generate this reality congruent knowledge.

## A Detour via Detachment

As Rojek (1986) criticises, and Dunning (1997), a key proponent of the Eliasian approach accepts, one of the biggest failures of the figurational sociology of knowledge is that, given the level of depth with which the issue of detachment is discussed in Elias' work, no significant detail is actually given on how to become 'detached'. Elias (1978:60) himself would argue that this omission reflects the nature of his theory of knowledge as a methodological concept rather than a research method, and suggested that the actual data-collection method should be chosen in relation to the research question, asking: *'what should we think of someone*

*who maintained that an axe must always be used to shape any material, be it wood, marble or wax?*'. However, by discussing the concept at such length and failing to give a concrete guide as to how to achieve it, Elias leaves himself open to the criticism that he is a self-appointed 'gatekeeper of detachment', happy to cast judgement on the work of others without fully reflecting on his own capacity to attain such detachment.

As such, the task for any researcher attempting to make use of Elias' work to investigate any social phenomena is to construct, from what fragments of guidance exist, a methodology that is figurational in form and suitable for the research question under investigation. Fortunately, a series of principles can be determined which allow this to be achieved.

Firstly, Dunning (1997) argues that it is vital to locate the work being undertaken within the existing social fund of knowledge. In essence, rather than simply examining the subject in isolation, the researcher should engage with as much existing literature, debate, and discussion related to the subject matter as possible to ensure they are familiar with the arguments and counterarguments within the field and also to add a historical dimension to the research by positioning the researcher in relation to that which already exists. This also helps to answer the question posed by Elias (in Waddington, 1997:37) in relation to the issue of overinvolvement and subsequently biased research: *'to what extent am I primarily attempting to establish the validity of a preconceived idea of how human society ought to be ordered?'* and develop a more detached stance.

Secondly, and in a similar vein, Dunning (1997:169) encourages researchers to avoid *'the retreat into the present'* and to adopt a historic overview of their research subject, focusing on the social, cultural, or political contexts that have shaped the subject rather than isolating it as a fixed point of time. Elias' (1939) approach encourages the researcher to consider their subject as an arrow in mid-flight, only able to be understood when consideration is given not only to where it is at any given moment but also from where it is fired and where it is targeted. Without this view, it is argued (Elias, Van Krieken, & Dunning, 1997) that it is not possible to gain significant insight into the current situation. In contrast, if this approach is undertaken, then it further enables detachment by moving away from the egocentricism of the moment, forcing

the researcher to take a detour via detachment and locate their ideas and analysis in a wider context.

Dunning (1997) then turns to an insight previously explored above, namely, Elias' rejection of the induction/deduction dichotomy in order to highlight a third insight. Here, Dunning argues that any researcher attempting to generate a figurational method should attempt to construct a methodology which privileges neither theory nor data collection at the expense of the other. Instead, it is argued that there should be an open two-way process between theory and data, with each informing dealings with the other. In a manner similar to what would subsequently be termed 'Grounded Theory' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), at each stage of the data-gathering process, theory should be used to develop understanding; however, if the theory itself is proven to be inaccurate or less adequate on the basis of research findings, the researcher should also move to realign or reject their theory in light of such evidence. Based on this notion, Dunning, Murphy, and Williams (1988) therefore argue that the researcher should not attempt to simply apply a theory to a research situation, but rather to continuously test his theoretical framework in order to become more detached.

It is these principles, therefore, that should underpin the development of a methodology and which will enable the researcher to undertake a detour via detachment in their work. The three key tenets: a link between existing knowledge and the research; a commitment to understanding the wider context in which the research subject sits; and a dynamic, continual interaction between the data and theory should inform the selection of the appropriate method, research subjects, and data-collection instruments. As such, whilst various methods could be employed, it is an understanding of these philosophical issues that will ensure the correct method is selected.

## A Figurational Method

With these principles in mind, the following discussion endeavours to demonstrate this process in action. As identified above, we selected two topics close to our hearts, from which it would be difficult for the authors to detach—setting the target of a detached investigation of: 'the

investigation of expressions of fandom at concerts' and 'expressions of national identity at international football matches'. The table below introduces these case studies and highlights their personal significance to the authors (Table 2.1).

Having established our case studies, the next step was to select appropriate methods for data collection. The process and principles of a detour via detachment can be adopted within any methodology and method(s); the following discussion demonstrates the methodology and method we adopted, but should not be seen as a directive or the only way. Rather, it should be noted that the following is a methodology that meets the requirements of the Eliasian approach rather than the way to do so.

To study the expressions of national identity and fandom respectively, the method of participant observation was selected. Participant observation involves the study of participants by watching them in a given setting(s) in an attempt to observe their routines, beliefs, values, and relationships (Stokes, 2011). Waddington (2004) discusses participant observation as a continuum from complete observation to complete participant. Complete observation requires the researcher to be completely separate from the participants, whereas complete participant has the researcher completely immersed in the social setting they are observing and actively interacting with the participants. By adopting a participant-observation study, a traditional view is that we would be taking a highly interpretivist approach to an ethnographic study:

*Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 24).

Ethnographic research is a highly qualitative and subjective methodology that focuses on the beliefs, thoughts, and feelings of the participants and, linking back to its anthropological beginnings, can often involve seeing the observed in '*their natural habitat*' (Brennen, 2013: 159). As with the often confusing, and incorrect interchangeability of Interpretivism, Constructivism, and Phenomenology, Ethnography is often used ubiquitously to simply mean qualitative research (Madden, 2010). Whilst some

**Table 2.1** Case studies 1 & 2: Introduction and personal significance

Case Study 1.1: A background to the investigation of expressions of fandom at concerts (Elliot)	Case Study 2.1: A background to expressions of national identity at international football matches (Daniel)
<p>As an avid guitarist who grew up idolizing the rock stars of the past, a challenging topic to become detached from would clearly be the attendance of concerts of my heroes. In winter 2014, two artists were to play the newly developed SSE Hydro in Glasgow. One of which was 'The Who', whom I had never (but always wanted) to see, the other was 'Slash &amp; The Conspirators', although I had been to numerous Slash concerts in the past, as the driving force behind my decision to take up playing guitar as a child, any affiliation he has with concerts I attend instantly influences my engagement and involvement with the event.</p> <p>The specific focus of the work (in this case at concerts), expressions of 'Fandom' and its links to sub-culture is a key topic area within my teaching of Consumer Psychology and the experiential aspects of Live Music Management (see Hebdige, 1979; Pine &amp; Gilmore, 1998; Bennett, 1999), therefore I have a vested interest and knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of the study and as such detachment from this too could be problematic as theoretical underpinning could prejudice my views on the findings. These two factors combined make this a highly involved experience from both the professional and personal point of view.</p> <p>To investigate this area I set the goal of identifying how concertgoers expressed their fandom or devotion at the event.</p>	<p>I have been a football fan my entire life and have been attending the Scottish national team's matches since the mid 1990s. Scotland home games are a major part of my social and leisure life. Events are marked in my calendar far in advance and are an opportunity to catch up with a group of friends specific to attending these events. The matchday experience is full of little rituals and I have many great memories related to games over the years. In addition, this interest spills into my professional life. As an academic, I have a keen interest in national identity and its expression via traditional Scottish events (see Flinn &amp; Turner, 2014). Thus, attending Scotland football matches, both personally and professionally, represents as involved an experience as I can possibly undertake.</p> <p>For this research, matches in November 2014 against England (Scotland's fiercest rivals) and the Republic of Ireland (near neighbours and significant competitors) were selected as research sites. Given the nature of the opponents, both matches witnessed an even higher than normal outpouring of Scottish nationalism from the crowd and made obtaining detachment an even greater challenge for me as a researcher. In this context I decide to pursue a board research aim to investigate how Football fans express their National identity when attending International matches.</p>

will argue that it requires an on-site longitudinal study of foreign cultures, people, and participants, others suggest that it can be conducted both locally and over a short period of time if it meets the key criteria of investigating a specific group (Brennen, 2013). It is the latter view of ethnographic research that we have adopted for our studies, in conjunction with an observation approach nearing 'complete participant'; the following table outlines our approach to data collection (Table 2.2).

Having collected our data, the final phase of the process was to ensure the detour via detachment. The first part of this process relied heavily on our own notes and reflections upon them. The simple act of taking notes during the process ensured that an element of detachment was already present in the research. In the process of taking notes, the authors were taken out of the moment and were forced to reflect on the relevant issues. Similar to the three tenets outlined above, this could be whether that was the observation's relation to the wider academic and literary subject area: the nature of the finding (was it supporting or in conflict with a predefined view of the researcher?), and how the observation related to the wider historical context of the subject. It is worth noting at this point, that when reviewing these notes, that if they are treated in a similar manner as that of an interview transcript, in other words attempting to treat them as the notes/words of another rather than your own thoughts and feelings, one can attempt to enhance this level of detachment.

The above process was conducted separately from one another, and in preparation for the final act: a 'critical conversation' with each other regarding our findings. This conversation was intended to force a detour via detachment by making each of us explain and defend our findings regarding our experiences. Having collated our individual thoughts regarding our live event experiences, we outlined the main themes and findings identified and how these linked to the wider body of knowledge. The role of the other was to critique these claims and to question the reasoning and logic used to arrive at the results presented. Similarly, the conversation allowed the questioner to raise alternative ideas and concepts that may or may not have been more reality congruent than that offered by the researcher. Crucially whenever findings had the potential to be formed through the primary researcher's own views or subject knowledge rather than from the actual observations, these areas would

Table 2.2 Case studies 1 &amp; 2: Approach to research

Case study 1.2: Approach to the investigation of expressions of fandom at concerts (Elliot)	Case study 2.2: Approach to expressions of national identity at international football matches (Daniel)
<p>For both of the concerts, I attended the event with close friends and family as a ticketed concertgoer, as such I was there first and foremost to experience the event, and during it would observe the wider crowd and their expressions of Fandom.</p> <p>Relating to Waddington's Continuum (2004) this puts my research closer to that of a 'complete participant' however as I did not engage directly with the participants outside my inner group, it can be seen that in fact I used a 'participant observer' approach, where I was 'fully integrated into the culture being studied.... While taking extensive field notes about his or her observations... [and] strives to understand the meanings of actions within the community from an insider's perspective.' (Brennen, 2013: 165). This differs from a complete participant or 'going native' as I did not abandon my role in the process and completely engage with the event at the expense of my research.</p>	<p>For both matches, I attended the events with a group of friends who are my regular social circle for such occasions. We observed our traditional pre-game practices of visiting a local bar, in one case a venue hosting a Tartan Army (the name for the Scotland Supporters' Club) pre-game concert and then walking to the stadium as part of the wider crowd. This 'walk up' can be considered to be as much a part of the experience as the match itself and notes were taken from arrival at the pre-match venue as this can be considered the starting point for the research.</p> <p>Similar to Elliot, my position was that of a 'complete participant', perhaps more so given my group for the evening was larger and there was a greater interaction with the wider crowd.</p>

(continued)



Table 2.2 (continued)

<p>Case study 1.2: Approach to the investigation of expressions of fandom at concerts (Elliot)</p> <p>During the walk to the venue I began the observation process, taking notes on my own experience, the interactions between groups of fans and each other, our own discussions and a factor that became critical to both concerts, the choice of clothing and associated expressions of fandom (hair-styles, accessories, etc.) of the attendees. For the first concert we went for a pre-theatre meal at a nearby restaurant, which was playing 'The Who's' greatest hits and was full, as such this too was part of the observation process. This was also my first visit to the newly developed SSE Hydro and as such many of the notes were also focused on how the crowd and I interacted with the venue. Less than a week later, I was back to see 'Slash and the Conspirators', the process of note taking was similar, focusing on the same key areas of my own experience, fan interaction, our own discussions, clothing and associated expressions of fandom.</p>	<p>Case study 2.2: Approach to expressions of national identity at international football matches (Daniel)</p> <p>Throughout the process, at both games, I typed notes at various points as I encountered moments of interest and intellectual curiosity that married with my chosen research topic. These notes ranged from comments relating to the dress of fans, songs sung within the crowd, observations regarding the demographics of participants and a range of other issues. Relating to the discussion above regarding the interplay between theory and data (Dunning in Boyce, 2004), I found my topic shifting to focus more explicitly on politicised expressions of national identity (the matches closely followed the 2014 Scottish independence referendum) within the crowd as this increasingly became a key recurring issue. This shift in focus also allowed a greater fit with figurational approaches detailed above (Elias et al., 1997), forcing me to consider the experience of attending the matches in a political and social setting rather than simply as a one-off football event.</p>
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<p>Case study 1.2: Approach to the investigation of expressions of fandom at concerts (Elliot)</p>	<p>As the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the process of the research rather than the results themselves, an analysis of findings is not specifically presented. However in relation to this chapter's remit, a clear and important aspect of the observation occurred at both concerts but specifically at 'Slash and the Conspirators'. As the concert neared its conclusion and 'the hits' began to play my note taking became more sparse, to the eventual point of none being taken at all during the encore, this was due to the simple fact that I was enjoying the experience too much, which is the key problem we are aiming to address, when we study something to which we are too involved, objectivity is difficult, nearing impossible. Upon return home after the concerts, I wrote additional notes on the overall experience, with particular emphasis on the areas of the night where I was having too much fun to be truly engaged with the research. This issue shows that during the process of the participant observation, it is possible (although not necessarily an advisable or deliberate approach) to change your position on the observer/participant continuum; I started each of the concerts as a participant observer but ended as a complete participant.</p>
<p>Case study 2.2: Approach to expressions of national identity at international football matches (Daniel)</p>	<p>Similar to Elliot's experience, reviewing the notes following the matches, the difficulties of being detached were apparent. In the case of both matches, there were moments where being immersed in the match clearly reflected in a reduction in noted observation. However it was also clear from the notes that my own thoughts and narrative began to appear during the data-collection stage as I noted questions and comments in the margins, my analysis being shaped in real time by events. As such, the real challenge for me as a researcher was to ensure these initial thoughts did not come to dominate my analysis unfairly. I had to try to find a technique to enable me to follow Maguire's (1988:190) suggestion that '<i>the sociologist-as-participant must be able to stand back and become the sociologist-as-observer-and-interpret</i>'. </p>

be discussed in-depth in an attempt to avoid bias through a too heavily involved standpoint. The role of the questioner in this case was to force the researcher to confront the question raised above, as to what extent they were presenting what they felt ought to be said rather than what could be claimed based on the evidence. In the end, these interrogations did not necessarily change the conclusions reached by the researcher, but allowed them to say with greater certainty that their findings possess a high level of reality congruence and that they had successfully undertaken the required detour to be able to trust the claims they wished to make based on the live event experience.

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to introduce students to a philosophical and methodological approach to enhance the study of live event experiences. Whilst we have undertaken primary research of our own to illustrate this, it is not the purpose of this chapter to answer the research questions that guided our data collection. Rather, in conclusion, we wish to focus on the research process we have undertaken and how this can enable students to improve their own research. As we have argued, researching live event experiences is an inherently problematic undertaking for students and academics. We are fortunate to study a subject area we find intrinsically interesting but, as such, face a continual battle to avoid the unreflective familiarity this brings. Elias' detour via detachment and his wider reflections on the problems of involvement and detachment offer students a pathway to overcome this obstacle and the potential for inherent bias when conducting research.

In our case, the process of detour via detachment was achieved by the critical conversation observed above, this was an obvious benefit of co-authoring a piece in the critical event studies terrain, we could ensure the process of detachment was achieved by reflecting objectively on each other's work. For students undertaking traditional dissertations, co-authoring is typically not possible and as such individual reflection and detachment may be required; however it may be valuable for students and supervisors to construct their roles and interactions around providing the setting

for successful detachment. Alternatively, or additionally another way to achieve this is through the use of a 'diary method' during the collection phase: by noting thoughts, expectations, and desires before the observation, interview, or method, and similarly reflecting on the experience immediately after the event, the researchers can have an honest 'conversation' with themselves at a later date in the research process. Similar to the approach identified above, by treating these diary entries in the same way one would any other data and by ignoring that they were originally the author's own thoughts, it is possible to have the same critical conversation we had with each other by yourself. However, it is not the intention of this chapter to give students a simple roadmap of methods to employ; rather, in conclusion, we challenge students to use Elias' work as a way of stimulating critical debate and discussion as to how to think about their research, in keeping with the emergence of a Critical Event Studies terrain.

## Notes

1. This term is often used interchangeably with constructivism and phenomenology.
2. Consideration to your own presence and the impact it has upon an event and audience under investigation is required. In the context of this research, both researchers were one in a crowd of thousands and therefore had little impact on their surroundings. However if researching more intimate groupings or if the researcher has a more active role in proceedings then greater consideration for your own influence on the experience observed is necessary.

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# 3

## A Qualitative Case Study of the 2010 Football World Cup in South Africa: Practical Considerations and Personal Dilemmas

Suzanne Dowse

### Making Sense of the Experience: Researching the 2010 FIFA Football World Cup in South Africa

Empirical research provides a means of testing and developing theory, but the appropriateness of methodologies adopted is frequently contested in the literature which identifies many weaknesses that have to be acknowledged and may not be substantially resolvable. For example, case studies are widely recognised in the Political Sciences as a means of studying complex or infrequent phenomena, but this approach has been criticised for being atheoretical, unmanageable, and producing ungeneralisable results (Bennett & Elman, 2008; Garrod & Fyall, 2013). There is also ongoing concern in discussions of qualitative investigation regarding the effect of an inside or outside position on the researcher's ability to obtain and appropriately interpret qualitative data (Herod, 1999; Sabot, 1999; Weinreb, 2006). Understanding the challenges and opportunities inherent in these approaches is therefore important and thus present the researcher with numerous practical considerations and private dilemmas. This paper explores these issues drawing on personal experience of

conducting a case study of a mega-event that included fieldwork in a foreign country. The research findings demonstrated the value of qualitative research for developing a nuanced understanding of the specific context(s) that influence complex social events, while the experience itself highlighted how personal insider and outsider statuses may influence data collection and analysis (Rainbird, 1990). By sharing these insights, and also reflecting on the rhetorical question (to paraphrase Wolcott, 2007) ‘what kind of story is a South African willing to tell a British researcher’, this chapter seeks to support the conduct of fieldwork within qualitative research ‘communities’. Towards these ends, the discussion begins with a brief outline of the (now completed) PhD project that provided the basis of the experiences shared in order to provide a context for the information presented. It then outlines some issues concerning qualitative research methodologies that are debated in the literature and how they were interpreted, experienced, and rationalised within the context of the PhD study. The discussion concludes by reflecting on why the challenges inherent in the conduct of empirical field work should not discourage qualitative methodologies that have an irreplaceable role in the conduct of social research.

## **Researching Sport Mega-Events: The State of Play**

Research into mega sports-events (MSEs) is an established field of study that recognises that the pursuit of event hosting rights requires unambiguous national government support in ways that make the actual decision a political one. This is because only the national government can agree the public resources and legislative adaptations required by event owners (The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)). The public nature of these commitments inevitably generates the need for the political decision to be endorsed by the affected population, support which is encouraged through the presentation of the event as a policy intervention that will secure a range of diverse, and frequently extensive, public good outcomes. These outcomes include economic dividends in the form of, for example,



tourism development, socio-cultural benefits like increased social equality and urban regeneration, and broader political advantage gained through enhanced status and prestige that provide opportunities for the country as a state actor to defend and pursue national interests (Black & van der Westhuizen, 2004). The significant cost of both bidding for and delivering events of the magnitude of the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Football World Cup has ensured that despite the breadth of opportunities promoted it is invariably the economic potential that has been the focus of evaluative attention. This research, while providing evidence that suggests the capacity to generate significant revenue is present, also indicates that the potential for this to be enjoyed as a public good outcome is limited (de Nooij, van den Berg, & Koopmans, 2010). It also highlights that expectations for economic dividends are frequently disappointed because the cost-benefit projections publicised tend to understate the costs involved and overstate the potential return (Whitson & Horne, 2006).

The unrealistic nature of pre-event predictions undermines robust event impact evaluations that explore how far outcomes meet political expectations. This is because publically presented rationales are more likely to reflect the requirements of gaining popular support than political motivations or expectations that may be more realistic and less concerned with obtaining an economic return on investment. The possibility that political support for an event is motivated primarily by non-economic considerations is raised by the destabilisation of the economic business case for events and the growing focus on the achievement of non-economic social good outcomes (Chalip, 2006). A body of knowledge that supports and analyses this reorientation is growing (Weed et al., 2009), but overall far more is known about expectations (particularly those economically focussed), than is known about outcomes achieved, the process by which they are achieved (or not), and the extent to which they match political expectations. The recent relocation of mega-events to developing countries has further complicated this knowledge gap, because the information that is available reflects the historical preponderance for events to be held in developed industrialised economies and therefore provides a framework for analysis that may be unsuitable for application in developing country contexts (Cornelissen, 2004). There

is also another dimension to this knowledge gap, the 'relative neglect' by the Political Sciences in studying sport mega-events. This lack of engagement contributes to the relative dearth of information concerning the political aspects of mega-event hosting and how, why, and whether it should be considered a useful policy intervention (Black, 2008).

The implications of this 'state of play' is that there are a range of motivations, which include domestic and foreign policy considerations, that drive the political desire to host a MSE that may outweigh economic considerations, particularly for states that possess fewer power and policy resources and in which economic returns may be harder to achieve (Matheson & Baade, 2004). However, there is a lack of clarity concerning how far political ambitions are realistic, realisable, and realised because the policy implementation process, including contextual specificities and event-led constraints and opportunities, are not well understood. These implications formed the working hypothesis of a case study of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA Football World Cup which sought to explore the political and international relations dimensions of a mega-event project within a developing country context. In line with the intention to study, in detail, the political and policy *what, why, and how* of a complex social event the data-collection methodologies adopted were qualitative. The methodologies used included documentary analysis and participant observation (though not in the true Hammersley and Atkinson sense), but predominantly centred on semi-structured interviews. This combination was informed by the research objectives which were: to explore how political narratives were formed and the degree to which they aligned with policy-planning processes, to understand the processes by which ambitions and expectations evolved, and to explore how the delivery process was experienced and the outcomes that were achieved as a result. Interviews were held with representatives of four main groups of respondents: government officials and policy officers, employees of FIFA and the local organising committee, foreign diplomats, and 'informed opinion' sources which included representatives from media outlets, civil society groups, organisations supporting the delivery of the event, and academics with expertise in South African domestic and foreign policy. The interviews were predominantly carried out in South Africa during two periods of fieldwork conducted in 2010

(preparation to ‘games-time’) and 2011 (legacy period). Sixty-five people were interviewed during this time and, where possible, interviews were repeated in order to facilitate the exploration of evolving perspectives and experiences over time. The decision to adopt an overall case study approach was grounded in the knowledge that event drivers and outcomes are highly influenced by the specific socio-economic and political environment in which they take place which means that contextual awareness is a prerequisite for impact studies. Accordingly, an approach that would necessitate a diluted focus across a range of events and event contexts was considered inappropriate.

## Issues in the Research Process: Case Study

Despite concern that the available methodological literature may provide limited support in terms of preparing academics for the practical and personal experience of in-the-field data collection, an extensive body exists that explores and debates the relative strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research methodologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Garrod and Fyall (2013), for example, recognise that case studies as an approach have received criticism with respect to their capacity to be atheoretical, ungeneralisable, and unmanageable. However they also recognise that case studies are useful pedagogical tools that offer opportunities to engage students more effectively by bringing life, and not unimportantly, status for the teacher, into the classroom. This is because detailed coverage of a single phenomenon provides a vivid, contextualised, and nuanced explanation of the *who*, *what*, *why*, and *how* of a social occurrence that is able to reflect on the possible influences of internal and external factors and the future implications. The same qualities make case studies a valuable methodological approach to the study of social phenomena and particularly those, like MSEs, where it is known that ambitions and outcomes are influenced significantly by the contextual features of the environment in which they are held. However, the existence of a credible rationale for the adoption of a case study approach towards the study of MSEs did not obviate the need to address the concerns raised in the literature about the academic credibility of this methodological approach. These, as previously

stated, relate to the manageability of case studies and whether the associated research is appropriately theoretically informed or applicable beyond the confines of the specific example explored.

Any project has the capacity to be unmanageable if the approach is unplanned or the objectives are too ambitious. The cornerstone of a successful research project is realistic research aims and objectives, but they may be challenging to develop and, more importantly, adhere to. Mission creep is a risk that Project Management schools against. Unfortunately, PhD students and academics infrequently benefit from this education and may struggle to appropriately contain the quest for new knowledge within the boundaries of a manageable study. 'Focus on your study and explore that when you have finished,' was a frequent refrain in the supervision sessions guiding the research presented in this chapter. It was unequivocally sound advice that researchers from all persuasions are likely to recognise and should consider very carefully. In practical terms, heeding this guidance reinforced the robustness of the decision to adopt a case study approach; it prevented the study of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 Football World Cup developing into an unmanageable comparative exploration of this experience against previous and future hosts. The same advice counselled against the equally unfeasible initial intention to cover the South African experience in holistic terms that incorporated each of the nine host city venues individually (there were ten event venues, two of which were located in Johannesburg). This ambition was consequently revised down to a more manageable two-level approach that was able to account for the particular considerations at national government and subnational levels of government, but approached the latter through the use of a sample of three host areas that had distinct and diverse core characteristics in order to explore the local government experience from a range of perspectives. These host areas were: Johannesburg in the province of Gauteng which is the economic centre of the country, Cape Town in the province of the Western Cape which is a tourism centre of the country, and Polokwane in the Limpopo province which is a relatively underdeveloped area of South Africa which shares its border with other African states. This sampling approach enabled the project to capture a flavour of the diverse motivations that informed hosting ambi-

tions, expectations, and experiences at the subnational levels of government across South Africa while at the same time ensuring that the scope of research required remained within manageable boundaries. Perhaps the point to be made is that the exploration of a complex social phenomenon will be limited by necessity, particularly when carried out as a single person led PhD project. Recognising these limitations is not a weakness, but rather a pragmatic observation that should inform, guide, and perhaps more importantly, serve to give confidence to the boundaries set for the study.

With regards to the theoretical grounding of a case study and the potential for findings to be transferable, it is perhaps better to assess projects on a case-by-case basis with the working assumption that the potential for both exists, especially for cross-disciplinary studies that provide opportunities to draw on theoretical frameworks from more than one academic field. For example, a study of the political and international relations dimensions of hosting MSEs offered possibilities in relation to theories from the Political Sciences as well as, for example, the Sociology of Sport, which is a significant contributor to the body of MSE research that exists (Beacom, 2000). Specific to this project, the methodological approach took a person-centred approach to understanding political activity and the behaviour of political actors. This approach was grounded in the belief that the world is a social construct and the behaviour and perspectives of social actors are shaped by individual perceptions and understandings that may or may not be shared (Parsons, 2010). This approach gives rise to the need to understand what Burnham, Gilland Lutz, Grant, and Layton-Henry (2008:35) describe as ‘context specific reasoning and situational logic’, meaning the context in which the behaviour takes place and the positions of the stakeholders involved. This rationale is presented as an example of the possibility for case studies to be founded on a theoretical basis that, in this case, also informed the decision to incorporate field work as a method of data collection in the environment of the social phenomenon under study. In addition to this conceptual underpinning, this study of the political and international relations dimensions of the hosting experience also drew on conceptual theories from relevant academic fields to inform key aspects of the research. For example, theo-

ries of States and State behaviour from International Relations informed expectations and explanations of South Africa as an emerging Middle Power within the international community (Jordaan, 2003).

With respect to the potential for research findings to be applicable beyond the specific case study setting, it may be that the contextual specificity that influences event impacts leaves associated research more generally vulnerable to this challenge. However, while it may be agreed that intentions and impacts will be nuanced according to context, some hosts will share at least some core characteristics and this, albeit potentially limited similarity, offers the potential to hypothesise similar findings in line with the extent to which features align and depart. It is also the case that these hypotheses will become more informed as knowledge about the social dynamics that govern complex social events grows. The case could therefore be made that research into new and potentially initially ungeneralisable social phenomena should be encouraged as a means of developing understanding rather than discouraged because findings may be unique to a particular study.

## **Issues in the Research Process: In-Situ Snowballing**

The case study approach provided an academically informed umbrella to qualitative data-collection methodology that included documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The remainder of the discussion is concerned with the issues and opportunities presented in the latter two data-collection tools, although the discussion has implications for the former specifically in relation to access to information. This relevance is grounded in the fact that the study of the 2010 Football World Cup (FWC) was the first time that the researcher conducting the study had academically explored, or personally experienced, South African society. This lack of prior exposure meant that fieldwork would be a crucial aspect of the research process because it would provide a means of understanding the socio-political and economic context that shaped motivations for the FWC and the outcomes that were gained. The value of this in terms of understanding

the stories shared was a striking aspect of the data analysis. In addition the personal contact that being 'in-situ' facilitated, it also had a very important practical dimension that was repeatedly reinforced by the challenges experienced accessing data ranging from policy papers, for the documentary analysis, to contact details for the relevant stakeholders to approach for interviews. From the UK, this process appeared all but impossible until contact was made with a South African academic through a third-person introduction. This contact then introduced a local government officer who in turn acted as a medium for reaching other relevant stakeholders at national and local levels of government who then in turn generated additional contacts. However, this 'snowballing' process did not come into full effect until after initial interviews were held in South Africa which suggests that a similar level of access to participants, policy documents, reports, and other evaluations would have been unlikely had the study been attempted from a remote basis. This is particularly so as a number of the documents shared by interviewees were not available publically and the researcher carrying out the study was inconsistently alert to what was available, and where and why it could prove useful. Meeting people face to face was invaluable because it provided opportunities to review papers without taking them off the premises which met various organisational protocol restrictions. It also enabled contact recommendations to be followed up immediately because they could be organised by the referee at the point at which they were suggested. It is not possible to prove whether this positively influenced the referred contact decision to agree to the meeting but the possibility should not be ruled out, particularly in view of the latent obligations inherent in social networks.

The snowballing route by which access was gained to the majority of stakeholders interviewed for this research aligns with other reported experiences of gaining access to stigmatised or elite communities that are 'hard-to-reach', because trust or points of entry are absent (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). For example, Noy (2008) observes that the snowballing approach frequently emerges as the default choice when other attempts have failed, which appears counter-intuitive given that key informants are likely to be identifiable only via 'local' knowledge from within these networks. This point was highlighted through interviews with

government officers in South Africa that were responsible for delivering the event which highlighted that a central organising role was played by a senior manager who was, unexpectedly, not from the national government department officially leading the 2010 project. This individual was subsequently interviewed in a meeting arranged by one of the early interviewees that had identified his centrality to the 2010 delivery processes. Noy (2008) also suggests that beyond providing an effective means of identifying relevant informants, the snowballing approach may also increase the possibility of their engagement in research activities as a result of the social pressure implicit in the membership relations of the network from which the referral was derived. This proposition cannot be tested in relation to the study in question; however, it is notable that only one referred individual refused to engage in the research project which suggests that Noy's observation has merit. In addition to facilitating the snowballing approach, being in South Africa also provided serendipitous interview opportunities. For example, an interview with an influential manager of a World Cup stadium, who had links to the 2010 Local Organising Committee and had been significantly involved in the 1995 Rugby World Cup project, was facilitated by the owner of a Bed and Breakfast establishment used following an informal conversation about the researcher's reason for being in South Africa; this highlights the importance of being in situ as well as good manners and approachability.

## **Issues in the Research Process: Negotiating the Insider-Outsider Dichotomy**

The benefits associated with being in South Africa in terms of access to information, the development of contextual knowledge, and the ability to personally witness the changes in social places, as MSEs move from the preparation to the delivery stage and lose their visible social presence in the legacy stages, are immeasurable. They do not, however, make the researching observer a member of their social setting in ways that could offer 'insider' status in terms of the insider: outsider debates that remain a feature of methodological debates. This point is salient irrespective of



the fact that study was never intended nor conducted as an ethnography and therefore the participant observer approach should not be understood in this sense. The implications of the position of the researcher as a foreigner within South Africa became more of a reflexive concern when the time came to consider the 'interviewing strategy' that would guide the conduct of the interviews that would take place. To be clear, this consideration did not relate to the structure of the interviews. The decision had already been taken to adopt a semi-structured approach that would provide interviewees with the space and encouragement to tell their story, albeit guided by an interview schedule of key areas for discussion. The consideration related more specifically to the question of how and whether the 'outsider' status would influence the interview itself and the stories shared by informants.

The body of literature that discusses the impact of researcher 'positionality' on the data collected and data-collection process is ambiguous as to whether informants are more open and co-operative with those 'local' or 'foreign' to the research setting. For example, Weinreb (2006) draws on the experience of a research project conducted in Kenya to suggest that data may be more successfully collated by 'insiders' as a result of their local knowledge and ability to reassure concerns about the intention of the research project, navigate 'sucker bias', and apply social pressure to achieve engagement. However, this experience is not a consistently shared experience. For example, Sabot (1999) reported significant difficulties accessing information and contacts when exploring the local dimensions of economic development in former industrial cities which contrasted significantly with the experience of a fellow foreign researcher. Sabot posited that the challenges encountered reflected local political concerns that a 'domestic investigator' may threaten electoral opportunities or career progression in a way that a foreign researcher would not. She also described how her foreign peer was also able to circumvent local sensitivities regarding, for example, the discussion of costs and budgets in ways that her social position and associated cultural familiarity precluded. However, Sabot also suggests that although foreign researchers may enjoy preferential access in the data-collection process, some of this advantage could be offset by a potentially more limited capacity for informed analysis and interpretation that would result from less devel-

oped cultural knowledge. In regards to the study of the 2010 Football World Cup this observation was intuitively sensible enough to raise concerns regarding the true potential for an 'outsider' to really understand a foreign social situation. A concern only partially ameliorated by Herod's (1999) suggestion that this position is tenable only in the context of a positivist approach to data collection that knowledge is out there and collectable rather than co-created through the research process. This notwithstanding, the literature also raises the possibility that the position of the researcher may affect the nature of the information put forward and how it is interpreted which, by default, raises questions about the resultant findings and the implications for action that is taken in response. Weinreb (2006), for example, observed how the information relayed to the researcher, within the project discussed, was significantly nuanced according to the profile of the collecting researcher to the extent that it could result in different policy interventions.

The positionality of the researcher is also important as it informs, although it may not determine, how the interview can be approached. For example, how should the interviewer seek to place themselves in relation to the interviewee, as an expert, a peer, or student, given the implications for projected or perceived determinations of statuses of superiority, parity, or subordination inherent in such positioning? Again the literature is divided on the merits of each of these approaches (Cotterill, 1992; Weiss, 1995; Herod, 1999; Mikecz, 2012). Cotterill (1992), for example, advocates an interactive approach that seeks to create a sense of parity between the interviewer and interviewee in which the former shares information as a means of encouraging reciprocal disclosure. This approach is contested by Weiss (1995) who suggests that the interviewer should operate in a facilitative role because sharing information centres the attention on the interviewer rather than the informant where it belongs. Agar (1996) highlights that ethnographic studies frequently describe the role of the researcher using the metaphor of child or student, which suggests a differential positioning that seeks to establish the interviewee as the mentor with the associated expectation that the 'learner' researcher will ask many questions and make mistakes, both of which should be responded to positively. These differences of opinion concerning the 'best' approach to eliciting information may also be less important if the status of the

researcher is understood as a fluid, rather than fixed, entity, which can be manipulated throughout the research process in ways that respond to the characteristics of the interviewee and the relationship that has been developed with them (Mikecz, 2012). It also is clear that despite the best (and potentially strategically informed) intentions concerning the projection of position and status, the interviewee may interpret the status and position of the researcher somewhat differently to that intended or expected and the researcher should be alert to how their individual biography may inform this (Mikecz, 2012).

## **Understanding South Africa 2010: Reflections on the Research Process**

Understanding the position of the researcher as a fluid entity and the interview as a stage-managed process designed to elicit information from social informants raises a variety of questions about the individual approach to be adopted. The key decision to be made appears to be ‘who’ to be when conducting interviews. For the research presented here, the intuitively logical approach was to adopt a position that was true to actual status—a British PhD Student that sought to learn about the 2010 hosting experience from the perspective of those involved—as this would be the easiest to maintain consistently. The fact the PhD studentship was a part-time role that was managed alongside University teaching commitments, and management of a busy and commercially focussed research centre, was not mentioned as it was felt that this could raise concern about an assumed ‘true’ purpose of the research project. As a student and non-South African (outsider), the status of the researcher provided a legitimate explanation for both presence in South Africa and interest in learning about the social dynamics of the country and the minutiae of the 2010 hosting experience. The emphasis placed on this positioning was also informed by discussions with experts in South African domestic relations; they suggested that the experience of Apartheid could mean that government officers might be more concerned than would be usual to expect regarding ‘hidden’ agendas driving the research. This history was also used to challenge the wisdom of the intention to audio record inter-

view sessions and led to the decision to 'minute' interview sessions, iterate the academic and independent nature of the study, and confirm the anonymity of all sources. The impact of these measures is indeterminable and should not be assumed. For example, Weinreb (2006) suggests that assurances of confidentiality and anonymity may be uninfluential when the person giving the assurances is unknown. While Harrison (2001) raises the possibility that note-taking during interview sessions can be distracting, whether this is a material consideration or one that is offset by the absence of a recorder is unknown. The depth of information shared during interview sessions did not suggest that the action of note-taking inhibited discussions, while the disclosure of additional, and arguably sensitive, information in post-interview conversations suggests that the presence of a recording device may have limited access to information in some cases. As an aside, while it is prudent to recognise that audio records of interview discussions offer a more comprehensive account of interview conversations, informal conversations with other PhD and post-PhD researchers suggested that the time and financial resources involved in transcription could mean that they are used less frequently than might be assumed. Where this possibility was highlighted it appeared that the notes made during interviews to cover possible recording failings had been utilised. It may therefore be prudent to recognise these limitations more explicitly, where they exist, and proactively plan a purposeful minute-taking approach that could offer more usable information than notes that were not taken intended to be the primary record of data.

The emphasis on a young researcher status, together with the decision not to make audio recordings of interviews, was designed to reassure interviewees that the study of the experience of delivering a sport mega-event project was neither a potentially threatening performance review nor a media investigation. Both of which were in evidence around the World Cup project. Within this context the desire to learn from experts was appropriate which, together with a foreign status, created a framework in which detailed explanations and expansive narratives were encouraged which allowed the informant to decide what they felt was important. A student-centred approach also created the space to probe, dogmatically, for information to bridge gaps created by a lack of contextual familiarity

or when it appeared that there was a reluctance to share certain pieces of information.

It seems important to highlight a conscious resistance to the 'child' metaphor that is used to describe researcher positionality in ethnographic literature in the belief that it does not lend itself to the seriousness or credibility that academic research deserves. The distinction should be made between a researcher that seeks to broaden their knowledge into areas that they are unfamiliar with and a child that does not have broad knowledge or experience. In terms of the research into South Africa, this meant an ability to be open about a lack of knowledge concerning the local journey and experience except in broad terms, but knowledgeable about events in general and proactive in gathering information about the local context. Accordingly interviews were opened with a general framing that sought to avoid leading discussions through the articulation of information held. However, this knowledge was utilised to project an image of a 'serious researcher' when it was felt that to do otherwise encouraged efforts to divert attention from, or deny the existence of, core issues and activities. In these, albeit limited, instances, the questions asked were contextualised using locally specific information in ways that reinforced the status of an informed student, rather than directly challenge what was perceived as rather patronising behaviour.

To encourage informants to self-determine issues of importance, priorities, and valuable areas of knowledge or learning, interviews were gently guided around the questions that underpinned the PhD project. However, the political emphasis of the study was de-emphasised to ensure that it did not lead the discussion. The importance of this approach was reinforced in one interview where an unfortunate reference to an interest in political motivations led to a dominance of this theme in the interview narrative. It was a lesson learned and not repeated. Issues or points of information raised in one interview were revisited in others and during the process of documentary analysis. This approach was designed to gather as much contextual information as possible and also created the space to explore alternative perspectives and explanations and accommodate the differing access that individuals may have had to information. The interviewing process was also guided by the principal that experiences, and therefore reflections, were personal and subject to re-interpretation

over time. The reality of this issue became more noticeable during repeat interviews, where it was clear that during the intervening time some personal reflections and interpretations regarding events and outcomes had changed. When these issues emerged during the data analysis stage, the approach adopted was to recognise differences and changes in narratives and offer reasonably grounded explanations where it was possible to do so. As a personal reflection, it is perhaps important not to underestimate how personally emotional a national project, that is viewed as a proxy for the characteristics of a nation, may become for the stakeholders involved. For example, one interviewee that was in South Africa to gather information to inform preparations for the 2014 event reflected on how the 2010 project had caused the accelerated development of infrastructure that did not respond to local priorities and, as a result, was likely to impede progress with more socially valuable improvements. A year later it was observed by the same interviewee that this issue was similarly challenging developments associated with the 2014 Football World Cup. However, when the 2014 event opened amid significant criticism of the social impact of this event, this personal evaluation changed significantly and the event was positioned as predominantly positive in terms of accelerative impact. The striking nature of this change, together with the pervasive public criticism of the 2014 project, suggests that it is prudent to acknowledge the possibility for a defensive evaluation when the project is immediate and personal within the data analysis process.

The methodological issues raised in the literature are appropriately captured in Henry Wolcott's (2007) rhetorical (and now paraphrased) question 'what kind of a story is a South African willing to tell a British researcher' and as a secondary question, 'why'? In this study, the answer appeared to be a rather candid one, although it is impossible to tell whether a different positioning, or indeed researcher, would have generated a different story. Those interviewed appeared willing, and in many cases eager, to share their lived experiences, personal perceptions, and informed understandings in expansive narratives that drew on examples of successes and challenges experienced in the event process, significant events, and key concerns. These narratives were only possible through personal and direct involvement in the delivery experience which has generated confidence in the findings returned.

It remains to this day somewhat surprising that, given how personally and emotionally stakeholders were involved in the mega-event process, that interviewees were generally very willing to participate in this research and offer the level of candour that they did. On very few occasions did it appear that the information on offer was limited to a rather turgid public relations narrative and, overall, an insight into the process was shared that was staggering. In part this outcome can be attributed to an open and expansive approach to the interviews that provided space for the identification of new themes and the exploration of specific nuances in those that the literature ensured would be expected. It also created opportunities to explore the specifics of why and how expectations and ambitions evolved, what was valued and dismissed, and—importantly—the impact of the personal experience of being involved. However, to attribute the level of information shared solely to the technical approach to the interview process would be to ignore the psychological dimension of a data-collection methodology, grounded in the belief that people have a story to tell and may gain something from the process of doing so. For example, for government officers it became clear that the visible display of capacity demonstrated in the successful delivery of the 2010 World Cup had generated enormous pride, but understanding this pride, and why it was so personally important, required the discussion of the project in ways that incorporated South Africa's social history, international position and a description of the delivery process. It was clear that the open interviewing approach was critical to understanding this because it provided interviewees with the space to describe this in detail. The expansive explanations which featured reflections on local agency and capacity, alongside discussions about the challenges that were experienced, also allayed concerns regarding the potential for the relay of a limited public 'good news' story. It is possible that relaying this story to a person that could be perceived symbolically as a representative of a former colonial power that is perceived as sceptical of the capabilities of previously controlled nations may have influenced the decision to support the research because it provided an opportunity for a potentially self-esteem-enhancing role reversal. This possibility was indicated in comments made during interviews that indicated that the Northern World generally, and Britain in particular, was regarded somewhat negatively due to its perceived disregard for African skills and attributes. For example, a

very senior manager of a leading national department commented, in a discussion about domestic perceptions, that the event could be relocated in response to fears about the country's capacity to deliver the World Cup project successfully, that 'they [FIFA] could not take it away from us; we would have paid Mugabe's ticket to the UK.' The vehemence with which this statement was articulated was surprising, particularly as it did not fit with the general, albeit robust, tone of the conversation that preceded or followed it.

## Concluding Points

Qualitative research studies invariably aim to create a '3-dimensional' picture of a social phenomenon that those involved can relate to and that enables the salient issues to be explored and reviewed from a variety of angles (Mikecz, 2012). The methodologies adopted to gather and process this information raise many challenges but in many cases these challenges are manageable if the planning process can accommodate the activity required to respond to them or is informed by the debates that they generate. For example, qualitative investigation raises concerns regarding the need to effectively balance researcher involvement with the detachment required to identify and develop appropriate lines of enquiry. However, the implications of this perceived positionality are deeper and have the potential to influence the story created through the research project. Awareness of these implications provides the researcher with the capacity to reflexively explore how their personal biography may influence the research process, knowledge which has a valuable part to play in the interpretation of data collated.

Personal experience of conducting a case study of a MSE that included fieldwork in a foreign country confirms both the importance of participant experience of the social environment studied and the value of empirical qualitative research as a means of developing a nuanced understanding of the specific context(s) that influence complex social events (Rainbird, 1990). The findings also draw attention to the ways in which insider and outsider status may influence data collection and analysis, albeit the influence was not experienced as a fixed position with associated and predeter-



minable positive or negative effects. Personal experience also supports the suggestion made by Cotterill (1992) that while the literature may alert the world of the field worker to potential personal and practical dilemmas that may be experienced in the conduct of fieldwork, the effect of this knowledge in terms of personal feelings of preparation or on-site capacity may be limited. It is possible that this is because the lessons learned are initially appreciable in the abstract alone and only become 'real' through personal exposure. It may also be because planning approaches are likely to be procedure and task orientated rather than person-centred on the possible emotional experience. This chapter has sought to respond to this gap and support the conduct of field work, within qualitative research 'communities', by sharing a personal experience of developing a practical approach to empirical research that accommodates logistical and private considerations in a way that (hopefully) presents the research process as a more tangible entity.

## Notes

1. An ethnographic approach that relies predominantly on participant observation in which the researcher actively participates (overtly or covertly) for an extended period of time in the lives of the society under study see Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (Third Edition), London and New York: Routledge.

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# 4

## Creating Critical Festival Discourse Through Flexible Mixed Methodological Research Design

Allan Jepson and Alan Clarke

### Introduction

Our chapter traces a path through previously published doctoral research (Jepson, 2009) which investigates the planning and construction of community cultural festivals. Socio-cultural phenomena such as festivals are multifaceted and embrace all walks of life, culture, and ethnic backgrounds. So much so that festivals cannot be separated from culture nor from their communities as they shape, represent, and recreate their histories. Social reality in festivals and events is multiple, divergent, and interrelated, and as a direct result reality becomes the meaning attributed to experience and is therefore not the same for everyone (Cohen & Manion, 1987; Remenyi, Williams, Money, & Swartz, 1998). From a methodological point of view festivals can pose many challenges to researchers such as, how to capture, record, and analyse the rich qualitative and quantitative data they produce across a variety of time periods, phases of festival planning, production, and consumption. The research discussed in this chapter utilised a flexible and reflexive methodological approach which incorporated

five data-collection and three analysis techniques to capture and analyse primary data across the unique phases of a community festival. In particular the research aimed to reveal the distinct relationships between power, planning, production, and consumption. Our chapter begins by examining the philosophical underpinning of the doctoral research, such as the use of social constructivism as a research philosophy and the integration of Guba and Lincoln's (1985) four criterion of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to raise trustworthiness within qualitative research. Following this discussion we show how research questions, themes, and data can be operationalised into practical data-collection methods in the field and how the data was analysed to create a contribution to knowledge. We then centre our discussion on validity, limitations, and ethical considerations which are thought to be unique to festival and event research environments. The final part of our chapter concludes upon research methodologies which could be employed within festivals and events research and discusses how this study has shaped judgement on our studies in community festivals.

## **Philosophical Underpinning; the Emergence of a Multimethods Approach to Studying Cultural Festivals**

Our research journey began on the premise that there was a lack of understanding in regards the interconnected relationships that existed during a community's cultural festival production and consumption. In particular we were interested in the festival planning and construction processes and the role of power and hegemony upon decision making on behalf of a local community. In researching within festival and event studies we recognised that as a field of study, rather than an established academic discipline one must understand the epistemological impact of borrowing knowledge from more established disciplines such as, psychology, which enabled understanding of the motivations of stakeholders. Sociology informed this research through cultural studies perspectives and informed on the make-up of the local communities and stakeholder groups within the

location of the festival research environment. Political Science and political philosophy informed the study through public policy for the creative and cultural industries and enabled understanding of public sector community events and the communities they serve. And finally History played a part in this study as it allowed critical juxtaposition of past cultural and creative industries events with what was happening in the present day.

Researchers in critical festival studies (CFS) should also be concerned in regards the ontological nature of their research. Ontology by definition stimulates our thoughts towards the very nature of reality and is known widely as the 'science of being' (Glazer & Straus, 1967; Taylor, 1975). The ontological stance taken here is that the nature of reality and its subsequent characteristics are subjective and contain multiple layers (Geertz, 1973), as witnessed by the many attendees to festivals and events which provides clear justification of utilising an open ontology. Another aspect which directly affects the ontological concerns of those studying festivals and events are theories of power and how these can directly influence culture and the position and actions of all of the stakeholders involved in the construction of festivals and events, moreover researchers collecting primary data in order to analyse them. Power according to Lash (2007) is becoming ontological, although this is directly criticised by Johnson (2007) who suggests that Lash's view classifies power as epistemological in a largely ontological world. According to Johnson (2007) politics and power can root itself in the lived contexts of different social groups in society, which will determine and influence power and knowledge within the construction of festivals and events. It is important to include power within ontological concerns as it can have an impact on the way data is collected with the major example being the positionality of the interviewer and interviewees, with regard to how questions are presented and how informants respond.

## **Positivist and Phenomenological Research Traditions**

When researching within social sciences, and moreover within event or festival studies it is paramount that an approach is identified that both defines, and drives the research, from its early beginnings to its ultimate

conclusions. Research paradigms have been widely discussed (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Remenyi et al., 1998; Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003). The vast majority of academics have formulated discussion around three major research paradigms: Positivism, Phenomenology, and more recently a combination of both positivistic and phenomenological paradigms to form a mixed or dual methodological approach.

Positivist paradigms tend to be common place within scientific research, as they employ the use of statistical procedures: lead to positivist knowledge claims, produces large amounts of empirical quantitative data uphold standards of reliability, and generally the research setting is artificial and easy to control. In conducting research within a positivist paradigm one assumes that there will be an objective analyst independent of the research and therefore there should not be any influence over the research subject, as a result law-like generalisations are sought based on the tangible nature of the research subject (Hussey & Hussey, 1998). Positivist research paradigms seek to generate quantitative data and usually employ data-collection methods such as closed-ended questions, cross-sectional surveys, moreover predetermined approaches, and incorporate a large amount of numerical data. It is likely that in adopting a purely positivist research paradigm, one would look to test or verify theories or a hypothesis in a deductive approach, which begins with theory, collects data (quantitative/empirical), then proves or disproves the hypothesis/theory (Hussey & Hussey, 2003). Within the analysis stages of positivist research, one seeks to maintain high reliability, validity, and the ability to generalise from their sample to the wider population. Positivists test for internal and external validity as this allows repetition of the research methods within a different research phenomenon. In retrospect the element that might have the most profound effect on the notion of reliability and validity in a positivist sense is that of the variables used. In utilising a purely positivist methodology, strict control of dependent variables and or manipulation of independent variables is needed, along with a watchful eye on exogenous, or confounding variables which unless monitored and identified correctly could have a detrimental impact on primary data collection, moreover could render flaws in the entire research (Hussey & Hussey, 1998, 2003). Within cultural studies research though there are simply too many possible variables within the environment to control,

and actually the interaction and relationship of variables is often the key to understanding cultural phenomena.

In contrast, phenomenological research holds beliefs and characteristics that are of an opposing nature to those of positivism. Firstly phenomenological paradigms utilise small qualitative data samples which are rich and subjective in nature. In its simplest sense phenomenological research focuses on social processes and how individuals shape and give meaning to their world in a sociological sense. It also stipulates that social reality is multiple, divergent, and interrelated, and as a direct result Reality becomes the meaning attributed to experience and is not the same for everyone (Cohen & Manion, 1987; Remenyi et al., 1998). Phenomenological research is concerned with the analysis of human perspectives generally within a natural environment which in turn makes them inherently subjective in nature. So unlike positivism, qualitative research seeks to place them within the phenomenon being studied, which often leads to an intrinsic link being established between a person and the research phenomenon. This means one is less concerned with the control or manipulation of research variables which are changeable over time, such as age, location, motivation, but moreover investigates the sociological nature of them in a given point in time to form a 'snapshot' or a cross-sectional analysis. Phenomenological research encourages reflexive observations from the actor's perspective not only on the phenomenon being researched, but also on those investigating it. Phenomenological approaches rather than adhere to strict rules, tend to be inductive in nature with theoretical perspectives and conclusions generated after primary data has been analysed. This tends to indicate that phenomenological paradigms use assumptions and generally include either one or more of the following strategies of enquiry: constructivist, advocacy/participatory knowledge, qualitative research, grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, and narrative.

## **Social Constructivism**

It could be argued that the most appropriate fit with regards creating critical festival discourse and thus advancing knowledge in the field of



festival and event studies is a mixed methodological approach based on 'constructivist' or 'social constructivist' claims, usually associated within a purely qualitative approach. This employs the theory that meanings are constructed by humans as they engage with the world they are interpreting, as opposed to the traditional pragmatist school of thought which is orientated around a particular research problem rather than a social phenomenon. Berger and Luckmann (1967), Guba and Lincoln (1985), Schwandt (2000), Neuman (2000), and Crotty (1998) amongst others see constructivist thinking as an underlying belief that we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture and that our thinking governed by culture allows us as humans to place value on our lives and the world in which we live. One of the main reasons for identifying with a constructivist approach within festival research is that culture can be set within the context of the festival through site visits, and gathering data at festival event level which allows for stronger interpretations of primary data. Guba and Lincoln (2005) who maintain that users of the constructivist paradigm are orientated to the production, and reconstructed understandings of the social world, and in our case the understandings and experiences brought about by visitors to festival events or production of events by festival organisers. In constructivist theory the basic generation of meaning is always social arising out of interaction with a human community, or festival communities in the case of this research. The meaning is social as people attach significant meanings and feelings towards a particular phenomenon, in this case a festival event or culture displayed within it which are then converted into discourse and social meaning, and conclusions are created through data analysis. The process of qualitative research is itself largely inductive as a result of theorising material from data collected within the field. Culture can be seen as a construct in its own right as we humans construct culture over a period of time and witness its very evolution. Indeed culture can also be clearly visible as a construct within festival studies, whether it bastardises, or contributes positively to host societies. Adopting constructivist claims to knowledge can be seen as a construction of event experiences, since festival visitors themselves constantly assimilate not only their own cultures but also borrow from others to enhance their cultural experience.

## Trustworthiness

Recognising the concept of trustworthiness within sociological research environments such as festivals and events is of great importance due to the multitude of cultural meanings, relationships, and realities involved. We have found that trustworthiness can and should be applied throughout the research process to ensure a rigorous research approach is followed to increase its validity and reliability. Decrop (2004) suggests that many attempts have been made to introduce concepts and terms from quantitative research paradigms such as generalisability, reliability, and validity but that the one accepted typology remains Guba and Lincoln's (1985) four criterion of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Guba and Lincoln's (Ibid) typology seeks to mirror the quantitative terminology to raise the trustworthiness within qualitative research.

*Credibility* is the extent of the researcher involvement with the research setting and those who participate within it. The Ontological stance in this research was guided by interpretivism and as a result was open to all social interactions taking place within the research setting between the researcher and stakeholders. To try to combat researcher bias and to gain the broadest range of information (Decrop, 2004) this doctoral research employed five different data-collection methods; event observations, and event photography were used to limit the contact with the research setting. For a clear breakdown of the data-collection methods implemented please refer to the next section on *Mixed Methods, Design, and implementation*. Research is said to be credible when data sets are giving the same suggested meanings and confirm theoretical positions.

*Transferability* is preferred over generalisability within qualitative research as a result of using large and rich data samples which cannot be generalised across an entire population (Denzin & Lincoln, 1997). Within festival and event research one must decide early on as to how generalisable the study is seeking to be, the doctoral research featured in this chapter used a simple random sampling technique which made generalisation impossible as generalisation relies on non-random sampling procedures. Transferability in the original research was increased as explicit details were given to contextualise the study and its findings

which were heavily grounded by existent theoretical perspectives carried forward from a critical review of the literature. This study adapted and utilised motivational frameworks which had been tested across a multitude of sociological and cultural contexts such as Crompton and McKay's (1997) motivational framework, and Iso-Ahola's (1980) escape-seeking dichotomy. By utilising published and tested theoretical perspectives research becomes more viable, and an increase in reliability can be acknowledged.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) et al. found that qualitative research cannot be bound by strict notions such as replicability bearing in mind the ever changing social cultural contexts of qualitative research. *Dependability* within qualitative research is the relationship between the data recorded by the researcher and what actually occurred within the research setting. In the case of this particular study a visual and narrative record of a cultural festival was achieved through photography and event observations taken at random events and times. Additionally visitor questionnaires were used to create an accurate and holistic view of the festival from the point of view of its visitors which was then triangulated against the views of the festival organisers.

By acknowledging and responding to Guba and Lincoln's (1985) criterion of credibility, transferability, and dependability, issues of *confirmability/objectivity* can be addressed more transparently within the festival and event research environment. The doctoral research featured in this chapter found that a variety of data-collection methods increased the size of data samples but had a significant impact upon the research as it meant that different cultural relationships and interpretations had a higher chance of materialising which in turn ensured that a realistic and truthful account of the research phenomenon was documented. One should seek to create a highly visible audit trail through the methodology and indeed the research to show how conclusions were arrived at. This study at the time of completion (Jepson, 2009) was unique in critical festival and events research as it set out to develop specific methods appropriate to capture culture and power relationships and push the boundaries of existing paradigms in order to analyse a multifaceted cultural phenomenon and raise the trustworthiness of festival and events research.

## Mixed Methods, Design, and Implementation

The benefits of using a mixed methodology within festival studies are mainly to gain a much more holistic picture of what is happening in the festivals local environment. Our research combined five forms of primary data capture (*planning forum observations, semi-structured interviews, festival observations, photography, semi-structured questionnaires*), collected both qualitative and quantitative primary data, and analysed the data using three analysis techniques (*discourse analysis; qualitative, SPSS analysis; quantitative, basic content analysis; qualitative*). (Please refer to Fig. 4.1 which clearly shows the adapted research process and the data-collection/analysis techniques). In adopting a mixed methodology one can choose the methods which are most appropriate to the research aim, objectives, and environment and therefore provide the most comprehensive understanding of the festival under investigation. We recommend that developing a mixed methodological approach should begin by identifying research questions and data needs which emerge from a critical literature review. As a frame of reference ours are seen in Tables 4.1, and 4.2. The research questions in Table 4.1 were developed as a result of a critical review of tourism, events, festival, culture, and power literature. We recommend that research questions are allowed to develop naturally from the review of literature; do not try to force their evolution as this can harm the validity of your study.

Table 4.2; shows the festival goals as set by the organisers and the data needs and data-collection methods employed in order to analyse the construction of the festival from different angles using both qualitative and quantitative data. The integration of both types of primary data collection and analysis can be seen clearly within Fig. 4.1.

Using flexible and mixed research methods can be justified within festival and event studies due to the complex and often messy and overlapping social and cultural nature of the research which will further evolve as data is collected. As a result of this consideration there is a necessity to build a research methodology which is flexible, transparent, and regulated by 'triangulation', in order for primary data sets to prove or disprove each other. This unique triangulation allowed critical discourse on the festival to take place and contributions to knowledge to be realised.

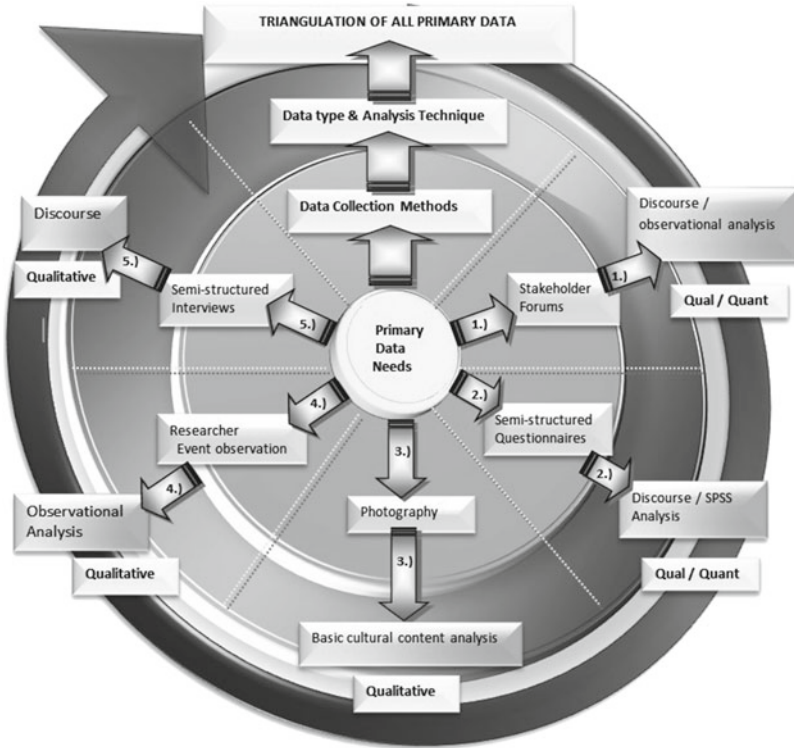


Fig. 4.1. Five point multimethods, and analysis framework  
Source: Jepson (2009), p. 171

## Data Collection and Analysis

In order to get a valid picture of the research phenomenon and confirm research truths it is suggested that data collection in festivals and events should take place across their three distinctive time periods (Pre/during/post-festival periods) as seen in Table 4.3

Further details of the ‘During Festival Period’ including questionnaire sample sizes can be seen in Table 4.5. It is important for any research within festival and event studies to consider the roles of both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques and highlight the need for triangulation of data during analysis. This doctoral research formulated a

**Table 4.1.** To illustrate possible research questions within the festival environment

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What types of cultural production, construction processes are in evidence at the festival; and what sort of culture is in evidence within festival events?<sup>a</sup>

How are stakeholders affected by power? And does it influence cultural production and construction, and consumption of festival events?<sup>a</sup>

Is local community culture represented by the festival events; and what is the cultural diversity like within the festival?

How does cultural theory (capital/habitus), and power affect visitor experience, enjoyment, cultural rewards/enrichment, or understanding of festival events?

Why have visitors attended festival events, and what motivates them to do so?

How has strategy been used within the festival, what are the festival's goals

Which variables best reflect levels of satisfaction within festival events?

What are the factors that could affect the overall success or failure of this festival?

What is the festival's purpose?

(Tourist attraction, political tool, image maker, or to provide community celebration?)

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<sup>a</sup>Major research question

Source: Jepson (2009), p. 151

**Table 4.2.** To illustrate festival goals, data needs, and data-collection methods

Festival goals	Data needs	Data-collection methods
<i>'Embrace all sections of the cities multicultural community'</i>	Document evidence of all local community and their cultures actively involved in the festival And in particular use of strategy or objectives set to achieve this goal through the construction and staging of the festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Event observations</li> <li>• Forums observations</li> <li>• (Post) festival stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>
<i>'Provide an opportunity for people living and working in the city to celebrate and enjoy a wide range of events'</i>	Collect evidence with regard to opportunity and motivation, document the types of visitors attracted to the festival events And also look for set objectives or strategy to achieve this goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Forum observations</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• (Post) festival stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>

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(continued)

Table 4.2. (continued)

Festival goals	Data needs	Data-collection methods
<i>'Highlight the existing quality of the events calendar'</i>	Evaluate and find evidence with regard to already established events in the city, and look for strategy or objectives that could help achieve this goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forum observations</li> <li>• Event observations</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Programme research V's established events pre festival</li> <li>• (Post) festival stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>
<i>'Stimulate new events &amp; activities specific to the festival'</i>	Evidence of events in the city before the festival V's those created by the festival, and any documented strategy or objectives which could help in achieving this goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forum observations</li> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Local newspaper research (Pre festival period)</li> <li>• Programme of events research V's established events pre festival</li> </ul>
<i>'Raise the city's profile regionally and Nationally'</i>	Find evidence of positive media, strategy and objectives during the construction and staging of the festival which could signify this goal is reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forum observations</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Media headlines or use of communication channels</li> <li>• (Post) festival stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>
<i>'Focus attention on the main festival period'</i>	Document evidence of all local communication channels and evidence of marketing strategy, campaigns and objectives to achieve this goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Event observations</li> <li>• Forum observations</li> <li>• (Post) stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>
<i>'Focus attention on the main festival period'</i>	Document evidence of all local communication channels and evidence of marketing strategy, campaigns and objectives to achieve this goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festival questionnaires</li> <li>• Event observations</li> <li>• Forums observations</li> <li>• (Post) stakeholder interviews</li> <li>• Collect and document positive media and communication evidence of successful strategy</li> </ul>

(continued)

Table 4.2. (continued)

Festival goals	Data needs	Data-collection methods
'Celebrate multiculturalism and diversity of the city'	Collect evidence with regard to festival events and their diversity with regard to different cultures featured in the construction and staging of the festival, and investigate use of strategy and objectives to achieve this goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Festival event observations</li> <li>• Festival questionnaires</li> <li>• Festival programme analysis</li> <li>• Forum observations</li> </ul>
'Celebrate partnerships between local organisations'	Collect evidence on relationships between organisations and the way they work together to construct the festival, and document any strategy or objectives which will ensure good working relationships of local organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festival event observations</li> <li>• Forum observations</li> <li>• (Post) stakeholder interviews</li> </ul>

Source: Jepson (2009), pp. 154–155

'Five point multimethods and analysis framework' (Fig. 4.1) to build and test theory based on key themes identified within the literature review. (See Fig. 4.2)

Figure 4.1 was designed to be specific and unique to the research setting and illustrates data-collection and analysis methods used in this research. The numbered Arrows indicate the phase in which the data collection and analysis took place, while vertical arrows signify the process, and in the surrounding circle the reader is able to clearly see the choices adopted with regard to data collection and analysis. The figure shows progression from the type of primary data need, through data collection, and shows the type of data captured and appropriate data analysis method whether this is Qualitative, or Quantitative, or a mixture of both data sets.

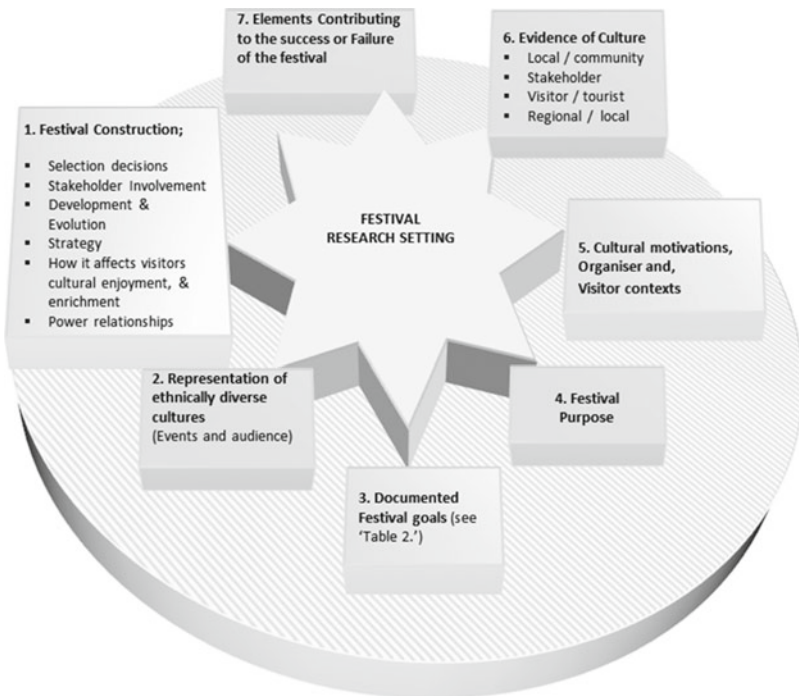
It should also be noted from the figure that triangulation should play a vital role in any study. Triangulation is defined by Denzin (1970,



**Table 4.3** The festival periods and the data-collection methods employed

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1. Pre-festival period
    - Festival stakeholder forum observations
    - Research notes from stakeholder forums
    - Archive newspaper, and library research
  2. During festival period
    - Festival event photography
    - Festival event observations
    - Festival questionnaires
    - Field notes from events
    - Festival programme, publications and media research
  3. Post-festival period
    - (Post) festival stakeholder interviews (Jubilee Four)
    - Post analysis and evidence of festival goal achievement
    - Festival publication report analysis
- 

Source: Jepson (2009), p. 158



**Fig. 4.2.** Key research themes and theories surrounding the research phenomenon

Source: Jepson (2009), p. 159

p. 297) as ‘the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon’; the major argument put forward by Denzin (1970) and Jick (1979) is that a collaboration of methods utilised by research investigating the same phenomenon will lead to greater validity and reliability than with a singular methodological approach, moreover this provides sound justification especially for a research phenomenon being investigated here, in which respondents will have different views and values on the cultural events they experience. Incorporating this five-tier system of data collection and analysis and sequential triangulation enabled a deeper view into the epistemological stance of the research, and thus allowing research truths to materialise above falsifications in collected data sets.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the major research themes which both governed and drove the doctoral research forward through primary data collection. Within the full submitted thesis these themes were also used as a context for analysing data sets and to build research findings and justify the contribution to knowledge through critical discourse.

Researchers studying cultural festivals and events should also be aware of the many variables which may impact on the collection and analysis of primary data. Dependent variables are those around which the research aims can be realised, independent variables are ones which the researcher can consciously or unconsciously select and control, and exogenous variables are those beyond the researchers control. Table 4.4 shows the variables which were applicable to the original festival research setting. As well as the three main types of variables discussed previously it is important for researchers to consider confounding variables especially within festivals and events research as they could have a detrimental impact on the analysis of primary data sets. From Table 4.4 one could assume that some of the exogenous variables could also be confounding variables, those which could have an effect on the dependent variable. For example, an event could be deemed not as successful by respondents due to bad weather particularly in the case of an outdoor event, but if this is not identified during data-collection stages it could mask the overall data sets and greatly affect the validity and reliability of the research.

**Table 4.4.** Identification of possible variables within this research

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Exogenous/extraneous variables
Cultural understanding	Venue size/quality	Bad weather
Cultural enrichment	Sequence of data collection— questionnaire distribution, duration of interviews	Ticket price
Cultural enjoyment/satisfaction	Selection of event to obtain primary data	Quality of miscellaneous facilities <sup>a</sup> Atmosphere/ambience Time/Duration of event Quality of performers

<sup>a</sup>Could include any of the following: food, drink, seating, access (including access for disabled people), safety & security, children's facilities (i.e. babies' changing areas, play areas, lost children meeting points), toilets

Source: Jepson (2009), p. 162

## Primary Data Collection and Analysis

The first stage of primary data collection was qualitative through documented attendance at festival planning forums. This was to investigate the festival construction process, but also to prioritise elements of research and to formalise oneself with all festival stakeholders, from both public and private sectors. The stakeholder forums were consistently held up until a few weeks before the festival and generally ran twice a month. Planning discussions took place with regard to; planning, finance, idea generation, and the organisation and construction of the festival programme. Informal meetings took place before and after the forums so a research agenda could be established, to prioritise and formulate the research questions documented in Table 4.1. Brief narrative summaries were made to establish contexts for qualitative and quantitative research. The festival planning forums were within the 'pre' festival stage and were used to evaluate and collect primary data in support of stakeholder cultural influence on the construction process of the festival and inform on decisions such as, sponsorship, cultural events, venues publicity, strategy, and marketing. The first phase of data collection set the foundations for evaluating the festival against its documented goals (Table 4.2). The

data from the planning forums produced qualitative data and were analysed through a simplified discourse analysis (Hodge & Kress, 1988), encoded into key themes and then triangulated with the fifth data set (semi-structured interviews with festival stakeholders).

The second stage of data collection distributed questionnaires in the field ( $n = 331$ ), during the main festival focus period and thus represented a major part of the field research (Table 4.5 shows the sample sizes employed at the various festival venues).

The questionnaires given to visitors (Simple Random Sampling) collected both qualitative and quantitative primary data and were formulated into three sections to investigate respondent motivations and cultural experiences at events. Section one of the questionnaire aimed to build up a respondent's attitude to festival experiences and classify them as to whether they were an experienced/inexperienced festival visitor. The questions sought to ascertain respondents' level of education, income,

**Table 4.5.** Festival events visited, and data-collection methods used

Title of festival event	Date, time, and location of Event	Primary data-collection method(s)	Approximate sample size (Questionnaires)
Jubilee well dressing, blessing and entertainment	22nd June 2002 10 am–10:30 am Market Square	Photography Observation	N/A
Scitec Family Science day	22nd June 2002 10:30 am–17:00 pm University Campus	Pilot Questionnaire Observation	31
County Singers: Monteverdi Vespers	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2002 19:30 pm–22:00 pm Derby Cathedral	Observation	N/A
Ladysmith Black Mambazo	26th June 2002 20:00 pm–22:00 pm Assembly Rooms	Observation	N/A
Local Radio/SONY Festival Sound Stage	29th June–7th July 2002, Market Place	Photography Observation	N/A
Jubilee Tea Dance	1st July 2002 1 pm, Market Place	Photography Observation, informal discussions with participants	N/A

(continued)

Table 4.5. (continued)

Title of festival event	Date, time, and location of Event	Primary data-collection method(s)	Approximate sample size (Questionnaires)
Thornton's Brass	5th July 2002 19:45 pm–22:00 pm Cathedral	Photography, Observation, Questionnaires	50
Local Newspaper sponsored Motor Show	7th July 2002 10 am–17:00 pm City Park	Photography Observation	N/A
The Sitwell Singers: Rachmaninov, 'Vespers by Candlelight	8th July 2002 21:15 pm–23:00 pm Cathedral	Photography Observation Questionnaires	50
Camra Beer Festival	10th July 2002 11:30 am–00:00 pm Assembly Rooms	Photography Observation Questionnaires	50
Continental Market	11–13th July 2002 09:00 am–17:00 pm Market place	Photography Observation	N/A
Sounds Interesting: Fine Arts Brass Ensemble	16th July 2002 19:00 pm–21:00 pm Guildhall Theatre	Observation Questionnaires	50
Farmers Market	18th July 2002 09:00 am–17:00 pm Market place	Observation	N/A
BBC Big Band	19th July 2002 19:30 pm–22:00 pm Assembly Rooms	Photography Observation Questionnaires	50
West Indian Carnival	20th July 2002 10 am–17:00 pm Market Place	Photography Observation	N/A
Queen's Company/ Musica Donum Dei	21st July 2002 19:30 pm–22:00 pm Cathedral	Photography Observation Questionnaires	50
Jazz concert— Orlando Consort/ Perfect Houseplants	27th July 2002 20:00 pm–22:00 pm Cathedral	Observation	N/A
County Celebrates— Royal Visit by HM the Queen	1st August 2002 12:00 pm–15:30 pm Football Stadium	Photography Observation	N/A

Source: Jepson (2009), pp. 169–170

and residence; these questions were probing at Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) theory of cultural capital and cultural habitus, which affects understanding and experience of festival events. This was important to the research as it was seeking to explore the relationships between culture and experience. Section two of the questionnaire was adapted from the work of Iso-Ahola (1980), and Crompton and McKay (1997) to establish cultural criteria and investigate motivations for visitation. Four subsections were used under the headings: cultural exploration, novelty, group socialisation, and external interaction/socialisation. These questions aimed to discover the reasoning and motivation of how and why visitors prioritised attending one over another. The final section of the questionnaire summarised and captured respondents' qualitative views on the event they visited.

The questionnaires produced qualitative and quantitative data for analysis. Quantitative data was analysed in relation to demographics and to build up visitor profiles, through encoding and decoding questions using 'SPSS software'. This research used SPSS to run cross-tabulations and established mean values to triangulate the data against the planning forum observations and semi-structured interviews. This was done to establish culturally significant relationships within festival construction and consumption. The qualitative data sets were encoded into key themes to build up a pattern of response percentages for particular questions.

The third phase of primary data collection employed the use of photographic evidence and visual analysis. Photographs were taken with a digital camera at all events visited. There are two main reasons for using photographic evidence within this research: firstly to ensure consistency was maintained through all events; and secondly it acted to reinforce and validate other data-collection methods such as event observation. It is important to recognise that the photographs themselves were not governed by rules, or procedures; the photographs taken were of particular locations and categorised mainly by the following aspects: the festival event venue(s), the atmosphere/ambience at the venue(s), the performers/artists, the visitors, entities which show promotion of the festival, cultural/non-cultural aspects which may or may not add cultural value for visitors. One of the first academics to see the benefits of using the visual as a means for cultural analysis was Roland Barthes, who using

models adapted from Ferdinand de Saussure opened up the constructed and contested nature of culture and in doing so begin utilising photography as a means to unlock cultural signs and relationships. Lister and Wells (2001) demonstrated three major concepts in analysing the visual in cultural studies: the context of viewing, the context of production, and the context of looking (form and meaning). The type of photography involved within this study is defined as 'Straight Photography' (Lister and Wells, 2001) in that the photographic evidence gathered is relatively free from elaborate arrangement, and moreover informs the viewer of the photographer's power to provide direct evidence of events occurring, in this case within a festival context. A simple content analysis was used to produce qualitative data under the parameters of: what the people represent what the event represents in terms of culture, what the event venue represents, and finally what the event delivery represents.

The fourth part of data collection took place through event observations: on the festival venue, event performance, event space and staging, visitor experience, the overall experience of the event, the management and programming of the event, and the cultural value associated with the event. Brief observational notes in an unstructured format were made during this period of data collection. Analysis of the fourth data set worked alongside the third analysis stage of photographic evidence mentioned previously. Data analysis was then based around the documented qualitative observations at festival events. The observational analysis also included observations of non-verbal behaviour such as spatial behaviour; this relates to how individuals attempt to structure the space around them in order to socialise, for example, people generally either maintain closeness to an object or person and form groups, or they move away. The qualitative data was then encoded into key themes to triangulate with other primary data analysis sets.

The fifth and final data-collection method was that of post-festival semi-structured interviews. Stakeholders were selected for interview based on their level of influence on the festival's construction to give their personal opinions on the festival (i.e. the 'gatekeepers' or major stakeholders). Interviewees were allowed to stipulate their choice of location for the interviews with most selecting their place of work. Discussions with respondents took place for around an hour and were not recorded

to make the respondents feel more relaxed. The questioning aimed to find out their informal views on the overall performance of the festival to triangulate with the other data sources. The fifth data set used discourse analysis to better understand the qualitative data produced from post-festival stakeholder interviews. A simple shorthand system was used to transcribe the data during the interviews and then more detailed transcriptions were completed immediately after the interviews. The discourse was encoded into key themes to ensure transparency and consistency with other data set analysis. Once all five primary data sets had been analysed and key themes were emerging, triangulation was employed and took place across all five data sets. This allowed for fair and accurate conclusions on the festival and its events and thus the thesis made its contribution to knowledge.

## Ethical Considerations in Festival and Events Research

There are no strict ethical codes or guidelines to follow in regards the ethical nature of research primarily because each piece of research is unique to those carrying it out. Rudestam and Newton (1992) however do suggest that five areas should be considered when understanding the ethical context of research: *subject matter, confidentiality/ anonymity, informed consent, dignity, and publications*. In view of the subject matter (Rudestam and Newton 1992), it should be understood that a festival or programme of events in its entirety can be very complex and made of hundreds of different events at various venues within an area. It is therefore important to factor into your methodology the time it may take to gain ethical approval from your institution and the time to negotiate access to venues, performers, organisers and event attendees. Once you have been granted access the research environment it is important to confirm this arrangement through a courtesy call or email prior to any data collection taking place. You should always advise anyone taking part in your study that they do so under their own free will (Confirm this through an institutional research consent form) and if they choose to they may withdraw from the research at any time. It could be argued that the most important aspect in



relation to the subject is of course the anonymity of those supplying the data; you should devise a simple coding system (FO1—festival organiser 1, or EM1—Event Manager 1, R1—Respondent 1, etc.) to ensure anonymity is consistently kept throughout your research. You should always make your respondents aware (Both verbally and in writing—e.g. paragraph on questionnaire) that their identity and the information they give you will not be traceable. You should offer potential respondents other ways of participating within the study through traditional post, email, telephone, or Skype if they want to take part in the research but are unable to at the point of contact. Another simple yet critical rule is to be completely open and honest about your research, because without informed consent the research will not represent a truthful account of the research phenomenon. You should ensure that as a researcher you are easily contactable and supply participants with vital contact information should they need clarity after they have taken part in the research.

At all stages of data collection whether in an interview situation, collecting questionnaires, taking photographs, or merely observing festival visitors or performers you should ensure that you take care to present yourself as a researcher in a professional manner and that a high level of dignity is presented at all times to respondents, not least as it will encourage respondents to assist with the research; moreover your academic institution is being represented and therefore being seen as friendly and professional is very important.

In addition to presenting a professional image care must be taken to ensure a relaxed environment and to not to embarrass the participant or make them feel uncomfortable not only with regard to the conversation, but also their surroundings. In respect of publications it is intended to maintain rigorous academic discipline and search for concise conclusions within the primary data gathered from respondents, with follow-up interviews taken to ensure that the views of respondents or stakeholders have stayed consistent and to ensure the data collected remained ethical, and that no personal bias was involved. The research conclusions and perspectives being searched for will be through the five-point analysis methods detailed in previous paragraphs. Using this method confidence is high that the results can be presented in a manner which does not offend any organisation or respondent involved within this research.

## Methodological Principles to Inform and Guide Your Future Research Journey

We wrote this chapter to demonstrate the research process we followed to analyse a community festival. In doing so we have made the case for using a constructivist approach within festival research as this connects the festival data and attendees to the research environment and allows for stronger interpretations of primary data. Festivals and events are highly sociological and are best understood through the socially and culturally significant relationships which occur during their creation. It is these relationships which create significant feelings towards the experiences during attendance at festivals and events. We have argued that there are demonstrable advantages to using a mixed methods approach in analysing cultural festivals and events to capture evidence and give a holistic research account, which would not otherwise be possible using a mono-methodological approach with limited triangulation. It was the aim of this chapter to give an insight into a practically applied flexible research methodology which integrated different data-collection and analysis methods to critically analyse a community festival. The chapter has provided a clear structure to better understand the multifaceted cultural relationships that exist within the planning of cultural events. The doctoral research case study featured here allowed a wealth of primary data to be collected and to support one another through a process of triangulation in lieu of the festival's performance as a 'community festival'. In reflecting on the data collected it could be thought of as excessive, though this was deemed highly necessary to draw out a full critical analysis of the festival, and also to collect data on the complex relationships of power acting upon the organisers, and stakeholders involved in the festivals construction. The chapter has also shown that all festival environments are unique and complex requiring a unique research methodology to fully understand the phenomena and create critical discussion. Our research into community festivals and events has since been guided by the principles of uniqueness, mixed methods, transparency, detailed triangulation, and leading to the creation of a flexible research methodology discussed throughout this chapter. It is also important to remember that consistency and trustworthiness are important components within

any study; our research, for example, used key themes. These themes were identified through the literature review, developed into research questions and data needs, operationalised into data-collection methods through the methodology, and finally used as a frame of analysis to create critical festival discourse. Festival and event studies as a young field of study remains very open in terms of methodological discourse, which means that researchers have the freedom to develop unique methodologies away from traditional paradigms and data-collection techniques.

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# Part II

**Discursive, Historical, and  
Ideological Perspectives**

# 5

## The Rewards and Risks of Historical Events Studies Research

Matthew L. McDowell and Fiona Skillen

### Why History?

When we think about events we think of them as being current, contemporary, in the here-and-now; history does not readily spring to mind. And yet history has much to offer the study and development of events.

Aside from needing to critically understand the politics, finances, and consequences in relation to events, researching their history enables students to approach the event from a new perspective. The use of history provides students with a greater understanding of the development of, amongst other things, policy, funding, and organisational structure and behaviour. It will allow the student a valuable insight into the evolution of an event over time. This in turn can illustrate the processes which were undertaken and influence the current format of a particular event.

Matthews (2012, p. 4) has suggested that historical events should be looked at by students because they:

- Offer an understanding role of events stakeholders (with three key categories: owners and organisers, participants, and spectators)

- Relationships between the three key stakeholders
- Design of events through the use of ritual.

Different models can certainly be applied towards studying the history of events, including ones of management and marketing. For the purposes of history, however, it can sometimes be necessary to apply a more flexible approach towards interrelationships within the organisation and management of these events. Our expertise is in the history of sport, including sporting events, and thus they will be the focus of our chapter.

Events do not just appear overnight: they evolve from earlier versions of the same thing. So, by studying where these events came from, we can begin to understand the evolution of the event in its current form. For example, the modern Olympics were first held in 1896. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was founded by Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1894. Purported to be based on ancient Olympics as participated in by the city-states of Greece, they nevertheless firmly reflected contemporary Victorian values of Empire, maintenance of the social order, and the pursuit of 'Christian' ideals.

One of Coubertin's founding ideals of the modern Olympics was to bring nations together in 'peace' through sporting competition, something which is still evident today. However, the Olympics also provide a forum in which the spotlight can be turned on international politics. The 1936 Olympics, held in Berlin, were used by the Nazis to demonstrate their power, and arguably their Aryan policies. The Nazis side-stepped the Games' usual vision of internationalism and cooperation, and instead promoted a vision of power, dominance, and scale, drawing on ancient Greece in order to legitimise their approach. Some of the now-recognisable set pieces of the Olympics only began in 1936, most notably the torch relay (Mackenzie, 2003). Only by carefully looking at the history of the Olympic Games themselves can we understand its current format, and its procedures that we often take for granted. The Paralympics were established in 1960. However, their genesis was in the Stoke Mandeville Games, which developed around the Ministry of Pensions Hospital in Stoke Mandeville. These Games were established for soldiers who had been injured during the Second World War. Their

success led to the founding of the Paralympic Games, an international competition for athletes with physical disabilities (Brittain, 2012). The popularity of these Games has spawned many equivalents, best known amongst these the Invictus Games, which seeks to return to the original relationship between the military and sport, which was central to the Stoke Mandeville Games.

These three examples illustrate the ways in which the past has shaped the modern Olympics. The format and the tone of these Games can only be understood by looking at the past and by the narratives which shape that past.

## Approaches to Events Studies

### History in Events Studies

There is a current fixation amongst events studies academics on examining contemporary events. An examination of the main journals of the discipline illustrate this, where the majority of the articles' foci were on events within the last 5 years, with only cursory reference to the history of their subject matter. Getz (2010) has advocated a broader interdisciplinary approach encompassing research from other areas, with particular reference to sociology and cultural anthropology. Goldblatt (1990) has taken this further, emphasising the importance of history in understanding today's events. Matthews (2012, p. 21), meanwhile, has gone further, stating that the study of historical spectacle should become 'mandatory core component' of event managers' education. Matthews is additionally one of the few to have made any attempts at examining historical events through the theoretical prism of events studies.

### Events Studies in History

Historiography is the term used by historians to describe the literature in a particular field and a phrase you will come across often when looking at work in this area. As we discussed earlier in the chapter there is little



in the way of literature within events studies which looks at historical events. However, if we look beyond the boundaries of the discipline, historians of sport and leisure have examined a range of events, often from particular perspectives or utilising specific theories. Research has tended to focus predominantly on events such as the Olympics. The publications, for instance, that are available on the Olympics are wide-ranging: covering aspects such as the origins of the event, its surrounding politics, national identity, competitions, and competitors (Polley, 1996, 2009; Llewellyn, 2011; Williams, 2012; Jeffreys, 2012, pp. 9–30; Jørgensen, 2008; Mason, 2006). Several examples of this are seen in a recent special issue of the *International Journal of the History of Sport* which examined the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. The pieces deal with themes such as: the impact of the Cold War, South Africa and Argentina's Olympic participation (or lack thereof), the women's marathon (the first of its kind at an Olympics), doping, media, and legacy (Brownell, 2015; Dyreson, 2015; Edelman, 2015; Gleaves, 2015; Llewellyn, 2015; Rider, 2015; Schultz, 2015; Torres, 2015; Wenn, 2015; Wilson, 2015). Each of these articles offers a different perspective on aspects of the competition. To historians these pieces are part of a much larger body of critical work on sport, politics, and society. To scholars of events studies they potentially offer a rich variety of case studies relevant to contemporary policy and management.

The historiography on major events in football is surprisingly threadbare. A notable exception to this would be Phillippe Vonnard's (2014) recent work on the origins of the Champions' League. Nevertheless the Olympics and the Champions' League, by virtue of their size and viewership, can be construed as exceptional rather than the rule. There is an increasing amount of work which is being pursued by historians on other smaller sporting events. For instance, *Sport in History* last year released a special issue on the history of the Commonwealth Games (formerly known as the Empire Games) (Dawson, 2014; Phillips & Bouchier, 2014; Polley, 2014; Ryan, 2014; Williams, 2014). Previously, the work that had been done on the competition had been dominated by Canadian scholars, and inevitably focused on Canada's relationship with the Games (Dawson, 2006; Gorman, 2010; Macintosh, Greenhorn, & Black, 1992). Another example of research into an international sports

event is Caroline Symons' (2010) work on the Gay Games. Her book examines the creation of the competition, amid the back drop of the Aids epidemic during the 1980s. In addition to tracing the development of the Games, Symons offers detailed insights into, legal, financial, and other practical aspects of its organisation. But scholars can go smaller still: one of the major texts in the history of sports events is Jarvie's (1991) book on the cultural politics of Highland gatherings in Scotland. Whilst Jarvie focuses predominantly on the cultural politics of these events, he nonetheless traces its evolution and organisation in doing so. The wide range of potential historical case studies is exemplified by the work of Suchet, Jorand, and Tuppen (Suchet, Jorand, & Tuppen, 2010), whose work examines the forerunner of the Pyrenees Adventure Games, the Spring Games. In fact, there is additionally room for lateral thinking with regard to what gets examined: for instance, the work of Beale (2010) and the work of Polley and Inglis (2011) examine alternative Olympic traditions, such as the Wenlock Games in England, which claim to be forerunners to the modern Olympics.

This discussion has only touched on a fraction of the work which has been done in this area. It is also a developing area of historical enquiry and as such offers an opportunity for interdisciplinary research.

## Methodology Available

Primary-source material for the majority of historical research can be found within archives. Often, these archives will be based within broader publically owned bodies and repositories: for instance, council or universities libraries or museums, registrars, or other government offices, although there are some stand-alone examples, such as the National Archives in Kew, the National Records of Scotland, or the US National Archives. At the same time, many governing bodies in sport house and maintain their own archives, and perhaps the most famous example of this is the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne, Switzerland. It is worth noting that there are also other archives which are typically 'hidden' from public view; this includes individuals' private papers and can often include corporate archives.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of researching historical events is the locating of suitable archive material. Sometimes this can be straightforward, inasmuch as you know the companies or stakeholders who were involved, and can make your starting point their archives. However, as we will see with our case study, the reality is often more complex.

Finding out what materials are available can be tricky. Many of these archives will not have complete digital catalogues: some will have paper-based ones; others will be uncatalogued entirely. The first point of contact should be the archivist; they can often give an overview of collections, but it will often be the job of archives' *users*, rather than the staff who work there, to identify which documents they wish to look at, and for the archivist to retrieve. The length of time this search will take varies on the level at which different aspects of the archive are catalogued. Accessing materials in an archive can often be a lengthy process, as not all archives are open nine-to-five, 7 days a week. Additionally, materials can often be stored off-site; therefore, planning ahead, and contacting the archive to request items ahead of time, is always advisable before you visit.

There are a range of different primary materials within archives that would be relevant to those researching events studies. We would never recommend focusing on only one type of source; good research would engage with several types, and would use a process of triangulation to uncover as many perspectives as possible, and give as representative a view as possible. Martin Polley's *Sports History: A Practical Guide* (Polley, 2007) offers detailed insight into the ways in which historians use different archival materials in their research. We will briefly examine the most commonly used categories of sources.

## **Magazines, Leaflets, Flyers, and Brochures**

As events in the past typically produced publicity materials, as well as instructional materials for participants and spectators, these are often useful to give a sense of both the marketing strategy of an event, as well as aspects of the event's organisation. Depending on who these materials are aimed at, official publicity materials will have different ranges of information. These sources can be used to give a practical understanding of the

structure of the event, but importantly they can also be deconstructed using semiotics to uncover deeper discourses and undercurrents within the culture of events. Analysing this material tells us how power can be utilised within events; rarely should promotional material such as this should be taken at face value as a record of historical fact.

These materials can additionally provide researchers with the primary visual motifs envisaged by events organiser. At the same time, especially from the twentieth century onwards, such materials are also a method through which the patronage of events, particularly with regard to sponsorship, can be determined. These sources can also highlight interconnection between the event and other industries; advertisements, for instance, are typically a feature of any material aimed directly at spectators.

## Minute Books

Minute books provide researchers with vital insights into the internal workings of the event's organisation. The amount of relevant material within each minute book or set of minutes varies considerably, and might require patience on the parts of researchers, but they often provide the chronological framework for the organisation of events, and their key actors, facilitators, and the points at which decisions were made. The limitations of using minute books are, amongst other things, the fact that they are a public record: they are often an abridged, condensed version of what might have actually been said at a meeting, rather than a verbatim account. One can derive a great deal of qualitative data from minutes, but their quantitative data can be equally as instructive: for instance, which officials were present at meetings, financial data, and so on.

## Personal Papers and Organisational Collections

These collections often hold a variety of sources, which can include those already discussed. However, these collections go beyond what appears in public records. Often the most useful items within these collections are letters and private notes, which can be more candid than minute

books and will include more rich detail such as personal opinions and emotions. At the same time, however, this unique perspective inevitably sacrifices some of the bigger pictures that minute books provide and can be clouded by personal opinion.

## Official Documents

The letters and publications of local and national governments, as well as governing or organising bodies, in relation to events are relevant from both a management perspective, as well as a policy one. Official documents will include such things as commissioned reports, official letters, policy documents, white papers, financial records, formal evaluations of event proposals and outcomes, and plans and blueprints for infrastructural changes. Ironically, the strengths of official documents—their being a representation of the ‘official word’—can also be seen as one of their weaknesses: that they provide a perspective that is too close to those in power, and can be seen as insensitive to the concerns of external stakeholders.

## Digital Media, Newspapers, and the Press

The primary source of information on events which is external to what appears in archives will be accounts of events which take place within the print and digital media. Unlike other sources we have previously discussed, newspapers represent an independent, although not always unbiased take on an event. Newspapers as we know them in the twenty-first century are available digitally, and in hard copy, although this has not always been the case. The size, frequency, and circulation of newspapers has varied since the seventeenth century, as well as the layout and perceived importance of different categories of ‘news’. For example, during the Victorian period, advertisements appeared on the front cover, and sport did not become a regular feature on the back pages of papers until the 1950s.

Within Europe, as now, newspapers have political allegiances and are often controlled by either individual owners or corporations keen to appeal to certain sections of the population. Newspapers then, like other primary sources, do not fully reflect an objective ‘truth’.

There are archives for most local and national newspapers. However, their format is variable: some will be available in the original paper format, bound into volumes within an archive; others will be available on microfiche (i.e. pages photographed on film); and finally, some will be stored digitally. Digital newspapers can be accessed in a number of ways, and this varies depending on the particular title. Some have search engines on their web-pages for looking at past publications (typically within the past 30 years): some are available through databases, which may be freely available online, such as the Google News Archive, while others may require a subscription. However, most commonly, you will be able to access these newspaper databases through your University library as part of your matriculation.

It is important to consider, however, that the digitisation of newspapers is a relatively new development, and therefore only a small proportion of titles have been fully digitised. Typically, this selection of papers privileges national and popular titles, rather than smaller, more regional, or niche publications that may contain different perspectives on events. In those cases, a researcher will probably need to rely on the previous formats discussed.

## Oral History

Oral histories can take a couple of formats, the most common of which is an interview conducted by the researcher. The second is material recorded by another source for a specific purpose. Both formats offer the researcher a depth of information which is often missing from other sources. They can provide insights into areas which are overlooked by other sources. For example, we can piece together an understanding of how and when an event ran but without interviews it is difficult to understand what it was like to experience it or what motivated people to attend.

Conducting your own interviews as part of your research allows you to focus on topics which are most relevant to your interests. It allows you to probe respondents on issues in a way no other source can. They can provide the researcher with insights which often challenge the existing sources. Of course, like all other sources, they are not perfect; they are open to bias and mis-remembering.

Pre-existing interviews can offer vital information but with the frustrating drawback of not being able to probe further or control what was being asked. In some cases these pre-existing sources are the only way of accessing this type of material as those interviewed are no longer available. For example, if you are researching an event from the early twentieth century, such as the 1911 London Olympics, it is unlikely that anyone who participated is likely to still be alive. It is, however, possible that these athletes were interviewed in the past and that you can access them through archives such as the British Library.

The sources discussed above are only a fraction of the types of materials available in archives. Each of these sources can provide a range of information, but with it they also bring challenges. We will now discuss how we have used some of these sources in our research.

## **Case Study: Commonwealth Games 1986**

1986 was the second time the city of Edinburgh hosted the Commonwealth Games. It was a highly controversial event, in terms of organisation, funding, and international politics. Fifty-eight nations had initially accepted their invitations, but, by the time the Games had ended, almost half of those nations ended up boycotting them (McDowell & Skillen, *in press*). The Games, however, took place at a crucial juncture of the global anti-apartheid movement. At this point, the UK government of the Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher pursued a policy of engagement and trade with South Africa, widely considered a pariah nation due to the pursuit of 'apartheid', a policy which segregated the population on the basis of race. From the 1960s onwards, many countries, groups, and individuals had pursued action against South Africa in an effort to make them change their policies. One such way of demonstrating their feelings was through the boycotting of cultural and commercial products of South Africa and their international allies. By the 1970s, sport was routinely used as an arena for pursuing political boycotts related to South Africa: the 1976 Olympics in Montreal featured a boycott of African nations, as did the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, where Nigeria did not attend. In both cases, this occurred

due to the inclusion of New Zealand, which was seen to be sympathetic to South Africa, having invited their national rugby teams to tour the nation. Additionally, the Cold War reached fever pitch during the 1980s, thereby complicating the political picture further. Many Western nations boycotted the 1980 Olympics in Moscow to protest the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan, and at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, the USSR and 'Eastern Bloc' Communist nations retaliated by doing the same.

Aside from the international picture, there is also the domestic political situation of the 1986 Games to consider. Scotland overwhelmingly did not vote for the Conservative government in power during the 1980s: instead, they voted mostly for the primary left-wing opposition party, Labour. Added into the mix was the ascendancy of the Scottish National Party (SNP), whose agenda was to promote an independent Scottish state. Within Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, Labour took charge of the local authority, the Edinburgh District Council, for the first time in 1984.

It was within this complex political context that the 1986 Games were held. The competition was subjected to an almost-complete boycott of African, Caribbean, and Asian member-states of the Commonwealth. However, the competition was not just a public relations disaster for its external politics, but also for its internal ones: the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee under Sir Kenneth Borthwick found itself continually at odds with the new Labour council in Edinburgh over perceived cronyism, the costs of Games' facilities, and the right to advertise within what would ostensibly be municipal properties. From the outset, the Games were forced by Thatcher to adopt status as a private company, as no central government funding would be given towards the project. The hope was that the Commonwealth Games would succeed in the same way as the self-funding 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, which, after its completion, netted a funding surplus. Promised sponsorships failed to materialise, however, and at the eleventh hour, the Games were forced to be 'bailed out' by media tycoon Robert Maxwell. The Games ended up being a financial disaster. At the time, they were perceived to have met at the confluence of a wide variety of political failures, with regard to the increasingly high standards of professional sporting organisations, the intransigence of the Thatcher government, and the powerlessness of the Scottish people to prevent any of it from happening.



We are interested in many of these issues: we discussed at the beginning how history was important. And by looking at this kind of event, we can get an understanding of the influence of national and international politics, of the role of individuals, and the organisational dynamics behind such a large event. This understanding can then be used to inform current practice when planning other large events.

Our previous research into the first Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh—those of 1970—focused thus far on domestic (and to a lesser extent, international) politics within the context of the presentation of national identity at the Games (Skillen & McDowell, 2014). As we have seen above, 1986 presented a fascinating case study due to the complexity of the political situation, as well as the changing nature of sporting events during the period. Our current research on 1986 focuses on two distinct areas: the boycott and the Scottish reaction to it, and the controversies surrounding construction on one of the Games' venues, the Meadowbank Velodrome.

## Literature on Commonwealth Games

As with all research, regardless of whether or not it is historical or contemporary, the first place to begin is by establishing what has been written on the topic before. We started by drawing up a list of themes which intersect with our two chosen areas:

- Empire/Commonwealth Games history
- The international politics of the anti-apartheid movement
- Scottish national and local politics during the 1980s
- UK politics during the 1980s
- Sporting events during the 1980s.

Looking at the academic texts written around these themes allowed us to understand the bigger picture, and establish where the gaps were. It very quickly became apparent that little had been written on the 1986 Commonwealth Games, and even less on the political context of the Games. Satisfied that we were examining a new area, we then went about establishing what archive material was available relating to the Games.

At the time of writing we were still unable to get access to the Thatcher Government's papers on the Commonwealth Games, owing to the 30-year release rule. This meant that we needed to be creative about other sources we used. Thankfully, there were various different ports of call where we could go for relevant information. As ever, in more contemporary history, researchers often need to be discerning about what they look at. There is a need to strike a balance between having too many sources available and too few, and with any research on events which have taken place during the last 40 years, it is often the former which poses a problem. Limitations, in contemporary history, can help to shape the parameters of what researchers end up looking at.

## Archives

The primary repository for records for the 1986 Games is the Edinburgh City Archives; this facility holds the records for the then local authority, the Edinburgh District Council, as well as its forebear (the Edinburgh Corporation) and its successor (Edinburgh City Council). The records were vital because UK government records were not yet available and they could therefore allow us some insight into the Council's dealings with National Government. The typical central repository for Scotland, the National Records of Scotland, holds mostly court cases related to the Games, which are relevant to the messy financial aftermath of the competition, rather than its real-time operations. The City Archives also contains the records of the main Games organising committees, including minutes, official correspondence, Games publications, and even architects' plans. These sources provide us with a nuts-and-bolts understanding of the practicalities of organising the event, such as the correspondence between the organising committee and the BBC over the bidding process and subsequent organisation of the filming of the event. These archives are also notable for their sometimes raw honesty, especially with regard to the tensions between the Games organising committee and Edinburgh District Council; personal letters between committee members and councillors reveal frustrations at both out-of-control finances and the pace of construction of Games venues. These archives were particularly useful for our research into the velodrome but held little in the

way of discussions on the boycott. Although these archives provide the most comprehensive account of the Games they are not without issue. By their very nature, being produced by those running the event they can only give their perspectives. It was therefore important for us to look beyond these 'official' records in order to triangulate the information.

The 1986 Games were a large-scale public event and as such were covered thoroughly by the print media of the time. Some newspapers from the period have been digitised, in particular the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Evening Times*, and *The Times* of London. However we did not have this luxury with Edinburgh's primary newspapers, the broadsheet the *Scotsman*, the populist *Edinburgh Evening News*, and the Glasgow tabloid the *Daily Record*. Furthermore, we were not interested merely in the opinions of journalists and reader within the Scottish central belt; we also sought out content from Aberdeen's *Press and Journal* and Dundee's *Courier and Advertiser*, which also have also not yet been digitised. The *Edinburgh Evening News*, the *Press and Journal*, and the *Courier and Advertiser* all sit under lock and key in bound volumes in the National Library of Scotland. These sources are vital towards understanding the discourses and undercurrents surrounding the Games within Scottish society at the time. In fact these newspapers challenged our established preconceptions about the narratives around the inherently egalitarian nature of Scottish society; they reveal an often-heated debate about Scotland's place in the world, and indeed the former British Empire.

Necessarily, we also looked to triangulate our research beyond these sources. To gauge policy debates at Westminster level, we turned to the digitised version of *Hansard* online. Whilst *Hansard* provides a verbatim account of discussion within the houses of the UK Parliament, it is nevertheless *meant* to be a theatrical display whilst the real work is taking place 'behind closed doors' in conversations and committees which have no available public record as yet.

We also examined the archives of the Scottish branch of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), which are held in the archives of Glasgow Caledonian University. We were looking at it in order to establish to approach of organisations outside the Games who were involved the boycott. This line of enquiry proved problematic, as there was little material within this collection. It is also worth noting that organisational

collections such as these often have specific restrictions on the material that can be viewed or used within publications.

There are two approaches to each type of source: qualitative and quantitative. A qualitative approach places emphasis on the depth and richness of information. In order to extract information in this way, historians ask key questions of the source such as, who wrote this, when was written, why was it written, and what is the broader context. In this way, we can extract data that is useful to your own research question, which can then be cross-referenced with other sources in order to establish reliability. If using this approach, students need to be able to discern what it is they are looking for before they head into the archives. Formulating clear research questions will help this. A quantitative approach can be used to evaluate numerical data, such as financial accounts, attendance records, ticket sales, and competition results. However, a quantitative approach can also be employed to measure data within qualitative sources: for instance, the frequency with which certain words or discourses recur within a given source or sources. Both of these quantitative approaches allow students to discern patterns and measure phenomena; however, a strictly numerical analysis of qualitative sources needs to take into account the dynamism of language and broader context: for instance, humour, irony, sarcasm, and even dishonesty. As always, triangulation is crucial to mediate these types of issues.

## **Why Our Conclusions Are Relevant to Events Studies**

Our research on the ceremonies and presentational aspects of the 1970 Games showed how such displays were reflective of the politics of the period. Aside from the domestic politics of the 2014 Games, their ceremonies made subtle reference to the events of 1986: for example, their use of Highland terriers was an homage to 1986's mascot, Mac. However, the subtext of the 2014 opening ceremony hinted at the political unrest surrounding 1986: there was a tribute to recently deceased Nelson Mandela as well as a section featuring Billy Connolly which discussed Scotland's role in the anti-apartheid movement. Studying the 1986 Games thus helps scholars to contextualise and understand the longer

narratives and threads running through the ceremonies of Games. This is only one example of a way in which studying the history of an event can add insight.

Another aspect of our research has been to examine the controversial history of the Meadowbank Sports Complex and in particular its velodrome. We drew on correspondence between governing bodies, minute books from organising committee meetings, and newspapers to gain an understanding of the development of the velodrome. The 1970 Games committee had initially planned to hold their cycling events on a ground in Grangemouth, 20 miles outside of Edinburgh. About a year and half before the Games it was decided to build a new velodrome next to the site of the new, purpose-build athletics stadium at Meadowbank. This was largely due to the reluctance of cycling authorities to accept the proposed track at Grangemouth Stadium. The new velodrome was constructed as a short-term solution: as the minutes highlight, its changing rooms and public-address system, for example, were temporary, and the structure was built without a roof. In fact, after the Games the building was left largely unused; that is, until the 1986 organising committee decided that they did not want to build a new velodrome. They assumed that it would be more economical to modify and update the existing Meadowbank facilities than to build a new velodrome. However, cycling authorities were not so keen to hold the cycling events in a roofless velodrome, given notoriously wet Scottish climate. That, and after a new, left-wing Labour District Council was elected in 1984 on promises to mitigate the effects of Thatcherite austerity to curb the overspend on the Games, the local authority found themselves at continual loggerheads with the organising committee. Beyond the increasingly angry correspondence included within the official archive, newspaper accounts show that the Council leader, Alex Wood, queried the need to even have cycling events in the first place at the Games. In the end the Council won in their battle to save money on the velodrome: the velodrome remained roofless. This was a rare victory for a Games that is often remembered for all of the wrong reasons.

Why is any of this relevant? The Meadowbank Sports Complex has continually come under threat of closure, almost since its inception in 1970. Part of this issue, in particular relating to the velodrome, was one of

maintenance costs versus usage. The velodrome was built as a temporary structure and as such was not built to the highest specification and therefore required substantial maintenance. These demands had to be weighed against the usage of the facility and the kudos of having a velodrome. The relevance of these calculations will be immediately recognisable to those who attempt to measure the 'legacy' of sporting events, including those of Commonwealth Games (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Preuss, 2010; Smith & Fox, 2007; Thomson, Schlenker, & Schulenkorf, 2013). The concept of legacy, as we now understand it, was not a formal part of the bidding process for sporting events until the 1990s. That is not to say that those cities hosting events did not recognise the potential longer-term benefits of holding these events. Even whilst the Games, chaotic as they were, lurched to their eventual end, Edinburgh District Council leader Mark Lazarowicz couched the Council's expenditure in what would be the future language of legacy:

The Games will have long-term benefits. The city will be a shop window and, hopefully, this will encourage more visitors to come here. In addition, most of the money we have spent will result on improved facilities for top sportsmen and the local government. All this has been done without a single penny from the Government (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 15 July 1986). The District's recreation commissioner James Henderson additionally commented at the potential sporting participation angle:

Another of the attractions of the Games is that they will give a massive boost to sport at all levels in the city and we are now looking at ways of catering for that demand and encouraging people to keep up sport after the Games (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 15 July 1986).

The potential benefits, of course, must be offset against the costs, which were astronomical in the case of the 1986 Games. As the newspaper quotes from our research highlight, even before legacy planning became a mandatory component of bids, politicians were already beginning to realise that the expenditure towards events themselves were not justifiable unless long-term planning for their aftermath was put into place.

Legacy is something that something that events students discuss a great deal when analysing contemporary events. As we have shown here, while there was often no formal requirement for legacy planning for events in the past, organisers were often nonetheless thinking in these

terms. Looking back at these events, we can trace the evolution of the theory around legacy and its growing importance. In stark contrast, the bid for the 2014 Games in Glasgow made provision for not only a velodrome, but also a facility which would be sustainable well beyond the Games. The Chris Hoy Velodrome, like its predecessor at Meadowbank, sits within a wider sports complex. However, it is situated within the East End of Glasgow and was seen as important part of the regeneration of that part of the city. The facility was intended to be accessible to locals; however, at the time of writing, less than a year after the Games, it is hard to judge if this will ultimately be successful. The determination of whether or not the outcomes of the Glasgow facility's construction have been successful will be evaluated via a variety of methods and sources, including the ones discussed in this chapter. Not all judgments about the 'success' of an event can be made at the time.

## Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have made the case that history should be an important part of events studies. We have shown that this approach has much to offer in terms of understanding the development of, policy, funding, and organisational structure and behaviour. This can be accomplished through a variety of sources as highlighted earlier. In this chapter we have shown that scholars can learn from historical events; our case study of the 1986 Commonwealth Games, which took place three decades ago, provided us with a deeper understanding of the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Depending on what critical events researchers choose to look at, historical research can assist in enlightening and shaping various aspects of practise in the world of events. It can be very difficult to evaluate the success of an event in its immediate aftermath. Using historical sources to evaluate an event provides the student with a more comprehensive picture of the impact and consequences of that event than could necessarily be gathered at the time. In conducting an historical analysis, longer-term patterns and a more realistic understanding of the impacts of a specific event can be achieved. This, in turn, allows critical events researchers an additional means by which they can test theory against historic practice and thereby learn what may work within a contemporary context.

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# 6

## Space and Memory in the Huashan Event

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### Introduction

In response to contemporary social anxieties, performances have been used to recall the past and to invoke collective memory. Such cultural productions and their consequential events provide a space of experience that re-creates cultural meanings and reshapes memories. The Huashan Event was initiated by the theatrical performance *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* (Golden Bough Theatre, 1997), a cultural response to the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. This was followed by a series of cultural and social events including a police raid, protests, finally turning the performing space, a deserted government winery, into a public artistic space, now known as Huashan 1914 Creative Park. This chapter focuses on the interconnection of performance, inscription of memory, and the spatial production of cultural meanings in the Huashan Event, and argues that this cultural event redefined its contemporary context and further contributed to produce new meanings and memories that redefined a sense of Taiwanese-ness in both its artistic and social aspects. Highlighting the significance of an event as an initiator, and participant, of cultural reproduction requires

the interdisciplinary application of theories and concepts from fields of theatre and memory studies, as well as spatial theories, to underline the cultural materialist perspective of the unceasing process of cultural reproduction. Theatrical performance, as a form of cultural production, cannot be perceived simply within a theatrical context that is excluded from the overall social and cultural context of its time. It has to be scrutinized with concern for the multiple material conditions within and outside the performance. This must include the contexts of theatrical productions, performance conditions, and the social and cultural backgrounds that profoundly influence the former two conditions. Ric Knowles triangle model of theatre elements (2004) completed with Stuart Hall's emphasis on historical and social contexts, is thus applied in this chapter to illustrate the dynamics of the Huashan Event, where the elegiac performance *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* hails Taiwanese identity through reimagining its tragic past in the sensitive year after 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. Since memory is a necessary part of any history and cultural formation, to examine the relation of the present and the memory of the past is crucial for understanding the new possibilities and cultural reproduction created through a specific event. Paul Connerton's (1989) concept about inscription of memory and Henri Lefebvre's theory of production of space (1991) are incorporated into this chapter's interpretation of the Huashan Event as a metaphysical space of experience, one that makes reproduction of cultural meanings possible. The Huashan Event is used in this chapter to illustrate how a cultural event turned into a social and political event, and eventually initiated changes to cultural policies and thoughts of national identity.

## **Huashan Event: Unexpected Controversies of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan***

On the third weekend of September in 2014, Huashan 1914 Creative Park, previously the deserted Huashan Winery (which dated back to the years of Japanese colonization) launched 'A Winery Tale: Huashan 100 Creative Exhibition' to celebrate the 100th year of this heritage site. Purposefully choosing the same weekend of 2014 European Heritage Days in France as the opening day for its exhibition, the administration

of Huashan 1914 Creative Park emphasized the cultural heritage value of these buildings. However, the prosperous heritage site we see today was once a deserted ruin; without the remarkable Huashan Event in 1997, it would not have been such a popular art venue and recognized as a heritage site. The Huashan Event, a series of unexpected disturbances that critically altered the prospects of Huashan Winery, was initiated by the theatrical performance *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*.

Listed by *China Times* in the 1997 Top Ten Performing Arts, *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* turned this ruined winery into the doomed locus of the Trojan War in Greek mythology. It was an allegorical adaptation of the Trojan War applied to a contemporary Taiwanese context, just 1 year after the well-known 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. The sovereignty of Taiwan has been a long-standing controversial issue due to the country's historical and political entanglements with China, but the advent of 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis was the first time, after the repeal of martial law, that Taiwan faced the threat of war for protecting its own sovereignty and freedom. The implication of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* was clearly stated by its director Wang Rong-Yu: enacting the tragedy of Troy through the performing style of Taiwanese opera 'to reflect the sorrowful fate of Taiwan, which has been haunted by various intrusion and wars for four hundred years' (Wang, 2005). The performance was thus the materialization of the collective fear of war, echoing to its contemporary social atmosphere; the deserted Huashan Winery became a symbolic battle field where the Taiwanese fought against China's military intrusion. The spatial meanings of the ruined site thus transcended its materiality and were encoded with the contemporary social conditions.

However, what caused an uproar, and formed the whole Huashan Event, was the unexpectedly consequential developments following the premiere of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*. The day after the premiere the police raided the ruined site and charged the director with 'trespassing', which induced artists to protests and politicians to intervene, finally resulting in turning the deserted Huashan Winery into an art centre for the general public. A pure cultural performance, in response to political crisis, surprisingly turned into a social event that involved political intervention and controversies about deserted government-owned properties. From inciting fears of political suppression to the liberation of public space, the

Huashan Event unfolded both inside and outside of Huashan Winery, resulting in dramatic events resonated with contemporaneous anxieties and collective fears of suppression. On top of that, the resulting transformation of Huashan Winery displays the changes of cultural meanings it represents. Furthermore it manifests it as a contested space within differing collective memories. Using a cultural materialist perspective the production of cultural meanings, through the process of the Huashan Event, is the focus of this chapter. The inscription of memory and reproduction of the cultural meanings of space are central to the analysis of the theatrical performance *Troy, Troy, Taiwan...* as well as the transformation of the Huashan Winery.

## Production of Cultural Meanings: Performance, Memory, and Space

Ric Knowles (2004), in *Reading the Material Theatre*, introduces three primary elements for the analysis of theatre within the tradition of cultural materialism: performances, conditions of production, and conditions of reception (p. 3). Cultural materialism insists that aesthetics should not be the only focus in the analysis of art. Performances, as a form of art, are not excluded from the process of cultural production; rather, they work in tandem with all the surrounding material conditions. The content and aesthetics of the performances certainly offer ways to understand the message being delivered. However, the material conditions, the background, and the social and cultural conditions in which the performances take place are just as pivotal in locating the meaning and the performances' effects on the construction of human societies and civilization. Hall's influential articles, 'Encoding/Decoding' (Hall 1992) and 'Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms' (Hall 1980)", Knowles links Hall's works on audience response with cultural materialism by extending Hall's concept of 'encoding/decoding' and 'production of signs/relations of reception'. He then further completes his triangular model with Hall's paradigms that emphasize the conditions of historical and cultural context. Hall's concept is concerned with the politics of performance in which the ideologically coded material conditions produce symbolic

signs in the performance context, affecting the way those coded signs are received, encoded, and interpreted. Knowles uses Hall's concepts to expand his triangle formula with an emphasis on the importance of larger contexts, that is, the historical and cultural moment of production that 'frame the entire theatre experience' (p. 19). An individual's perception of something is greatly influenced by what the person is going through at the moment. How the performance is decoded depends on the circumstances of the society in which it occurs.

The historian Paul Connerton (1989) has noted in his influential book *How Societies Remember*, 'We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected to past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present' (p. 2). The performance of the past offers its spectators a simulated milieu to experience past events and a way to make sense of the present. This is not passive participation by the spectators. As Gaynor Bagnall (2003) suggests in 'Performance and Performativity in Heritage Sites', the visitors/spectators tend to actively participate in the performances in heritage sites by applying experiences from their daily lives to enable the emotional and imaginary mapping of the sites. The spectators show their performativity not simply through their physical participation, but also through their interpretation based on their daily experience.

This also echoes Connerton's view regarding the ways in which memories are inscribed through bodily practices. Connerton suggests two social practices that assist memory being amassed in the body: incorporating practice and inscribing practice. Incorporating practice postulates that every bodily action performed by individuals, either intentionally or unintentionally, conveys information and meaning coded by the societies they belong to; inscribing practice refers to the bodily practice of applying devices to store and hold that information and meaning for later retrieval. Individuals in any given society remember the social convention through their bodily practices in daily lives, and the collective memory is inscribed by each member's bodily practice of the social and cultural codes. Incorporating practices deliver messages that reinforce the codes mutually understood, and the inscribing practices preserve those codes and meanings by making the body remember through actions.

Although Connerton's concept of inscribing practice is elaborated through examples of material inscription, such as the writing and the film-making, he mainly emphasizes the action that forms the bodily inscription of memory in the process of actions.

Connerton's example of the institution of the cinema offers a specific elaboration regarding inscribing practices. When singling out the simultaneity of the actors and spectators' presence during the shooting and also in the cinema house, Connerton notes that 'the rules of looking specific to cinema' (p. 78) is based on the ocular convention that the spectators have expected: to identify with the camera's omniscient view. Therefore, scenes that are created by rotating and panning the camera or the editing with jump cuts do not cause confusion for the spectators. Instead, they enjoy the special effects provided, because the cinematic ocular convention has already been shared and mutually understood by the film-makers and the spectators. Connerton concludes that it is through the incorporating practice of the spectators that the inscribing practice of cinema is made possible. But what he has overlooked is the inscribing practice of the spectators, that is, the action of becoming involved emotionally or imaginatively in the performance through the acting out incorporating practices. Spectators' incorporating practices of adopting the camera's omniscient view form their experiences of watching films. However, it is the overall experience, not the incorporating practices, that forms the memory. Theatre is what the anthropologist Reinhart Koselleck (1985) called 'the space of experience', in which the 'experience is present past, whose events have been incorporated and could be remembered' (p. 272). In other words, when the spectators incorporate the cinematic ocular convention by viewing, it is the experience of the entire process of watching films that inscribes the ocular convention onto the spectators' memory.

Extending Connerton's concept on bodily practices is helpful with regard to recognizing the memory inscription on the spectators' part during the performance. Similar to the cinema audience, the spectators of theatre performances act out the incorporating practices according to certain ocular convention. But it is surely different from the cinematic convention of omniscient view. Instead, the theatre spectators are following the convention of being the witnesses, existing in the same time and



space as the event, but refraining from intervening in the proceeding of the performances. In the cases of the theatrical performance, the spectators' presence makes them a part of the scenes as the events unfold. The spectators are not only the witnesses in theatrical performances, but they are also placed in a previous time they never experienced, which activates their emotional and imaginary mapping of the past and the present simultaneously. During the performance, the spectators are experiencing the process of interpreting and decoding the past with the present historical context. The narrative of the past is no longer simply a story told. It is what Connerton calls 'a cult enacted'; the experience of time and space is not unequivocally of the past but of a 'metaphysical present' (p. 43). The result of the entire experience of decoding such equivocation is the inscribed memory of a new narrative with a reference to the spectators' present.

The 'metaphysical present' does not exist merely through a performance about the past. The space in which the metaphysical present enchants the spectators is also involved in the process of the inscription of memory. Memory takes roots in various concrete forms, including ruined spaces like the deserted Huashan Winery in 1997. In contrast to the established or restored heritage sites where distinct ideologies are emphasized, ruins are ambiguous and unsettled. Decayed ruins are the remains of the past but are not assigned a representative meaning for society to commemorate, nor is there a dominant ideology to oppose. They are neither demolished nor restored; they are in limbo with past memories that have been abandoned and forgotten—becoming the concrete existence of collective amnesia. Nonetheless, the silent and ignored past embodied in the ruins can be brought to life to produce new dynamics in the constant process of production of cultural meanings, and alternative interpretations can emerge and unsettle the present. However, memory is selective and locates itself in its social frameworks, as Maurice Halbwachs and Coser (1992) demonstrates in his *On Collective Memory*. People have to forget in order to remember. Forgetting is an inevitable part of the process for collectives to select memory in order to provide a usable past (Wertsch, 2002, p. 37). This is where the contestation of memories arises and continues till the representative memory gets selected and used for the present needs. Ruins, a space embedded with memories, are thus

contested and unsettling during the process of reproduction of meanings and transformation.

Reproduction of cultural meanings cannot happen if they are not tangible for individuals to perceive. The unsettled nature of ruins cannot be recognized without the materialization of collective memory relating to the past of the remains. Memory is intangible and there are gaps to fill to transform collective memory into something accessible, for individuals to take possession of as a part of their memory. Pierre Nora's (1996) concept *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory) suggests that memories are held in various 'sites', from conventional figures and monuments to street names, holidays, and even small objects such as letters, and are available for cultural decoding in the present. Those sites exist because real environments of memory, *milieux de mémoire*, are no longer there (1989, p. 7). Modern conditions, and the practice of 'scientific' history, bring forth a sense of alienation, which emerges while one tries to take possession of the past and results in a sense of discontinuity. To reduce such a sense of alienation, making the past vivid again is a way to turn the intangible memory into a concrete sensation: ceremonial rituals in heritage sites are thus the most obvious examples. Heritage sites such as museums and monuments are frequently regarded as contested spaces that reveal the tension among conflicting ideologies and are discussed in theories of space and site-specific performance. Joanne Tompkins (2006) applies Henri Lefebvre's spatial theory to her examination of various Australian theatrical performances at monuments and historical sites, and analyses how the phantom of the past presented in those performances haunts and unsettles the memories embedded in those heritage sites.

Space, as a social product, is both a physical entity and a conceptual construction of values and experiences. Henri Lefebvre (1991) elaborates on this in his influential work *The Production of Space*, theorizing the relationship between the production of space and social relations of production. He develops his analysis of the production of social space from the conceptual triad: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. Spatial practice is the experiential deciphering of space determined by the social network, and it 'ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion' that guarantee each member of a given

society a solidified relationship to that space. Representations of space is the conceptualized space of the authorities, through which a society's relations of production, of its social power or authority, are reinforced. Finally, representational space is defined as the space of the users, a passively experienced space in which 'the imagination seeks to change and appropriate', and thus it overlays physical space with symbolic links to 'the clandestine or underground side of social life' (p. 33). For Kevin Hetherington (1997), who extends these concepts to temporal situations and events, representational space 'opens up the possibilities of resistance' within society (p. 22). When memorial activities are constantly held to remind the participants of the collective memory embedded in the heritage sites, those unsettling spaces, though being dominated, are appropriated and transformed symbolically into contested spaces that deliver messages resistant to the dominant power, producing the possibility of alternative interpretation and reproduction of meanings. In the same vein, a performance in the ruins can be understood as part of the process of the constant reproduction of meanings and social space. The ruins, as representational space, are regarded as useless leftovers by the authorities and as abandoned existence by members of its society. However, when a performance reoccupies the ruins and symbolically makes use of the memories embedded (i.e. the social meanings the deserted space once possessed) resistance to the dominant ideology can emerge and reproduction of cultural meanings thus becomes possible.

Combining Connerton's concept of bodily practice of inscribed memory, Lefebvre's production of space, and Knowles's triangle model in the tradition of cultural materialism, this chapter is concerned with the dynamics of Huashan Event, by which the collective memory and space were reinterpreted and new cultural meanings emerged in responses to social anxieties and crises. The elegiac site-specific performance *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*, was first staged in 1997 in Huashan Winery as a response to the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis by a little-known experimental theatre group Golden Bough Theatre. The unexpected consequential developments (a police raid, an arrest, protests, and the renovation of the site), along with *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*, formed the famous Huashan Event which entirely changed the prospects of the Huashan 1914 Creative Park.

This chapter focuses on how the performance of trauma unsettled and redefined its contemporary context, and how the Huashan Event contributed to the reproduction of cultural meanings and memories in the shadow of the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis.

## Metaphysical Present: *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*

The adaptation of the Trojan War in *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* was truthful to the original depiction in the *Iliad* by the ancient Greek poet Homer. The narrative, the characters, and the locations in the *Iliad* were all faithfully enacted and presented in *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*. But there was an obvious and significant difference that made this performance no mere duplicate: the performing aesthetics of Taiwanese opera, aka Gezaixi or Koa-a-hi. Without changing any names or scenario, the Greek story unfolded entirely through the body movements of meticulous gestures and martial arts that characterize Taiwanese opera. Also, the specific performance aesthetics of Taiwanese opera was entirely displayed through the chanting, singing, operatic tones, and the poetic language in Taiwanese vernacular alongside the sophisticated costumes featuring a strong sense of Taiwanese folk culture. Given that the director of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*, also the founder and artistic director of Golden Bough Theatre, Wang Rong-Yu, was raised in a Taiwanese opera troupe and the son of the very famous Taiwanese opera singer Hsieh Yue-hsia, the aesthetics of this performance seem to be the unsurprising result of the legacy of his upbringing. However, as an avant-garde theatre director strongly influenced by the methods of the significant Western experimental theatre director Jerzy Grotowski, Wang's emphasis on Taiwanese opera was not just an artistic choice for producing an intercultural performance. One of the most influential concepts in Grotowski's theory of actor training is the emphasis on exploring the elements inside the actors and the audience through human movement, chanting, dancing, rhythm, language structures, incorporating these with the surrounding space (1997, pp. 376 & 380): this profoundly influencing Wang's approach on inventing a new breed of Taiwanese avant-garde theatre. For Wang, the elements that inherit and impact the actors

and audiences of Taiwan are the Taiwanese culture and environment that shape their bodies and minds. The implementation of Taiwanese Opera was in fact Wang's reflection of body and mind in relation to Taiwanese grassroots culture (Liao, 2007, p. 303). More than an a theatrical experiment, by combining Grotowski's concepts and Western stage conventions with performing aesthetics of Taiwanese opera, *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* was staged with the intention of ideological subversion that dominated Taiwanese avant-garde theatres in the 1990s, and also a means to defy the oppression of Taiwanese culture by the previous émigré regime from China.

The strong orientation of Taiwanese plebeian performances in Golden Bough's works has a profound connection with Wang Rong-Yu's background. His mother Hsieh Yueh-Hsia has been well known and admired for her acting as a male protagonist in an extensive repertoire of Taiwanese opera. For a long time that Taiwanese opera was regarded as merely a plebeian entertainment, and Taiwanese opera artists could not gain proper social respect even though they were greatly admired among the people. Therefore, Wang Rong-Yu's background is absolutely of the lower social class. Having a Taiwanese opera actress mother and a gangster father, Wang Rong-Yu himself was also known as a gangster in his junior high school: notorious for mustering Taiwanese native juvenile gangsters, in comparison with other local schools infamous for mainlander juvenile gangsters.

Traditionally, Taiwanese opera has a fixed repertoire with a specific set of ancient libretto and music that go with the stories. But as an avant-garde director renowned for his 'New Opeila' style (Silvio, 2009), Wang prefers his works to be named 'alternative modern theatre' rather than 'modern Taiwanese Opera' (Liao, 2007, p. 304), and intentionally opts for the opeila style, to mark its deviation from Taiwanese opera and emphasize its connection with contemporary society. Opeila is a term borrowed from Taiwanese vernacular language meaning 'free-styled graffiti'. It foregrounds Taiwan's colonial past. The gist of this sub-genre is the abandoning of convention and improvising around contemporary popular culture to achieve entertaining effects (Hsieh, 2002, pp. 165 & 167; Yu, 2002, pp. 88 & 91). It emerged in the early twentieth century of Taiwan, whilst under Japanese colonial rule, when there was fierce competition among

Taiwanese opera troupes. This made them squeeze out all their novel ideas in order to survive. In order to captivate the audience, tension, novelty, and spectacle were vital; the traditional patterned repertoire could no longer entertain their audiences. Consequently spectacle, colourful stage craft, gaudy and glittery costumes, dramatic but simple plots, meretricious and hyperbolic acting pervaded those extremely commercial-orientated productions. Coeval popular songs, slang, vulgar jokes, and various entertainments were inserted and improvised by the performers (Hsieh, 2002, pp. 159 & 164). Lin Ho Yi (1997), a scholar of Chinese traditional theatre, was to criticize the immaturity of Golden Bough Theatre's previous opeila style production as being a self-conscious attempt at producing 'Taiwaneseness' through learning from 'the underclass' (p. 54–55). It seems indeed a paradoxical situation if 'the underclass' is the only source of 'true' Taiwanese culture. But the position of cultural class is inevitably associated with the history of being suppressed and subjugated. Looking upon the earliest records about Taiwan, this island has always been subjugated by one foreign regime or another: Dutchmen, Spaniards, the Chinese, and the Japanese. While denying the legitimacy of all those regimes, the 'pure' Taiwanese culture can only exist in the plebeian lives that reflect the real living conditions of Taiwanese people.

*Troy, Troy...Taiwan* was not aiming to be pure entertainment; it was, rather, serious and poetic in most parts. However, the influence of opeila style was still visible, such as the sudden intrusion of a motorcycle and the gaudy dressed dancing lady. Such spectacles and glittery costumes were certainly an entertaining trademark of opeila style, but this infusion of opeila in *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* also served a contrary effect: visualizing the chaotic displacement of deaths, wars, and cultures through the apocalyptic juxtaposition of the Trojan War and Taiwan's traumatic past. The vigour and the effects of making the audience confront the plebeian culture in *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* cannot be denied. To revive an 'old-fashioned' performing style in Taiwanese culture was not only a reminiscence of the past, but to invoke the awareness of plebeian culture that had been overlooked by the Taiwanese populace, tamed by the KMT (Kua-mia Tang: The National peoples party of China) government's imposition of Chinese identity.

In an interview before the remake of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* in 2005, Wang Rong-Yu made it clear that 'Mourning for Troy' (the Chinese title)

actually means ‘mourning for Taiwan’ (Wang, 2005). He also explicitly expressed his intention that ‘I aim to display the “beauty of the spirit”. This spirit is the persistence of defending our home, our motherland; it is stimulated by the tough determination and confidence against the “malignancy” (Golden Bough Theatre, 2006). In the context of 1997, it was not simply the year after Taiwan Strait Crisis, but also the year China officially took over Hong Kong and demonstrated its determination to ‘take back’ its territories. The ‘malignancy’ Wang mentioned undoubtedly refers to the Chinese missile threats and China’s intention to take over Taiwan. The playwright of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*, Yu Hui-fen, emphasized the similarities between Troy and Taiwan:

Just like Troy, Taiwan has been the target of intrusion and wars because of its fertility, vitality and its geographic importance for military value. In the history, Taiwan has been facing threats and intrusion for many times. Therefore, I cannot stop widening my imagination on Troy...It is a civilization under siege of violent threats, thorough destruction and the overwhelming devastation. (Golden Bough Theatre, 2005, pp. 17–18).

The doomed battle of Troy in defending the Greeks’ intrusion in *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* was intentionally produced to evoke the strong anxieties of the Taiwanese audience regarding Chinese intrusion. This performance was an enactment of the Greek myth. But in the context of Taiwan in 1997, it contextualized the collective fear, creating a ‘space of experience’ that shaped the memory of its historical moment.

This ‘space of experience’ of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* was not a typical theatre space. The proscenium stage to which the audience was accustomed was not used. Instead, without the presence of a boundary between the actors and the audience, the entire space of the winery became both stage and auditorium; making it the site at which the tragedy occurred and the space at which it was witnessed. The audience moved and watched according to the random locations where events were taking place. The actors would suddenly lurch from one corner to another or unexpectedly leap into sight from another spot on the other side of the main performance area. Occasionally, the action would take place in a dark corner without any warning, drawing the audience’s attention with a sudden

sound or the voices of the actors. This compelled the audience to pay full attention to the actors and the environment, while waiting for unexpected events to happen in any direction. With the cracking surface of its dirt-covered walls, irregular interior arrangements, and bare beams across its roof, the ruined space resembled a haunted house. The audience seemed to have been placed inside an ancient dream, becoming part of it, experiencing the characters' lives, destinies, and agonies as the action proceeded to its eventual doom. The audience's role as witnesses framed their experience, remapping the whole space. Their imagined collusion, and the inscription of their memory, made sense of the present through the re-enactment of fear in the past. The story might have been about Troy but through the addition of Taiwanese imagery, and the Taiwanese vernacular that informed the context of a suppressed culture, this tragedy became an allegory for the past and the present predicaments of Taiwan. The space that surrounded the actors and the audience became the devastated battlefield of the Trojan War while recalling the haunting fear of KMT suppression. The performance was no longer simply about the Trojan War, it became the 'metaphysical present' of the collective fear for the Chinese military intrusion. The doom of Troy and Taiwan was enacted by the actors and the audience, and also by the ruined space with its suppressed memories of Taiwan.

Through enacting the fall of Troy in a ruined site, dating back to colonial rule under Japan, *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* echoed the overwhelming fears of war with China by presenting the remnants of Japanese colonization the last shelter against a powerful Chinese intrusion. The Huashan Winery, which was erected by a Japanese sake company, Yoshi Winery, in 1914, was the most successful and profitable winery during Japanese colonization. It was renamed the Taipei Winery of Taiwan Province when Chiang Kai-Shek's KMT government, the Chinese government at that time, took over Taiwan after World War II. The abbreviated name Taipei Winery was kept in use, along with Huashan Winery, even after the KMT government moved the factory to a suburban area and left the site deserted in 1987, the same year as Taiwan was finally liberated from the KMT government's suppressive martial law. The history of Huashan Winery succinctly illustrates modern Taiwan's history of subjugation: Japanese colonization, KMT's dictatorship, and the lift of martial law.



The memories associated with this historical building begin when the prosperous Japanese ruled and ended in the year Taiwan obtained its freedom. The connotative cultural meaning of performing *Troy, Troy... Taiwan* in the winery is thus intriguing. The director, Wang Rong-Yu, has emphasized more than once the 'Taiwanese memory' represented by the space of Huashan Winery (Liao, 2007, p. 278). During the years of Japanese colonial government this building was a successful winery, demonstrating Taiwan's economic value as a colony to Japan. After the KMT government took it over, Huashan Winery became a huge playground equipped with a 'big garden, a cafeteria, a convenience store, a hair salon, a public bath and a common room' (Chen, 2002, p. 55). Given that Taiwanese society, on the whole, continued to suffer from poverty and poor living conditions before the 1980s, Huashan Winery was, arguably, a luxurious environment to work in and was a space that represented certain 'privileges' (Ibid, p. 55).

For a native Taiwanese, growing up in difficult conditions with a Taiwanese opera troupe, the director Wang Rong-Yu was certainly not impressed by the 'privileges' Huashan Winery represented under the KMT government. Thus, Wang appears to have come to regard Huashan Winery as a site full of Taiwanese memories rooted in its history during Japanese colonization. During the colonial period of the KMT/Chinese government the colonial population did not participate in Taiwanese history; it is this that most distinguishes the differences between the Taiwanese and the Chinese people in Taiwan. The director's resorting to Japanese colonization to accentuate Taiwanese-ness is not a rare and individual perspective on Taiwanese society's process of seeking a solidify its identity after the lifting of martial law. From the former Taiwanese president Lee Teng-Hui receiving a Japanese education to the provocative black metal vocalist Freddy, of the world-famous Taiwanese black metal band Chthonic, the Japanese influences on Taiwanese culture has been continuously emphasized since 1987. In the case of *Troy, Troy... Taiwan* the Huashan Winery, a remnant of the former glory under Japanese colonization, was set as the 'homeland' of Taiwan, a place where the horrors of war were re-enacted. It became a site of reliving traumatic massacres that echoed the reality outside the performing space, that is, the fears induced by the Chinese missile threat. This ruined site, therefore, served

as a site of inscribing contemporary Taiwanese memory in 1997; fusing the recollection of Japanese colonization with defiance towards Chinese intrusion. The cultural meaning of Huashan Winery was thus transformed and became the symbolic defiance in response to the recently experienced crisis.

Such transformation of the cultural meaning of space echoes Lefebvre's concept of social production of space (Lefebvre 1991). Huashan Winery has articulated different representations of space in different eras. At first, it was the representation of the economic success of Japanese colonization, and after the KMT regime took over Taiwan, it came to represent the privileged power of the colonizing regime. Before the performance it was a ruined space echoing those abandoned and forgotten memories of Japan's legacy and the KMT's oppression. With the enactment of the Trojan War and Taiwan's traumatic history, *Troy, Troy... Taiwan* symbolically transformed Huashan Winery from the concrete amnesia of the past into a representational space that negotiated and produced cultural meanings in opposition to the threat of Chinese intrusion. The performance created the possibility of alternative interpretations and production of new meanings to be associated with the space.

## Reproduction of Space: The Transformation of Huashan Winery

The reproduction of meanings, however, was not limited to the performance. *Troy, Troy... Taiwan* unexpectedly induced a series of consequential events that finally contributed to transforming this ruined urban site into a government-funded art centre. The morning after the performance's packed and successful premiere, on the evening of 4 December 1997, the director Wang Rong-Yu was arrested by the police and accused of 'trespassing on government-owned property'. The artistic circle reacted immediately and rushed to the police station to demonstrate their strong support for Wang. Among those artists and critics, the world-renowned Taiwanese choreographer Lin Hwai-Min and the avant-garde installation artist Tang Huang-Jen raised the ongoing issue of converting deserted government properties into artistic spaces for the general public (Chiang, 1997).

After negotiations that lasted 8 hours, Wang was released without charges by signing an agreement to immediately cease performing *Troy, Troy... Taiwan*. On the surface, this event was about artists using deserted space for innocent artistic purposes without the permission from the property owner, who happened to be the government. However, on a deeper level, the artists' act of occupying a deserted property was to demand the government to return it to the Taiwanese public. In so doing it reversed the definition of who had 'trespassed' on the property—making it appear as though it had been the KMT government instead of Wang Rong-Yu and his Golden Bough Theatre group. Accordingly, when the government reacted by arresting Wang Rong-Yu, the clash between the resistance and the authorities was staged with the government's participation, echoing the performance *Troy, Troy... Taiwan* that had taken place inside the deserted space of winery, becoming another re-enactment of the re-enactment. Not only did this circumstance re-enact the re-enactment of Taiwanese resistance to the ongoing missile threats from China, but it also re-enacted the attempt to challenge the suppression of the then present. Inside the building, the intruder was Agamemnon, and the Chinese authorities were merely implied in the performance; outside the performance, it was the KMT government from China suppressing the artist, who was asking for the liberation of more space to meet the public demand to 'live more freely on this land we belong to' (Liao, 2007, p. 278). Ten years after the lifting of martial law, the liberation that the Taiwanese had finally obtained appeared fragile in the face of both the familiar suppression of the government and the threats from China. The performance, which visualized the traumatic fear of Taiwan, was not limited to the ruined space. It also took place outside the ruins, becoming a real-life event, in the public domain, that changed the public's perception of spatial meanings and relationship to the space. After 2 weeks of negotiations and intervention by politicians, the government finally conceded and gradually turned Huashan Winery, and many other deserted government properties, into artistic venues.

The famous Huashan Event seemingly involved 'bravery' and had a positive outcome, much like a successful protest campaign winning both publicity and a satisfactory final answer from the government, unexpectedly leading to various deserted spaces being developed into

art venues. This was a result of the conceptual transformation that *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* achieved: that is, by reimagining and interpreting the past through the re-enactment in the performance within the specific social context, the Huashan Winery was transformed from a place representing the order of the authorities to a representational space that challenged the status quo and produced new meanings and relations to the space. The Huashan Winery, a space created during Japanese colonization and deserted by the KMT government, became a symbolic homeland that had been devastated by the suppression of Chinese governments from various eras. This building, an inheritance from Japanese rule, appeared to be 'the most beautiful motherland' praised in the opening monologue of *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*, in which the Taiwanese resisted the 'malignancy' of China. In contrast to the memories of suppression after 1945 (such as the 228 Incident; martial law; the KMT government's White Terror; and the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis), the tendency to recall the past under Japanese rule as a golden age was obvious, but also paradoxical. The fact that Taiwan was colonized by Japan seemed to be blurred. But suppression and resistance against Japanese colonization surely existed before 1945. Such a 'liquidation of history' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 122) displays the nostalgia that causes the space in question to be consumed in more than a literal sense. Nostalgia, as Svetlana Boym (2008) argues in *The Future of Nostalgia*, is the longing for the unrepeatable past with belonging and 'a sentiment of loss and displacement' (p. XIII). It is the denial of the present with the 'fantasies of the past determined (through)...needs of the present' (p. XVI). *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*, as a response to China's missile threats, demonstrated a refusal of the current predicament of Chinese oppression, creating 'a phantom homeland' (p. XVI) in which Japanese colonization was romanticized, the space of the Huashan Winery becoming consumed with a quest for belonging. Resorting to nostalgia may be a method of subverting existing ideology, but it is hardly a perfect way to establish subjectivity. Relying on memories and experiences under a previous foreign power (Japan) simply exposes the insecurity of the rootless past and the anxieties of a lost identity. The imposed Chinese identity was challenged, but a solid Taiwanese identity was far from being reached.

In the face of missile threats from China, the urge to claim a new sense of Taiwanese-ness dominated *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*. By visualizing

the fear of China's intrusion through the metaphor of the Trojan War, the collective fears of 1996 and 1997 were recalled to defy the Chinese identity that had been imposed by the KMT regime for more than 50 years. However, what haunted 'Taiwanese space' more was the ghosts of ambiguous attitudes towards Japanese colonization. On the one hand the past of Japanese rule provided Taiwan with a nostalgic memory in the face of KMT suppression. On the other hand, it exposed a persistent lack of subjectivity in Taiwanese history. This paradox was thus embodied in the ruined space of Huashan Winery through the performance *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*.

Nonetheless, the creation of cultural meanings is a continuous process, and the quest of belonging is the inevitable process of reproduction of meanings. The celebration of 100 years of Huashan 1914 Creative Park in 2014 is a recognition of the past, including the cultural resistance and reproduction of social space that the Huashan Event represented. *Troy, Troy...Taiwan* elicited the collective fear of an intrusion from China; it echoed that political crisis and challenged the Chinese identity imposed, for half a century, by the KMT government. It endowed the Huashan Winery, a cultural inheritance from Japan, with a cultural connection to Taiwanese-ness, and a sense of political resistance to both the KMT and the current invasive Chinese governments. In response to the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, *Troy, Troy...Taiwan*, and the subsequent Huashan Event, revived the forgotten memory of Chinese suppression, inscribed memories of resistance onto its contemporary context, and became the materialization of ideological resistance that reshaped a sense of Taiwanese-ness. Inciting the transformation of the Huashan Winery from a deserted ruin to an art centre and to its current recognition as a heritage site, the Huashan Event unexpectedly, yet successfully, redefined cultural resistance in the historical moment of crisis, reproduced cultural space through challenging the dominant ideology behind the spatial production of Huashan Winery, and ultimately paved the way for the recognition of cultural heritage in Taiwan that keeps producing new cultural meanings of Taiwanese-ness.

This chapter used the Huashan Event in Taiwan to illustrate how a theatrical performance, a cultural event, evolves into a social and political

disturbance, becoming a critical event; one that transforms a nation's cultural policies and the cultural meanings of its national identity. Methodologically, the main aspects to investigate, in similar cases, are:

- The artistic and cultural context
- The social and historical background
- The relation of the present to the memory of the past
- The formation of the physical and metaphysical space
- Identifying the paradox of the specific national identity involved
- The significance for initiating another phase, development, or cultural definition.

## Notes

1. However, there are significant misunderstandings of European Heritage Days on the exhibition website. Firstly, the introduction of this exhibition mistakes 2014 European Heritage Days in France as World Heritage Day, and it also wrongly regards France, in lieu of Council of Europe, as the initiator of European Heritage Days, which is in fact held respectively by members of the Council of Europe in their own countries and in any weekend of September.

The exhibition webpage: <http://www.huashan1914.com/huashan100.php>

European Heritage Days: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/ehd-jep/home>

2. China deployed hundreds of missiles aimed at Taiwan, and conducted missile tests in the narrow Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and China, to deter Taiwan from declaring 'independence'. The fears about the impending war were so intense that US aircraft carriers were sent to patrol around Taiwan. (Huang, 1996; Hsu, 1996; Wang, 1996).

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# 7

## CDA, Critical Events and Critical Event Studies: How to Make Sense of Critical Events in a Society of Radical Change

Nicolina Montesano Montessori

### Introduction

The invitation to contribute a chapter to this book became an incentive to reflect on how we may perceive critical events in a globalized era of radical change, and how to consider these academically in the light of the academic frames that I normally work with: poststructural thought, discourse theory, and critical discourse analysis (CDA). The chapter starts with the outcome of these reflections, a suggestion for a research methodology that seems useful to analyse critical events and a series of recommendations for future research in this direction. It presents an example of such a research methodology and how it was used in the study of the Spanish Occupy Movement, the Indignados (Montessori & López, 2015). The chapter finishes with some reflections on the potential and possible pitfalls of Critical Event Studies (CES) as an emergent discipline.

## Critical Events in a Globalized Era of Radical Change

The purpose of this book is to create an alternative route away from mainstream event management studies, which has to do with mega activities, such as global audience sports events. What could constitute an alternative route? What do we consider to be critical events? How do we identify them? How could we frame and analyse them?

Looking for critical events is not a difficult task, especially not in a time in which the press and media are eager to frame anything under the sun as a new 'crisis'; we seem to race from a financial crisis to a construction and housing crisis. Whilst under all these events lies the crisis of our ecology through climate change. Critical events can be found without too much difficulty either: major protests in major cities around the world and, recently, during the inauguration of the new buildings for the European Central Bank in Europe. Large numbers of migrants coming from Africa in floppy boats, left to their own destiny by captains who abandon them, leaving their craft to the rescue of others. Recent incidents where 900 people lost their lives in their attempts to reach Europe and drowned in the Mediterranean, with European governments reluctant to act. Flights that disappear from the sky without leaving a trace (Malaysia Airways, March 8, 2014), while flying at great height, get shot out of the air by rebellious groups, whilst the culprits remain unknown (Malaysia Airways, July 2015) and, more recently, a flight deliberately flown into the alpine mountains by a co-pilot (Germanwings, March 24, 2015). Wars started by Western countries in Afghanistan, Iraq, and so on without clear consensus, uncontrolled use of drones, collateral damage on the one hand, cruel decapitations of Western victims shown on YouTube at the other. Radicalization of Islamic people in the East and West, increased populism at the extreme Left and Right, fundamentalism, massive demonstrations such as the ones by Pegida in Germany (and elsewhere) to protect the national character of the state. In January 2015 we witnessed the assault on Charlie Hebdo in Paris where 11 journalists were killed by gunmen claiming to be members of Al Qaeda.

What can we say in general about these events? They happen, they receive worldwide attention through global media, they cause a sense of shock and sensation, and they create (new) identities such as ‘ship-migrants’, terrorists, Syria-gangers, jihadists, populists, activists, to name a few. Social media are often essential in both organizing the event and disseminating its results. Partly, the dissemination is performed by traditional sources, such as journalists. However, increasingly, the actors play a key role in the dissemination themselves, through the internet, using forums such as YouTube, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and so on.

From a poststructural point of view, these events can be considered disruptions of the social order. For instance, Derrida would envision these critical events as a rupture in a structure (Derrida, 1978). Žižek (2009) sees event as a rupture in the structure of the ideological domain—opening up space for an alternative vision to emerge and to take shape, enabling the formulation of new imaginaries. The latter is to be seen, since quite a few of the events that I mentioned before seem to be negative in that they do not propose an example (yet). This is the case of the flight events mentioned above: ending up in destruction, disappearance of an entire aircraft, and destruction of it against the mountains, including the culprit. In the case of the flight that was shot down in Ukraine, there is probably a political story behind it. Since the culprits formally remain unknown, this story remains latent. The question that emerges, then, is whether these incidents are causes or symptoms of a world in crisis through radical change, increased globalization, available technology (both social media and weapons), increased heterogeneity, and radical capitalism or neoliberalism. A world, in which more and more people, from different cultures and religions, need to share the same public space, in heterogeneous environments in an era in which resources seem to be becoming increasingly scarce. Simultaneously, traditional institutions such as the UN, (Western) democracies, and banks seem to be incapable of dealing with these situations; their practices seem outdated and—partially—corrupt. Churches and other institutes no longer provide structure to people’s life, and as postmodernism has it, the postmodern society no longer has ‘big narratives’ upon which to draw.

## Making Sense of Critical Events Through Discourse Theory and CDA

I believe that both discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) and CDA (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2003), together with its underlying ontology, critical realism (Bhaskar, 1978), provide a useful framework to make sense of critical events. The reason is their dynamic view on social reality. Discourse theory envisions society as a 'site for social struggle' that is never fully closed. The social is, by definition, agonistic. Events exist outside of discourse, but will only gain significance through discourse. A plane crash may happen, but it is through discourse that it is defined as a technical accident, a human disaster or 'the wrath of God'. Critical realism, on the other hand, envisions a layered ontology, consisting of the Real (manifestations that exist independent of our knowledge of them, such as nature, gravity), the Actual (when the real manifests itself, such as rain, climate change, eruptions of volcanoes), and the Empirical, which is the domain where humans make sense of the real and the actual through observation, scientific research, and procedures of making sense of the events and either reinforcing or controlling them. The dialogical relational approach of CDA (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2003) has, especially, anchored itself in this critical realist ontology. This approach in CDA considers that within the social, there is always a dialectic relation between institutional and material practices, discourse, power, norms, beliefs, and social relations (based on Harvey, 1996). Hence the discourse-relational approach, which analyses the particular relations between these moments in a particular discourse or discursive event. The layered approach in this direction of CDA is also found in their scalar view on social reality, taken from sociology in general, that distinguishes between structures, institutions, and events. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) further applied this to discourse, claiming that Structures are related to Language (i.e. Spanish, English, Dutch), the level of institutions are considered 'orders of discourse', that layer between structures and events, characterized by orders of discourse that simultaneously entail discourses (representations), styles (identities), and genres (activities between people, such as meetings), while events represent the

most concrete level of abstraction and are in language represented as texts, such as reports, letters, minutes, and so on. In earlier work, I further elaborated on this scheme, relating it to discourse theory, situating Discourses at the most abstract, structural level (say: the Discourse of the church, or Law), social imaginaries at the mediate level, and myth at the most concrete level of texts. To unpack this, Discourses refer to language use—both written and spoken—in social practice. As such there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and its social context: ‘Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s) institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it’ (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:258. See also: Fairclough, 1989:22; 1992:62–67; 1995:135; 2003:3).

Myth is a concept taken from Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who define it as an alternative to the dominant, present situation. For instance, a sustainable economy is a myth in times of the dominant free market economy. Social imaginary is a myth that gained support from a majority of different groups in society (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). I further developed this concept for my own theoretical framework, claiming that for something to become a social imaginary, it was required to have a tangible impact on social reality (Montessori, 2009, 2011). Hence, a myth remains at the textual level of formulating and disseminating a desired alternative, while a social imaginary is a myth with sufficient support of other social groups and classes and an imprint made on social society.

I believe that this layered approach to social events helps to analyse critical events not only based on their symptomatic appearance, but also in their causal structures (what caused them to happen), their embedded position in the society, or the context that they break away from and the interplay of discursive and non-discursive dimensions of the event.

Another advantage of CDA is its eclectic character, which allows the researcher to use the instruments, theories, and methodologies which seem to be most adequate to get a grip on the event being studied. For instance, in my earlier work I have used Gramsci’s (1971) theory on hegemony to make sense of my data in the light of social change. For instance, Gramsci in his Neo-Marxist account on hegemony, claims that a social revolution comes from the bourgeoisie, or any creative force in society, and is based on new visions and ideas, a new historical bloc, when it

succeeds in gathering sufficient support. Language plays an essential role in this process. Creating impact on society with these ideas through gaining support for it in a majority of civil society was what Gramsci called a 'war of position'—as opposed to a 'war of manoeuvre' which involves arms and violence. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) further elaborated Gramsci's perspective on hegemony and introduced not only the concepts of 'myth' and 'social hegemony' as described above, but also the linguistic concepts of 'empty signifiers' and 'nodal points'. These are signifiers without a particular signified. Due to their empty character—their lack of a direct observable relation to a particular signified—they represent an absent and transcendent totality; the totality which never can be fully captured or obtained. The concepts of 'nationalism' or 'democracy' may serve as an example of empty signifiers. Due to this empty character, many different groups can unite themselves with an empty signifier, which then obtains a split identity, uniting in itself the universal (the part of the signifier that is joined by all different groups, e.g. social innovation) and the particular: the different view each of the related groups has, such as social innovation through sustainable energy, or through innovative human relations or through the implementation of robots (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Empty signifiers have the potential to crystalize into *nodal points* defined as 'privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a signifying chain' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:112). For instance, 'wind energy' would be a nodal point in a discourse of sustainable energy. Charging empty signifiers with meaning is a hegemonic operation, a (new) nodal point might point in the direction of having acquired hegemonic status or having created a 'new common sense'. In earlier work I suggested that the concepts of 'myth' and 'empty signifiers' operate at the most concrete level of texts, while social imaginaries and nodal points belong to the middle level of abstraction of 'orders of discourse' (Montessori, 2009, 2011). In this dynamic view on discourse, the concepts of 'articulation' and 'rearticulation' are also of central importance. Articulation implies any practice that establishes 'a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:105). For instance, migrants can be articulated as victims that need help and support or as criminals that need to be imprisoned and sent back to their countries. 'Rearticulation' entails a modification

of these relations among elements. In the discursive analysis of critical events, these concepts may be useful in terms of identifying the values and causes one struggles for, to analyse how a worldview is articulated and rearticulated, and ultimately, it contains elements for establishing an instrument to evaluate to extent to which social change has been achieved (see for details Montesano Montessori & Morales López, 2015).

## Research Methodology in CDA

As in other critical sciences, CDA presents a layered approach to research methodology that is abductive in character, since it goes back and forth between theory, data, and sociopolitical context. It hinges between theory and data. The layered approach is defined most clearly in the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). This methodology consists of three analytical steps: a content analysis, the analysis of discursive and argumentative strategies, and the analysis of linguistic features. Hence, in the first stage, one presents a global analysis of the data which can be thematic, or based on particular key concepts or the structure of a text or event. The second stage is the analysis of argumentative structures or discursive strategies of dismantling, restructuring, and transformation. The third stage is a more detailed analysis of linguistic features, such as metaphors, stylistic, and grammatical features. Micro-discursive strategies are, for instance, strategies of (de)legitimation, singularization, exclusion, and so on. Though the methodology has been developed for the analysis of texts, it can also be applied to events, as I did in my participatory research on social justice in the classroom (Montessori & Ponte, 2012; Montessori & Schuman, 2015). The eclectic character of CDA allows the use of any research methodology considered useful for the research topic and purposes; depending on the critical event one focuses on. In this case, we made different methodological choices; we did action research rather than textual research. Nevertheless, we did maintain the gradual order. Thus, we started with a global exploration through narrative interviews, followed by detailed observations of particular situations in the classroom, using specifically designed forms that zoomed in to the relation between the teacher and one pupil. In other words, the layered principle

can be adapted to the context and purpose of the research. Also, the order can be reversed, as will become clear in the example below in the analysis of the Spanish Occupy movement, where we started performing the analysis at the micro level.

## **Using a Discourse-Analytical Approach as an Example of the Analysis of a Critical Event: The Struggle of the Spanish Indignados**

The Spanish Occupy movement, alternatively called the struggle of the Indignados (the undignified), 15M (the first massive demonstration took place on May 15, 2011), or Real Democracia Ya (the struggle for a real democracy to be established), can indeed be considered a ‘critical event’ in that it disrupted not only the status quo in Spain, but also the attitude and the belief system of Spanish citizens. In what follows I will present a brief description of the struggle and highlight the theoretical, methodological, and analytical framework that we developed to analyse the slogans our interpretation of the struggle.

### **Scope of the Struggle of 15M**

The movement of the Indignados was one of the first organized movements of public protest against the neoliberal free market economy in Europe, which was later followed by the worldwide Occupy movement. It started with a massive public, peaceful occupation of Madrid’s central square: Puerta del Sol, as a response to the heartfelt financial and political consequences of the financial crisis. Middle- and working-classes were hit by the crisis through increased unemployment, cuts in wages (to the extent that citizens were unable to pay their rent or mortgage) and lost their homes. Politically they felt abandoned by a two-party system that served the needs of global capital at the expense of the Spanish population, and at the expense of a proper functioning democracy. Demands, then, implied both political and financial causes. In the political domain there was a demand for reform of the electoral law in order to spread



power to all parties; internal reform of political parties through open publication lists; participation in the proposals for new legislation through votes on the internet. In the financial domain the main demand was the establishment of a public bank that provides loans to small entrepreneurs rather than to other banks and the full cancellation of a mortgage in case of insolvency, in exchange for the payment of a reasonable interest rate to the bank.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used a Gramscian discourse-theoretical approach, described above, to which we added Jessop's state theory (Jessop, 2002), which claims that capitalism develops in a series of spatio-temporal fluxes that each end in a crisis. Examples of such fixes are Fordism, the welfare state, and the neoliberal free market economy. In times of crisis, it is argued, narratives emerge about what went wrong in the past, whilst the contours of new models and how these will improve the wrongs found in the past model emerge. Based on this theory, we recontextualized the data—the slogans and websites—as such narratives. We then used a sociocognitive constructivist perspective to further analyse and understand the significance of the data. The constructivist approach holds that reality does not exist independently of social actors. The reason is that these social actors rearrange reality to fit their perception of the world. It is, therefore, a worldview that is discursively constructed both individually and socially, in relation to the subject's embodiment and emotion.

## The Methodological Framework

For the analysis of the data—slogans, placards, websites (considered as narratives)—we used discourse-historical methodology, due to its analytical focus on diverse strategies to do with dismantling, transforming, and constructing sociopolitical space (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 1999 [2009]). The main stages were described above and were applied in the reversed order: we went from

micro (slogans and rhetorical analysis) to the analysis of discursive strategies, to the global narrative of transformation. In order to perform a global content analysis, we employed a model to analyse narrative in its sociopolitical context (Somers, 1994). Somers distinguishes three dimensions of narrativity within any particular narrative: the ontological, the public, and the meta-narrative. The ontological dimension contains the stories which define the identity of social subjects and a particular vision of the status quo. The public dimension concerns cultural and institutional formations such as the family, the church, and the nation. The dimension of meta-narrativity concerns the master narratives in which people are embedded as contemporary actors in society. Somers states that meta-narrativity has the paradoxical quality of de-narrativisation, in that it backgrounds human agency in the light of more abstract forces; in this case the free market capitalist economy, which invades and appropriates the political system.

## The Analytical Framework

Using these analytical tools, we analysed the discursive process of dismantling the existing dominant political and financial system, the transformation and the strategy of reconstruction, followed by a narrative analysis. The data we analysed consisted of a large amount of slogans on the placards used for the demonstrations (real life and taken from the Internet) and protest songs. In terms of the dismantling strategies, we found that the slogans and placards aimed at the deconstruction of the political power of the two main parties (the Partido Popular and the Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol [PSOE]) and that of the financial sector. The two leaders of these parties were often shown as two rulers under the same banner. Also, a semantic contrast was made between a ruling 'them' and a citizenship 'us', each group having opposite values and interests, thus showing that the ruling class is far away from representing the people. The deconstruction of the financial sector was performed clearly during the manifestation that we joined in Barcelona (October 15, 2011). There were some 40,000 people walking the streets, stopping in front of the stock exchanges, and the houses of bankers, pointing fingers, singing

protest songs and chanting ‘*culpables*’, ‘*culpables*’ (guilty, guilty). A typical slogan was: ‘*no hay pan para tanto chorizo*’ ‘there is no bread for so much sausage’. The meaning is layered, in the sense that ‘bread’ is slang for money, and chorizo is slang for corruption. The slogan makes manifest the corruption at the local and national levels, but also the pressure felt in the households: ‘we cannot carry the burden of the corruption and the crisis’, thus moving from the macro level of corruption to the day-to-day life of citizens. Strategies of transformation included the expression of a myth of the desired democracy, through slogans such as ‘*indignados y organizados*’ (undignified and organized) and ‘*No somos antisistema, el sistema es antinosotros*’ (we are not against the system, the system is against us). We see that the creation of the neologism *antinosotros* (against us), as a variation on the lexeme *antisistema*, creates a paradox which clearly represents the inhuman behaviour of the elites who exclude real people from their policies. The strategy of reconstruction was expressed through the invention of the expression *citizenship 2.0*, implying the need for re-installing a new version of citizenship.

The narrative analysis revealed a *meta-narrative* which constructs a different interpretation of the final years of the first stage of Spanish democracy (1975–2011): that of a mediocre and bureaucratic political class, wrapped up in the power structure of the dominant parties who divided power between themselves and the bankers. The *ontological dimension* contrasts the present situation of the free market economy with a desired imaginary of a sustainable world. The present situation is characterized by an elite that looks after itself at the expense of the public sector. The imaginary of a new society involves a reinvention of democracy, and an inclusive world that provides a basis for the middle- and working-classes to live their lives, to have jobs, and to enjoy public services such as health-care and education.

Finally, the *public narrative* shows a world in which banks and politicians are expected to play a social role in sustaining society, having previously turned to enterprises that support the private sector and the global economy at the expense of public funding and sustainability. 15M calls for a reconsideration of politics and of the financial system. The political system should be more inclusive for smaller parties, while the financial system should separate responsible, state-guaranteed banks, from speculative banks that take risks.

## Interpretation

The analysis of the semiotic expressions of 15M in combination with the narrative analysis has shown that a large part of the struggle has been a process of publicly making sense of the crisis. In interpretive terms, 15M citizens rearticulated themselves in at least two significant ways. One was their increased understanding of the crisis as described above. In discourse-theoretical terms, we can state that a myth (in Laclau's sense of filling a lack in the status quo) was created; a public space was opened in which all citizens had equal access to promote their own views and actions. The 15M organization helped make sense of the status quo and the different powers operating in it, which helped citizens rearticulate the future and their own place in that future. This process of a new cognitive understanding went hand in hand with the development of a new communality: people came together on the plazas and in the streets and neighbourhoods. During the process, new emotions evolved, such as the loss of fear, the sensation of increased empowerment, a shared concern about democracy in Spain, solidarity with the working classes, and a sense of solidarity and shared involvement between older and younger generations. In the process, citizens rearticulated from mere victims to *indignados* and finally to *indignados* (the outraged).

## Evaluation of the Impact of the Struggle

Seen from a discourse-theoretical frame, it is obvious that 15M has created a myth, an alternative to the existing dominant political and economic situation. The question remains, however, whether the movement has the strength and power to recontextualize the political and economic arena in Spain. So far, 15M has not been able to disrupt the traditional electoral procedures. It did not stop Rajoy from winning the elections in November 2011 and imposing a new austerity regime on the country. So far, 15M has not been successful in resisting the power of the financial markets and it has not changed the economy. The difficulty may lay, in part, in the roots of their grievances: the strength of the market in the present-day economy and the commitment of Spain to the European Union (EU), which imposes budgetary austerity on all member countries. In this sense, it is safe to

conclude that 15M constructed a powerful myth. Though its views were shared by a large percentage of the population, the movement has been unable to turn this into a social imaginary (especially not according to the definition of this concept as described in Montessori, 2009). 15M has been unable to gain full hegemony, but remains a counterhegemonic movement that protests against the economic and political status quo. However, we consider that the process of the rearticulation of civil society has had strong effects. At the local level, civil society has shown examples of organizing itself differently. The best known, and most successful, has been the Platform of People Affected by Mortgage ([afectadosporlahipoteca.com](http://afectadosporlahipototeca.com)), which has been successful in helping many people, across Spanish territories, avoid eviction. One of the most famous leaders of this movement, Ada Colau, succeeded in creating a citizen platform in Barcelona that will participate in the elections on the May 24, 2015. She managed to unite various leaders from left-wing parties and other social groups in the city, which shared the vision of 15M. At the national level, Podemos has emerged.

## The Role of the Internet and Social Media

The Internet also played a major role during the struggle. Through the use of social media decisions about where and when to meet were made and distributed. The website of Real Democracia Ya ([www.democracia-realya.es](http://www.democracia-realya.es)) was, and is, the platform for news, activities, tweets, and the manifestation of placards, and so on. Communication went back and forth, from the media into real life, in the squares and other meeting places, in a continuous process of making sense of the crisis, working to shape the protest movement.

## Further Reflections on CES

I believe we will need a fairly clear definition what CES is and what it contributes to the academic arena. In this chapter I suggest that CES needs to define itself in relation to adjacent approaches such as CDA and other disciplines. We will need to problematize what we understand by 'events', from a CDA point of view the question arises around the

difference of discursive versus non-discursive events. A public manifestation is likely to be a discursive event. How about people randomly shooting in public places? Is this a discursive or a non-discursive event? Returning to the recent airplane crashes. Do technical causes make an event non-discursive? How about the air crash of Germanwings where, allegedly, the pilot committed suicide and deliberately flew the plane into the mountains? Is it discursive or not? Would it turn into a discursive event if he had pronounced his last words, for instance, presenting the world with reasons for his action? We can usefully borrow CDA's concept of 'chains of events' and Fairclough's (2003) distinction between events that occur at different levels of abstraction. Looking at the concept of a chain of events (a sequence of events that lead to a climax or to different events, perhaps in different domains), the chain of events of these last two air crashes are significantly different. The plane that crashed in Ukraine had a political cause, so once there is evidence who the culprits were, future (and current) events are likely to take place at the political level and may lead to, for instance, increased tensions between Russia and the West and increased military security. Germanwings may lead to new security rules, such as a mandatory presence of two staff members in the cockpit, and a new system of regulating the mechanisms of the door to the cockpit. In other words, we cannot take the meaning of the concept of 'event' for granted. In both cases, the main structure in which these events occurred, international aviation, has not been disrupted by any of these events. Problematizing the meaning of event, the place of an event within a larger chain of events, in-depth studies into causes and historical roots, help us to move away from—as stated in the introduction—the neoliberal inclination to detach and disconnect everything. It thus prevents events as stand-alone facts, removed from the commercial/capitalist/social structures in which they are embedded.

## Recommendations for Performing CES Research

Based on these reflections, I would like to formulate the following recommendations. A potential pitfall for CES is that we, too, end up seeing events as isolated moments. It can create hypes in academia and—in the

light of the neoliberal pressure to perform—that academics too eagerly take advantage of each and every critical event to publish an article and, hopefully, brand their name as an expert in the field of *the event*. This may lead to superficial studies and to academics that, too easily, jump to conclusions. An example of this may have been the Zapatista struggle in Mexico which, soon after its formal beginning on January 1, 1994, received abundant academic attention from fields as varied as anthropology, political sciences, ecology, and so on. My analysis of all these interpretations demonstrated that the many interpretations construed Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) as, allegedly, a net war; a peasant war; a (neo) indigenist struggle; and a traditional guerrilla movement. My discursive analysis found three problematic features in these interpretations—even though each of them might have been valid in their own paradigm. First, these interpretations overlooked the hybrid character of the Zapatistas that were simultaneously indigenous and peasant movements, traditional and modern. Second, these interpretations failed to analyse the discourse of the Zapatistas, holding their text for truth, while the discursive analysis demonstrated its symbolic value, but also some major contradictions in their texts that remain unperceived when reading the text at face value. Third, as other authors have noticed, academics were too eager to project their own desire for change on this movement (Nuijten & Van der Haar, 2000). In fact, I found that an interpretation which had received little attention, namely that the EZLN was a ‘Gramscian war of position’ was a much more adequate interpretation of this struggle.

In order to avoid CES becoming a field of hypes where academics project their own desires and methods on any critical event that comes our way, I would like to make the following recommendations.

- Dive into the history of the critical event and its sociopolitical context. Read authors that already wrote about the issue before it became a ‘critical event’. A serious state-of-the-art review is needed.
- Create a thorough and well-explained theoretical-methodological-analytical framework and analyse the data accordingly.
- Consult experts familiar in the field for an open peer-review. Resources such as those offered by Academia.edu, for example, provide the

opportunity to start a review session on your article. It is a very good and efficient way to receive a lot of feedback.

- Formulate a thorough evaluation of the critical event and its meaning in the sociopolitical context in which it occurs and point out the lessons to be learnt.

## Conclusions

This chapter tries to understand the significance of critical events as opposed to mainstream events, and CES as opposed to mainstream event studies. It has taken the study of the Spanish Occupy movement as an example as to how research on critical events can be performed. It has taken an overview of this study and its outcome, followed by a series of reflections on the potential of, and possible pitfalls for, a CES. Finally it has presented a set of recommendations for academics wishing to conduct CES research.

## Notes

1. The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (The Zapatista Army of National Freedom).

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# 8

## Using a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) Approach to Investigate Constructions of Identities in Media Reporting Surrounding Mega Sports Events: The Case of the London Olympics 2012

Sylvia Jaworska

### Introduction

Mega sports events are a unique type of planned events in that they attract large audiences across the globe to experience ‘a joint “reality”’ (Billings & Hundley, 2010, p. 2). However, for most people, this experience is only possible through media. Through the choice of what and how to report, what is included and excluded, media largely control the dissemination and representations of such events. Discourse, understood here predominantly as language use, plays a crucial role in this process in that it can effectively shape public perceptions of (sport) events and the participating actors. For example, a heavy use of metaphors from the domain of war in reporting of international football matches constructs the events as armed conflicts between two nations fuelling nationalistic ambitions (Bishop & Jaworski, 2003). Celebrating a sportsman as a *British* champion when he wins, but as a *Jamaican-born* runner when the win is contested is another illustrative example demonstrating how media

can frame and shift perspectives through specific language choices. Such choices are never neutral. Commentators and journalists have a large pool of language items at their disposal, but when writing about a specific event, they may prefer some words or phrases over others, thus reflecting certain attitudes and ideological stances and propagating a particular version of events (Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery, 2013).

It needs to be kept in mind that the media versions of events are not solely a reflection of what media producers see as interesting, relevant, and suitable. *Media* are driven by profit orientation and hence, what is produced also needs to appeal to the target audience. The audience is not just the immediate reader or listener, but often an imagined and more general one (Cotter, 2010). Thus, media will often draw on popular discourses assumed to be widely shared in order to respond to and attract more listeners and readers. Studying media discourses surrounding events can, therefore, offer considerable insights into how events are medially constructed and shed light on stances and ideologies that underpin such constructions and are widely circulated in society.

Commonly media discourses are examined using approaches such as discourse analysis (DA) and especially its recent faction of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 2001). Both approaches are qualitative in nature and are based on close readings of texts. By examining the interplay between context, text, and language, DA and CDA have been invaluable in providing insights into how media symbolically produce and reproduce norms and ideologies, especially of the powerful and dominant groups. However, both approaches operate normally with smaller sets of media data. Whilst this can produce rich accounts of a particular issue shedding light on nuanced or subtle discursive strategies and representations, findings obtained from an analysis of a handful of articles are difficult to generalise beyond the studied cases. They may also tell us little about the more pervasive and widespread ways of how media construct events. As Fairclough (1989, p. 54) observes, 'the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the repetition of handling causality, particular ways of positioning the reader and so forth'. It is for this reason that analysts interested in media discourses are increasingly adopting

the tools and methods of corpus linguistics (CL), which investigates linguistic patterns in large amounts of language data known as corpora. Corpora are normally interrogated using corpus-linguistic specialist software and quantitative, statistical techniques that allow for retrieval of frequencies, keywords, and collocations. In this way, analysts can scan large amounts of data and reveal frequent and repeated linguistic patterns that are not immediately visible to the naked eye. Quantitative results produced by corpus tools are studied subsequently in more depth using qualitative discourse-analytic techniques. The combination of quantitative corpus techniques with more qualitative methods have led to fruitful methodological synergies (Baker & Levon, 2015; Baker et al., 2008) and approaches such as the corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) (Partington, Duguid, & Taylor, 2013) that can reveal much more nuanced patterns of language use and representations in the media when compared with a quantitative or qualitative analysis alone. The main aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the CADS approach can be effectively used to investigate media construction of events, in particular mega sports events. It will do so by taking as an example the media reporting surrounding the London Olympics 2012.

Sport, especially mega sports, events are an interesting site for social scientists and (critical) discourse analysts for many reasons. Sport is a major socialising force and a common cultural and symbolic resource deployed to aid solidarity, understanding, and identity formation (Meân & Halone, 2010). Sport is also a site of tensions mostly due to ideological contradictions between its underlying values and the actual practice. Although sport ethos is based on neutrality, inclusivity, and fairness with the aim to promote international harmony, more often than not it becomes a site of aggressive national rivalry and a strong reaffirmation of national pride. Despite some progress and changing social attitudes, it is still far away from being inclusive. Sport is recognised as one of the major masculine domains perpetuating the heterosexual norm (Daddario, 1994). Undoubtedly sport, due its global impact, has the potential to be a vehicle of social transformations; there are numerous examples demonstrating the impact of sport on social and ethnic barriers (for example Carrington, 1998; Woodward, 2004). At the same time,

sport still continues to be an expression of privilege, domination and subordination maintained through the complex mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion (Jarvie, 1991; Long & Spracklen, 2011). It is this contradiction that makes sport ‘a disputed ideological terrain’ and a powerful site in the re/production of traditional hegemonic orders (Meân, 2010, p. 67). Thus, sport and especially its media representations are an important lens through which to examine social relations, and constructions of identities. Against this background, the paper focuses specifically on the investigation of discourses around identity that are constructed and supported by media coverage during major global sports events. The specific research questions that this study investigates are the following:

- Which identities are foregrounded and positively valued and which are backgrounded, negatively valued, or absent?
- Do mega sports events have an impact on the discursive ways in which national, racial or gendered identities are constructed, and, if so, what is the nature of this effect?

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows. Section “Media Representations of Sport” offers a brief overview of research concerned with media discourses surrounding sports events. Section “The Methodology of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS): Principles and Tools” discusses in depth the CADS methodology, its principles and analytical tools. In Section “Discursive Constructions of Identities in Media Reporting During Global Sports Events: The Case of the London Olympics 2012”, the main results are presented and discussed in light of the above research questions. The paper concludes with critical observations regarding the benefits and limitations of the adopted CADS approach to study media constructions of mega sports events.

## Media Representations of Sport

Sport as a cultural and symbolic resource has been of interest to historians and sociologists for some time. Three major themes have been addressed in particular: (1) sport’s role in promoting nationalism (Hogan, 2003;

Kinkema & Harris, 1998; Smith & Porter, 2004); (2) sport, ethnicity, and racism (Jarvie, 1991; Long, 2000; Long & Spracklen, 2011); and (3) sport as a signifier of hyper-masculinity and a site of gendered ideologies (Bruce, Hovden, & Markula, 2010; Duncan, Messner, & Willms, 2005; Jones, Murrell, & Jackson, 1999; Kane & Lenskyj, 1998; Pirinen, 1997; Wensig & Bruce, 2003). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss in detail this extensive body of research, some of the major conclusions need to be noted. Firstly, sport is seen as one of the major social forces that maintain a sense of national belonging. This role has become even more significant in the post-war world characterised by globalisation, mass migration, and weaker nation states. As Smith and Porter (2004, p. 2) observe, increasingly, national identities are defined through and are 'inextricably linked to what happens on the field of play'. Secondly, sport continues to be a site of white privilege and domination (Spracklen, 2013). Although the participation of various ethnic groups in sport has considerably increased in the last decades leading some to celebrate sport as a tool of equal opportunity, research shows that racism is still experienced at all levels of sport (Long & Spracklen, 2011). Arguably, overt expressions of racism seem to be less common, not least because of the many anti-racism campaigns introduced by various sporting bodies. However, racism still prevails, though in more subtle forms, for example, as institutionalised racism that restricts access of certain groups to positions of power. Although teams in some sports appear to be more diverse, we rarely find sportspeople from ethnic groups in the role of coaches, managers, or members of sporting board rooms. Related to this is the issue of gender representation. Women's participation in national and international tournaments has too increased significantly since 1950s, almost reaching parity with men in some domains, for example, in Olympic sports. Nevertheless, research shows that sport continues to be a male domain that maintains traditional and heterosexual gendered hierarchies (Bruce et al., 2010; Duncan et al., 2005; Eastman & Billings, 2000; Meân, 2010).

Methodologically, these issues have been mostly addressed by analysing historical records or using ethnographic and qualitative methods such as participant observations or interviews. Given the importance of media on experiencing sports events, some researchers have begun to look more

closely at how media represent sport and sportspeople. There is now a large body of research documenting the media coverage of various sports events pointing to patterns of systematic mis- and underrepresentation. For example, Bruce et al. (2010) reveal that on average sportswomen receive less than 10 % of newspaper or TV coverage leading the authors to conclude that 'women do not matter in our culture' (Bruce et al., 2010, p. 5). Although the female converge in certain domains seems to increase, this does not necessarily lead to gender parity. As demonstrated by Duncan et al. (2005), despite the increased coverage of women during Olympic Games, the reporting tends to depict female athletes in disciplines traditionally seen as feminine such as swimming or gymnastics. Such disciplines focus heavily on aesthetics as opposed to strength and contact—attributes associated with men's sports. Thus, some researchers are sceptical about the increased female coverage in media arguing that instead of achieving gender equality, it further perpetuates the ideology of biological difference which views women as suitable for certain sports only and denies them the possibility of demonstrating their prowess in others (Bruce et al., 2010; Duncan et al., 2005; Jones et al., 1999; Pirinen, 1997). This comes particularly into view in the ways in which female and male athletes are depicted. As Eastman and Billings (2000) show, sportswomen are more frequently described by references to their age, emotions, dating habits, or family, attributes that are rarely used to refer to sportsmen. Successful female athletes are also often compared to famous sportsmen. In contrast, successful male athletes are never compared to famous sportswomen, but to religious, mythical, or fictional figures of power such as Jesus or Superman. Eastman and Billings (2000), p. 208) conclude that such comparisons place sportsmen several levels above sportswomen and install the male athlete as the prototypical athlete. Early research by Daddario (1994) also shows that sportswomen are likely to be represented as sex objects or in heterosexual roles pointing to the impact of sports media in perpetuating the norm of compulsory heterosexuality (Kane & Lenskyj, 1998).

Similar mis- and underrepresentation has been shown in research examining the construction of race in sports media. Billings and Eastman's (2002) study of American telecasts of the 2000 Sydney Olympics demonstrate that white American men athletes were the most mentioned and

most positively portrayed. Their success was associated with commitment, whereas black athletes were portrayed as having innate sporting abilities. Similarly, in a longitudinal content-analytic study on the representations of black athletes, Goss, Tyler, and Billings (2010) demonstrate that certain features such as strength and hyper-aggressivity continue to be strongly associated with black players. Intelligence and leadership are, in contrast, more often attributed with white sportsmen (McDonald, 2010). Overall, sports media tend to over-signify blackness, whereas whiteness remains the unquestioned and 'unmarked' norm (Spracklen, 2013).

All in all, sports media have been shown to construct sport as a domain of hyper-masculine, white, and heterosexual identities marked by aggressive and competitive attitudes (Meân, 2010). Furthermore, hegemonic gender and racial representations seem to be strongly tied with national identities. Studies that examined the intersections of race, gender, and nationalism in the coverage of international sports events demonstrate the prevalence of nationalistic biases (Billings & Angelini, 2007) and the homogenising ideologies of nation states (Hogan, 2003). In fact, mega sports events are often directly utilised by governments to project the idea of a unified nation, whilst masking social inequalities and divides (Hogan, 2003). On the one hand, an increased coverage of women or members of ethnic groups serves this nationalising project in that it helps propagate the idea of a whole and 'happy' nation. On the other hand, media representations of sports events draw heavily on national discourses or in Hall's (1992) sense, narratives of a nation, that is, images, stories, symbols, myths, metaphors, and stereotypic 'national' characteristics that all together construct an experience of shared history and strengthen the sense of national unity. These are also adopted to create divides between nations, which further fuels nationalistic rivalry, as Bishop and Jaworski (2003) show in an analysis of media reporting surrounding the football match between Germany and England during Euro 2000. In this way, sports media perpetuate the homogenising and nationalistic ideologies and are significant contributors to the process of 'nation imagining' (Anderson, 1983).

Research studies concerned with media representations of sport discussed above highlight the role of sports media in constructing and



perpetuating traditional, hegemonic hierarchies and ideologies. Due to various awareness-raising campaigns, overt expressions of racism or sexism are rare. Nevertheless, biases still prevail albeit they tend to be expressed in more subtle or ambivalent ways, for example, through the amount of attention given to and attributions associated with certain groups. Whilst the conclusions from this research are compelling and consistent, there are some methodological issues. The dominant approach used is that of content analysis (CA). Whilst CA has a number of strengths, it is based on coding schemes and categories that are normally set *ex ante*. The data is subsequently scanned for the absence or presence of the set categories or themes. Whilst this may capture a number of relevant topics, some topics or categories may be omitted. Also, most of the studies are based on the analysis of a small amount of media data, making generalisations difficult. Finally, many of the studies highlight the importance of discourse and language but, with a few exceptions (Bishop & Jaworski, 2003; Meán, 2010), most of them are not systematic analyses of discourse or linguistic choices. The CADS approach, which is a linguistic data-driven methodology, can help address some of these weaknesses and contribute to a more systematic understanding of the role of discourse in constructing events in the media. The next section moves on to outline the principles and key analytical tools of the CADS approach.

## **The Methodology of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS): Principles and Tools**

The term CADS was first introduced by Partington (2004) in order to account for the growing body of research interested in discourse and adopting the techniques of corpus linguistics. Generally speaking, CADS is an offspring of the parent methodology of corpus linguistics (CL) and was much inspired by the early work by Stubbs (1995); Hardt-Mautner (1995), and Krishnamurthy (1996). This section begins by describing the main concepts and tools used in corpus research. Subsequently, the specificity and tenets of CADS are discussed.

CL is primarily concerned with studying language on the basis of large electronic collections of real-life linguistic data normally known as corpora (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Corpora can be quickly and reliably searched using specialist corpus-linguistic software programmes known as concordancers such as AntConc (Anthony, 2011), WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2008), and Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff, Rychlý, Smrz, & Tugwell, 2004). Although the starting point for analysis will be a statistical output of some sort, for example a frequency list, corpora can also be interrogated qualitatively by studying selected outputs, for example, concordance lines. Generally speaking, CL is interested in studying quantitatively and qualitatively lexical and grammatical patterns across different varieties (e.g. national varieties such as British English), domains (e.g. business communication), or specific genre (business emails). Insights derived from corpus research have increased our understanding of language use by providing empirical evidence for the existence of regularities and patterns that are not immediately visible to the naked eye. As the father of CL John Sinclair once pointedly remarked: ‘The language looks rather different when you look at a lot of it at once’ (Sinclair, 1991, p. 100).

The key analytical tools underpinning most of corpus work are frequency, keywords, collocation, and concordance. These will now be discussed in more detail. In corpus-linguistic terms, frequency refers to the count of items in a corpus, whereby *item* can be a word, a part of speech, or a keyword. Frequency lists are a useful entry point to a corpus in that they can reveal items that occur often (on top of the list) or rarely (towards the bottom of the list). Frequent words can point to certain regularities, which, in turn, can be a sign of importance and salience. Another good way of interrogating a whole corpus is via keywords. In corpus linguistics, a keyword is a word which occurs unusually frequent in a given corpus, as compared to another mostly larger reference corpus (Scott, 2010). The *keyness* of an item is usually established using a test of statistical significance, mostly log-likelihood. Whereas a frequency list indicates absolute or raw frequencies, a keyword list shows relative frequencies and it can be a useful tool in revealing the main themes of the studied corpus. Researchers often categorise retrieved keywords manually into semantic groups in order to see the wider range of topics covered in a given corpus.

Whilst frequency and keyword lists are useful in revealing frequent or unusually frequent items and can signpost major themes, they only show single lexical items and in isolation. We know from studies in phraseology that a single word does not necessarily encompass all the meanings that the word in question has. These often arise from the typical combinations of the word with other lexical items, that is, from collocations and from their use in context. Stubbs (2001, p. 105) gives an example of 'cosy', whose meaning generally tends to be positive, but in the collocation with 'little relationship', it expresses the negative meaning of 'cliquey'. In corpus linguistics, collocation is understood as the co-occurrence of two or more words within a certain span, for example four items to the left and four to the right and a certain cut-off point (e.g. occurring five times or more). A distinction is normally made between co-occurrences that are determined on the basis of raw frequency or significance testing (Barnbrook, Mason, & Krishnamurthy, 2013; McEnery & Hardie, 2012). The latter helps establish the strength of associations, and commonly t-score, mutual information, or log-likelihood is used for that purpose. It needs to be borne in mind that each test favours different types of words and hence yields different results (Baker, 2006, pp. 100–104).

Collocations are very useful pointers of recurrent, typical lexical choices that are frequent and hence preferred or salient in a given data set. Such recurrent preferences are not just a matter of individual choices, but largely reflect established practices and evaluations and are often a means by which communities express, interpret, and evaluate people and actions. For example, Stubbs (2002) shows how the word 'gossip' is mostly used with terms denoting or implying a female speaker highlighting the stereotype that only women gossip. Frequent patterns of co-occurring choices can, therefore, indicate how a phenomenon, group of people, or events are persistently framed in discourse. As Stubbs (2001, p. 35) states, collocations are not simply lexical items, they 'are also widely shared within a speech community' and can act as 'nodes around which ideological battles are fought' (*ibid.*, p. 188).

Finally, corpus researchers can study selected words or phrases in context by examining concordance lines. Concordances are lists with lines that display all occurrences of a search term. The word or phrase is normally positioned in the middle with a few words to the left and to the right. Such a display is known as a KWIC, short for key word in context.

Figure 8.1 provides an example of a random concordance for the plural noun ‘women’ from the COR-OLYMP corpus, which includes press articles published in major national British national newspapers during the London Olympics 2012 (see below). A close examination of concordance lines is a qualitative technique that enables the researcher to discover lexico-grammatical patterns offering clues to the uses and meanings of the search term in context. To illustrate an example, we will have a look at the concordance lines in Fig. 8.1. As can be seen, the term ‘women’ often collocates with the modifier ‘British’, ‘Britain’s’, or ‘Great Britain’s’ highlighting potentially a national bias when referring to female athletes in the context of the Olympic Games. Another interesting pattern is the use of ‘women’ in the second position after ‘men’ providing some evidence for the male-firstness observed in general English usage (Baker, 2014). In this way, a concordance analysis can reveal associations that would otherwise be difficult to detect and could provide evidence for the existence of certain discourses and biases.

The CADS approach utilises the quantitative tools offered by CL, but it extends the methodological paradigm by integrating techniques commonly associated with qualitative discourse analysis in order to understand the discourse in question and its context as much as possible. Alongside frequency or keyword lists, CADS researchers interrogate the data in a variety of ways, for example, by close reading, watching, or listening to its subsets (Partington et al., 2013, p. 12). In most cases, the studied phenomenon is further contextualised by considering and examining its social, political, or historical context (Partington, 2014; Taylor,

N Concordance  
 1 things. To see a packed Wembley stadium watching Britain's women beat Brazil was one such moment. How can I explain to my  
 2 .2.30pm) japanvegyp(olldtrafford,noon) Great Britain's women produced another display that belonged in the category of  
 3 a shoulder and was also ruled out of the Games. Great Britain's women take on Belgium today still unsure if Kate Walsh, their captain,  
 4 in gymnastics in more than a century and medals won by men and women gymnasts on the world stage in the past decade have helped  
 5 in gymnastics in more than a century and medals won by men and women gymnasts on the world stage in the past decade have helped  
 6 moment. How can I explain to my son that football is for men and women when all he sees and reads is men? Well, he knows now. For  
 7 things. To see a packed Wembley stadium watching Britain's women beat Brazil was one such moment. How can I explain to my  
 8 really can become reality." Eight more of the 3,854 tall men and women who initially signed up are competing at London 2012 - another  
 9 members. I don't like to see that." More than 105,000 gay men and women have formalised their relationships, five times more than  
 10 grit and even genius; but not fanatical, drilled armies of sportsmen and women chosen for their big hands and feet. Where this country can  
 11 inexorable passage of time. And in purely national terms, the British women have been fab, medal-winners and also-rans and all. As I write,  
 12 have been fab, medal-winners and also-rans and all. As I write, British women have won 102/3 gold medals, 7A? silvers and 6 bronzes.  
 13 rugby is known, and the ruthless goalball, in which men and women in blindfolds hurtle a heavy ball at each other at up to 60mph.  
 14 inexorable passage of time. And in purely national terms, the British women have been fab, medal-winners and also-rans and all. As I write,  
 15 have been fab, medal-winners and also-rans and all. As I write, British women have won 102/3 gold medals, 7A? silvers and 6 bronzes.  
 16 ... .. Champion in Beijing, Nicole Cooke is one of four British women among the 67 riders taking part in the road race, which begins

Fig. 8.1 Concordance lines of ‘women’ in COR-OLYMP

2014). In contrast to general corpus research, CADS researchers prioritise a comparative approach. As Partington et al. (2013, p. 12) highlight: ‘we are not deontologically justified in making statements about the relevance of a phenomenon observed to occur in one discourse type unless, where it is possible, we compare how the phenomenon behaves elsewhere’. Comparisons can take different forms. We can compare and contrast one discourse type in different sources, for example, national print newspapers versus political speeches. We can also examine the same discourse produced under different circumstances, for example, during different events. Another type of comparison is a diachronic one, which involves studying a particular type of discourse at different points of time (Marchi, 2010; Taylor, 2010). This enables the researcher to detect changes and shifts over time. Finally, we can combine all the different types of comparison depending on the research questions.

The CADS approach has been successfully used to study a variety of discourses including discourse of science in the British press (Taylor, 2010), the discourse of morality also in the British press (Marchi, 2010), nationalism and language ideologies in the Canadian context (Vessey, 2013), the representations of Islam in the British media (Baker et al., 2013), and the portrait of immigrants in the British and Italian press (Taylor, 2014). Representations of specific events have not thus far been examined by using this methodology. Therefore, the next section presents a case study demonstrating how the CADS approach can be employed to investigate media constructions of events, especially the discourses of identity that underpin such constructions. The focus is on the London Olympics 2012.

## **Discursive Constructions of Identities in Media Reporting During Global Sports Events: The Case of the London Olympics 2012**

This case study is based on the analysis of a large corpus of newspaper articles (COR-OLYMP) that were published in four major national British newspapers with their Sunday publications from 27 July to 12 August 2012 (see Table 8.1). The data was collected using the database Nexis.

**Table 8.1** Corpus data

Corpus	Before	COR-OLYMP	After	Words total
Daily mail/mail on Sunday	1,135,264	1,114,492	1,087,458	3,337,214
Guardian/observer	1,484,057	1,758,387	2,121,963	5,364,407
Times/Sunday times	1,783,546	2,285,999	2,112,689	6,182,234
Sun	597,676	618,901	616,911	1,216,577
Total	5,000,543	5,777,779	5,322,110	16,100,432

Instead of focusing solely on texts that were specifically about London Olympics, the decision was made to retrieve all articles published during this period. This allowed us to assess better the extent to which media construct sports events alongside other newsworthy events and which discourses are foregrounded and backgrounded in this context. Following the comparative CADS credo, we also decided to compare the media reporting diachronically and created two control corpora encompassing articles from the same publications with the same time span, but one year BEFORE and one year AFTER the event. In doing so, we were able to evaluate the impact of mega sports events on the discursive ways in which such events and specifically identities during such events are medially constructed. Table 8.1 shows the data in all three corpora. Because of the unequal sizes of the data sets, results were normalised whenever necessary. The corpora were interrogated using the software programme WordSmith Tools Version 5 (Scott, 2008).

As discussed in Section “The Methodology of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS): Principles and Tools”, frequency lists are a good point of entry into a corpus and thus, the analysis was started by examining and comparing the frequency lists retrieved from the three corpora. We included content words and personal pronouns only, as they are more likely to reveal aspects of identity constructions. Table 8.2 shows the most frequent content items in the three corpora.

Table 8.2 points to a number of lexical items that denote national and gender identities and these seemed worthy of further scrutiny. We begin by examining the item ‘British’, which belongs to the 30 most frequent content items in COR-OLYMP and occurs much lower on the frequency list in the two other corpora. This could suggest that national identity is

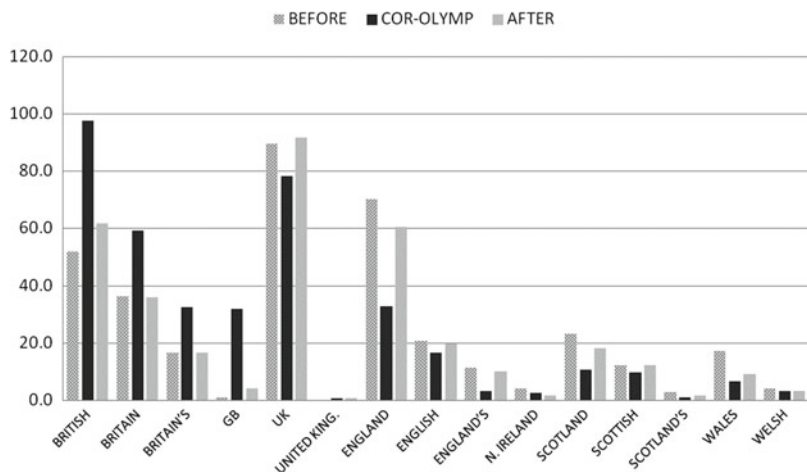
**Table 8.2** The 30 most frequent content words and pronouns in the three corpora

Rank Before	Freq.	NF <sup>a</sup>	COR-		After	Freq.	NF	
			OLYMP	Freq.				
he	33,354	667.0	I	39,572	684.9	he	38,610	725.5
I	29,578	591.5	he	38,413	664.8	I	33,376	627.1
his	26,763	535.2	his	30,403	526.2	his	31,208	586.4
they	18,299	365.9	her	19,681	340.6	said	18,635	350.1
you	16,178	323.5	you	19,235	332.9	you	18,310	344.0
we	14,827	296.5	she	18,614	322.2	we	17,356	326.1
her	12,119	242.4	said	18,265	316.1	their	17,032	320.0
she	11,315	226.3	we	17,388	300.9	her	13,757	258.5
year	9753	195.0	their	16,171	279.9	she	13,057	245.3
my	9296	185.9	my	11,650	201.6	year	11,816	222.0
time	7865	157.3	year	10,716	185.5	my	9874	185.5
new	7463	149.2	time	10,177	176.1	time	9508	178.7
people	7212	144.2	years	8267	143.1	new	9244	173.7
them	7000	140.0	him	8036	139.1	people	8466	159.1
him	6864	137.3	them	7852	135.9	them	8319	156.3
years	6472	129.4	Olympic	7759	134.3	years	8048	151.2
us	5555	111.1	me	7537	130.4	him	7916	148.7
your	5483	109.6	world	7515	130.1	me	6371	119.7
world	5165	103.3	people	7340	127.0	us	6340	119.1
our	5161	103.2	new	7334	126.9	our	6142	115.4
says	4732	94.6	team	6818	118.0	your	6127	115.1
UK	4472	89.4	London	6691	115.8	says	5679	106.7
day	4462	89.2	gold	6598	114.2	made	5333	100.2
week	4338	86.8	your	6576	113.8	make	5263	98.9
make	4336	86.7	us	6236	684.9	day	5194	725.5
way	4331	86.6	our	5831	664.8	way	5169	627.1
made	4179	83.6	British	5643	526.2	old	5162	586.4
old	4138	82.8	day	5324	340.6	world	4911	350.1
London	4101	82.0	good	5066	332.9	UK	4885	344.0
home	4006	80.1	final	5056	322.2	week	4864	326.1

<sup>a</sup>Here, the normalised frequencies (NF) were calculated using 100,000 as the base of normalisation. This base of normalisation was used throughout

more emphasised during global sports events such as Olympic Games. To further test this claim, we compared the use of other typical items denoting national and regional identities used in the UK to see whether 'British' was preferred during the London Olympics.

Figure 8.2 demonstrates a considerable increase in the use of 'British', 'Britain', and 'Britain's' in COR-OLYMP. Together with 'UK' and 'GB',



**Fig. 8.2** Terms denoting national and regional identity in the three corpora

these were the preferred national terms. The frequent use of GB in the context of London Olympics is not surprising, as the acronym was used in the name of the British national team. Terms denoting regional identities such as ‘England’, ‘English’, ‘Scotland’, and ‘Scottish’ experienced a drop, in some cases substantial. Overall, the major national newspapers seem to promote the concept of nation-state or big-state nationalism more strongly than aspects of regional identity, as evidenced by the lesser attention given to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland in all three data sets. The London Olympics appears to have reinforced this trend. Thus, the data provides some empirical evidence suggesting that media reporting during global sports events effectively strengthen the concept of national identity and nation-state.

Other interesting items appearing on the frequency lists are words denoting gender. For example, the two masculine pronouns ‘he’ and ‘his’ belong to the most frequent items in all three corpora. It is notable that these pronouns always appear before the feminine pronouns ‘she’ and ‘her’, suggesting that in the media men receive more attention than women. This is consistent with previous corpus research that revealed a significantly higher proportion of male than female terms in general language usage in English (Baker, 2014; Pearce, 2008; Sigley & Holmes,



2002) and in the British media (Caldas-Coulthard & Moon, 2010). However, when we compare the normalised frequencies of the female pronouns across the three subcorpora, an interesting result emerges. In the BEFORE Corpus, ‘she’ occurs 226.3 times per 100,000 words. In COR-OLYMP, the number rises to 322.2 and in the AFTER Corpus declines again to 245.3. The same pattern applies to the use of the pronoun ‘her’ as well as other terms denoting male and gender identities. Figure 8.3 shows the trends for ‘woman’, ‘women’, ‘man’, and ‘men’. Thus, although the traditional order was still maintained, the London Olympics seems to have had some impact on the gender representations in that media gave more attention to women as opposed to the time before and after the event.

This makes gender an interesting area for further investigation. For reasons of space, this cannot be perused here in greater depth. To illustrate the advantages of corpus tools and methods, this section focuses just on one example, that is, the collocations used with the term ‘women’. Table 8.3 demonstrates the strongest collocations as measured by t-score and retrieved within a –5 and +5 span. Only content words were included. As can be seen, items associated with ‘women’ vary across the corpora. In the BEFORE and AFTER corpus, women frequently co-occur with

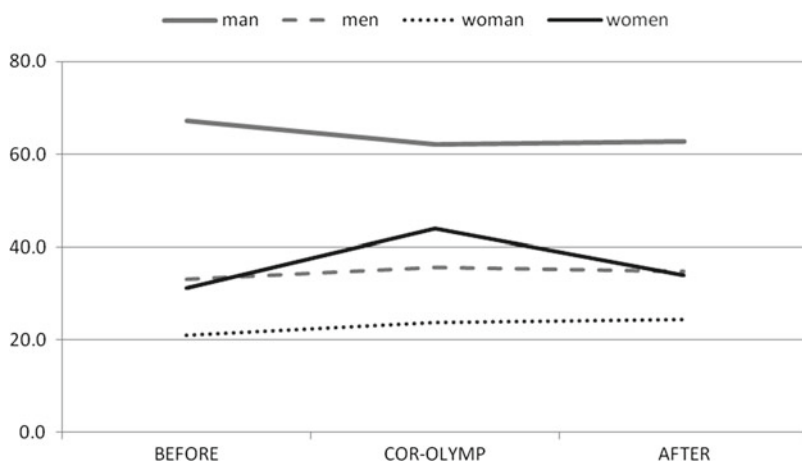


Fig. 8.3 Distribution of gendered lexical items

**Table 8.3** The 20 strongest collocations of ‘women’ across the three corpora

Before	COR-OLYMP	After
men, their, young, children, said, aged, number, think, older, pregnant, look, make, girls, age, beautiful, middle, loose, time, want, our	men, young, first, Britain’s, British, said, she, can, sport, team, games, Olympic, final, make, her, gold, he, you, time, group	men, young, children, said, he, can, work, number, she, hair, rape, violence, pregnant, say, girls, sex, older, British, group, threats

lexical words pointing to reproductive status (‘pregnant’, ‘children’), appearance (‘beautiful’, ‘hair’), and age (‘young’, ‘aged’, ‘older’). In the AFTER corpus, we also find references to crime (‘violence’, ‘rape’) and sex (‘sex’). Previous corpus research on gender representations in the media points to the same tendency: women seem to be more strongly associated with appearance, sexuality, and violence in contrast to men, who tend to be linked with careers, roles, and status (Caldas-Coulthard & Moon, 2010; Pearce, 2008).

Of interest, however, is the absence of the ‘regular’ associations with women in the media reporting during the London Olympics. The collocations that appear in COR-OLYMP are, in some sense, ‘unusually’ positive and point to different discourses about women. Firstly, we find here two modifiers ‘Britain’s’ and ‘British’ suggesting that in the context of global sports events women are strongly attributed with the nation-state. Interestingly, the association between Britain and women appears predominantly in the context of celebrating sporting success. A quick look at concordance lines in Fig. 8.4 illustrates this point: the attribution with ‘British’ and ‘Britain’ is clearly linked with winning, especially gold medals.

In the concordance lines, we find a number of positive associations highlighting physical strength (‘beat’ in line 4), persistence (‘secured their first Olympic medal’ in line 7) and power (‘had the race under control’ in line 9)—attributes that are more commonly associated with men and rarely with women (Pearce, 2008). Frequent references to ‘British’ and ‘Britain’s’ when describing women provide yet another evidence for the robustness of the concept of nationalism in the context of global sports events. The example also shows that women are more likely to be positively

N Concordance  
 1 gave thanks to Heather Stanning and Helen Glover. The first British women ever to win Olympic gold in rowing had done so with  
 2 a shoulder and was also ruled out of the Games. Great Britain's women take on Belgium today still unsure if Kate Walsh, their  
 3 silver in the road race on Sunday, came in tenth. Great Britain's women produced another display that belonged in the category of  
 4 things. To see a packed Wembley stadium watching Britain's women beat Brazil was one such moment. How can I explain to my  
 5 FOR FIGHTING SPORTS Russia 18 medals WOMEN Britain's women athletes have won ten golds, putting them ahead of France,  
 6 passage of time. And in purely national terms, the British women have been fab, medal-winners and also-rans and all. As I  
 7 Hockey's tale of two Kates ended with a victory hug as Britain's women secured their first Olympic medal in 20 years yesterday.  
 8 Winning an Olympic medal is the headiest cocktail of all. BRITISH women have a distinguished pedigree in modern pentathlon. When  
 9 to row what Hosking later described as a "time trial". The British women had the race under control from a long way out, rowing with  
 10 men's 200m individual medley, qualifying in joint seventh. Britain's women freestylers put up a spirited show in the 4x200m relay final.  
 11 and English pairs partner Helen Glover became the first British women rowers ever to be crowned Olympic champs. They  
 12 with William Hill that this would be the first Games in which British women won more medals than the men. As it stands, with a week of  
 13 Lewis's bronze in the heptathlon was the only medal won by British women, the gender gap has been closing with each Games. But a  
 14 her bet and she has statistics on her side. There are more British women taking part in this Olympics than ever (262) and they make  
 15 Olympic legacy should be that the media do not forget that British women do sport and do it well. The Guardian could lead the pack

**Fig. 8.4** Concordance lines of 'British women' and 'Britain's women' on COR-OLYMP

represented, if they win the highest award, that is, a gold medal. The frequent collocations of 'gold' and 'first' (see Table 8.3) provide further support for this claim. To test this assumption, we will now look briefly at the collocation profiles of two female athletes Jessica Ennis, who won a gold medal in the women's heptathlon, and Rebecca Adlington, who received two bronze medals in swimming. For reasons of space, we focus on collocations surrounding the surnames of the athletes only.

The first fact to note is that 'Ennis' (as the surname of Jessica Ennis) appears 745 times as opposed to 'Adlington', which occurs 384 times. This suggests that Jessica Ennis as a gold winner received almost double amount of attention in the media than the double bronze medallist Rebecca Adlington. Table 8.4 shows the 30 strongest associations with both terms.

A number of interesting patterns emerge from the lists. Jessica Ennis is mentioned together with other male gold medallists, whereas Rebecca

**Table 8.4** Collocations of 'Ennis' and 'Adlington' in COR-OLYMP

Ennis	Adlington
Heptathlon, best, Jessica, Farah, Wiggins, Rutherford, Mo, GB, hurdles, Bradly, poster, Olympic, stadium, stormed, medal, jump, gold, Sheffield, champion, winning, Britain's, girl, star, greatest, refused, record, final, pressure, British, team	Rebecca, freestyle, swimmer, swum, bronzes, swimmers, Beijing, medals, bronze, Olympic, swimming, pool, women's, won, champion, crowd, fifth, finished, win, double, race, herself, Miss, behind, goes, final, took, set, world, her

Adlington is not. Ennis is also described in superlatives as ‘best’ or ‘greatest’, which reflects her status as a champion. We also find references to ‘Britain’s’ and ‘British’, suggesting that her sporting success was framed in the national terms—Ennis as incorporation of the nation’s success. Interestingly, the two modifiers do not appear in the vicinity of ‘Adlington’ implying that bronze medallists do not ‘enjoy’ the same status. The collocations occurring with ‘Adlington’ point to her sport discipline and we do not find here any instances of positive associations. Interesting is the grammatical collocation ‘herself’, which occurs five times in the vicinity of ‘Adlington’. As a reflexive pronoun, herself ‘reflects back’ on the subject and is the object of the verb to which the action of the verb is ‘done’. It can also be used as an intensifier. Studying the context in which ‘herself’ collocates with ‘Adlington’ points to a rather negative discourse expressing either an apologetic stance and desperation, as the examples of expanded concordances below show:

By now people were starting to panic, not least Adlington herself. Sensing that the situation demanded it, *she tried to make a move. But she just could not summon up the change of pace she needed.*

But she cruised past Adlington, who *then found herself trying to hang on to bronze.*

But look just a little harder and you will find that Adlington, as she said herself, has ‘swum faster than this all year’. *‘I would have liked the time to have been a bit quicker, I’m not going to lie’, Adlington said. ‘I’ve done that time all year and I don’t know what happened. Everything kind of caught up with me’.*

Although the collocation profiles of the two athletes differ considerably, there is some similarity. Striking is the use of the term ‘girl’ as a collocation of ‘Ennis’ and ‘Miss’ in references to ‘Adlington’. Referring to an adult woman as a girl can be seen as patronising and trivialising. Previous corpus research has noted the tendency of the terms ‘woman’ and ‘girl’ being used synonymously, whereas this does not seem to apply to ‘man’ and ‘boy’ (Taylor, 2013). The representation above echoes this tendency and supports a claim suggested by the linguist Dwight Bolinger (1980, p. 100) that ‘a female never grows up’. Also, the use of ‘Miss’ in references to Rebecca Adlington shows that women are likely to be described by pointing explicitly to their marital status—something which has also

been identified as a common feature in descriptions of women in the media.

The above analysis has revealed a number of notable discursive patterns and tendencies of media reporting during the London Olympics. The frequent use of items such as 'British' and 'Britain' and decline in regional terms exemplify how global sports events are used to boost national unity and the concept of nation-state. The persistent association with 'British' and 'women' provides further evidence for the dominance of national bias, which frames female success predominantly as a symbol of 'national' success. In terms of gendered discourses, we can note a pattern of 'unusually' positive representations of women achieving almost parity with me. However, as the analysis of collocations profiles of Jessica Ennis and Rebecca Adlington exemplary shows, only those women who achieve the highest award are likely to be positively represented. The analysis also demonstrates that despite the generally positive and less gendered representations, the media still tend to adhere to certain trivialising and patronising tendencies when referring to adult women. The use of 'girl' or 'Miss' illustrate this pattern.

Overall, the results seem to point to salient discursive patterns regarding identity constructions during a global sport event. However, the analysis focused on a single case and limited number of examples. Thus, the identified patterns need to be verified by comparing, for example, female with male representations or representations of sportspeople of various ethnic backgrounds. Also, to see whether such discourses are typical for global sports events, a comparison with other sports events would be necessary.

## Conclusions

The above analysis serves as a case study to illustrate how the CADS approach can be effectively used to study media constructions of global sports events. By scrutinising frequency lists and studying collocation profiles of selected lexical items denoting national and gender identity, we were able to identify prominent discourses around identity that the British press foregrounded during the London Olympics 2012. The comparative

CADS approach has also allowed us to assess the saliency of such discourses: comparing the media constructions of the London Olympics with media reporting during the same time but one year before and one year after has demonstrated the prominence of nationalistic bias and positive female representations, though the latter appeared to serve more nationalistic tendencies rather than gender equality (Wensig & Bruce, 2003). For reasons of space, the analysis focused on selected analytical tools and procedures. Issues involved in corpus creation, data sampling, and the use of statistical tests were not considered and readers are encouraged to consult, for example, McEnery and Hardie (2012) and Baker (2006) to find out more about these important aspects.

All in all, one of the major benefits of the CADS approach is its quantitative basis. Examining large amounts of textual data enables the researchers to produce empirical results that are more generalisable than those obtained from studying a few texts. It also fosters a greater distance to the data and increases objectivity of research in that it can help reduce some of the cognitive biases such as the primacy effect or confirmation bias (Baker, 2006, pp. 10–12). Moreover, corpus analysis enables us to see frequent and repeated patterns that may not be immediately visible to naked eye perusal or simply run counter to our intuition leaving room for serendipitous effects (Partington, 2014). Repeated associations are important because they help reveal discourses that are continually and systematically disseminated, thus, increasing our understanding of the recurrent or dominant ways of talking. It is precisely the ability of a corpus approach that it allows us ‘to see which choices are privileged, giving evidence for mainstream, popular or entrenched ways of thinking’ (Baker et al., 2013, p. 25). Also, by combining the quantitative corpus tools with qualitative discourse-analytical techniques, the CADS approach permits us to study our data comprehensively. By retrieving frequencies or keywords, we can identify general salient patterns in our corpus. These can be subsequently examined in more depth using qualitative techniques, for example, close readings of selected stretches of discourse via concordance lines. In this way, we may discover much more subtle and nuanced meanings that a list of keywords or collocations cannot reveal.

Despite its numerous benefits, a corpus methodology such as CADS has some limitations, especially when adopting the approach to study events

and their mediatisation. Firstly, CADS is mostly concerned with texts and words, and leaves out the visual type of data. This could be a problem when examining media constructions of events, for which the visual component is central. A combination of CADS with a multimodal analysis would benefit future corpus-based research, though arguably this presents methodological and analytical challenges. Also, CADS is primarily interested in studying press data. Given the growing importance of social media in disseminating events of all kinds, future research needs to give more attention to the online mediatisation of events. Finally, corpus-based analyses of media often assume that frequent discourses or representations are influential and widely shared in society. Whilst this may be true, corpus-based results are rarely tested against views and attitudes of the wider public. The issue of reception and production of media contents is indeed rather neglected. Thus, another useful direction for future corpus-based research would be integration and triangulation of corpus methods with other qualitative and quantitative techniques used in social sciences, for example, ethnography or surveys. This would allow the researchers to validate some of the insights derived from corpus-based analyses, which, in turn, could offer invaluable insights into how discourses that underlie media representations of events really 'work' in a given discourse community.

## Notes

1. This example refers to Linford Christie, whose win in the 1988 Olympic Games was contested on the grounds that he may have used performance enhancing drugs. He was eventually cleared of any wrongdoing.
2. There has been a great deal of debate regarding the status of Corpus Linguistics. Some researchers see CL as a new theoretical approach to language, whereas others argue that CL is more of a methodological package (see Partington et al., 2013). The author of this chapter agrees with the view expressed by Partington et al. (2013, p. 7) that the use of corpora and corpus tools is not in itself a new theoretical advance in Linguistics, but it certainly is a new methodological paradigm that has the potential to revise some of the existing theories or concepts and lead to new ones.

3. When comparing frequency results obtained from corpora of unequal sizes, it is important to normalise the raw frequencies to a common base, for example, per million words. Normalised frequencies (NF) are calculated using the following simple formula:  $NF = (\text{number of examples of the word in the whole corpus} \div \text{size of corpus}) \times (\text{base of normalisation})$ . Here, the normalised frequencies (NF) were calculated using 100,000 as the base of normalisation. This base of normalisation was used throughout.

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# 9

## Examining Paraspport Events Through the Lens of Critical Disability Studies

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### Studying Major Events: A Research Predicament

The majority of scholarly research on events has tended towards economic impact assessments, and snapshot analyses. This has led to significant critique based on concerns over the value of these short-term assessments of events, which may not offer accurate evaluations of event outcomes over the longer term. This type of approach also raises questions about the neutrality of the research produced and the lack of translation between what events are *said* to have contributed to a host economy and what material differences the host community has experienced. Additionally, from a critical perspective, these short-term studies often fail to gain access to the mechanics, subtleties, and long-term strategies involved in managing and delivering events. We argue that in order to capture a more complete picture of the landscape, it is necessary to conduct studies that represent multiple and overlapping facets of the events. This includes a greater focus on developing methodological tools suitable for studying the social dimension of major sporting events. In studying the social

value of major sport events, we want to emphasize the importance of longitudinal and/or concatenated research strategies—including those that report beyond the period of the event itself and also interact closely with the users or beneficiaries of research. Thus, the focus of this chapter is on how event-related research can employ a critical longitudinal evaluative approach, framed around our current research endeavour examining the leveraging strategies and tactics associated with different types of disability sport events. We emphasize the underlying critical theoretical approach emphasizing events as valuable agendas for social change, and the need to assess these over a longer period of time than the typical snapshot studies.

## From Impacts to Process Evaluation

Extensive research has been conducted in exploring the immediate impacts on host cities/regions of hosting large-scale events (e.g. Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2005; Jones, 2001a; Preuss, 2005; Rowe & McGuirk, 1999); however, a growing number of researchers now give consideration to the long-term impacts of these events (Dickson, Benson, & Blackman, 2011; Dwyer et al., 2005; Foley, McGillivray, & McPherson, 2011; Kaplanidou et al., 2013; Ramchandani, 2012). This research has focused on features most commonly referred to as event ‘legacies’. Much of this so-called legacy research has concentrated primarily on large-scale events such as the Olympic Games, with a strong emphasis on economic impacts. Yet, many critical scholars have suggested that the practices surrounding the use of large-scale sporting events for civic and economic development hold little value for local communities and local development activities (Hiller & Wanner, 2011; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Misener & Mason, 2010). As a result, there is a growing demand from governments, citizens, and sport organizations to show how these events can positively impact community development and broader social outcomes, such as empowering disadvantaged groups, enhancing local community infrastructure, and increasing community

and sport participation (Carey, Mason, & Misener, 2011; Cashman, Toohey, Darcy, Symons, & Stewart, 2004; Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Jones, 2001b; Misener & Mason, 2006, 2009). Hence, the emphasis of legacy programmes has shifted towards the generation of sustainable social legacies from events to ensure broader community benefits.

As the research focus has turned towards more broad-based community benefits, there has also been a concomitant shift in the rhetoric surrounding the impact of events from legacy to examining the leveraging of events (Chalip, 2004; Grix, 2012; O'Brien & Chalip, 2007). Some have argued that this shift in understanding is purely theoretical in nature, in particular as legacy frameworks have attained a great deal of attention, especially within the Olympic Movement where the event is considered to produce primarily positive outcomes that counterbalance the criticism often associated with the hosting of large-scale events. The problem is that host Organizing Committees often view legacy as a secondary or tertiary goal of the event, these committees disband soon after the event, and event organizers fail to see the importance of strategically developing tactics that fit with the host service mix (Chalip, 2014). To counterbalance these concerns, leveraging is about strategically developing programmes, tactics, and processes that naturally fit with the host's economic, social, and environmental goals. In this way, the event becomes the catalyst to spur on specific outcomes that align closely with the context of local development.

Leveraging might be easily construed as a collection of strategies developed to create a particular legacy. But the key is to understand how these strategies and tactics fit within the overall service and marketing mix, and help bring about some level of social change. In this way, it is critical to move beyond the typical estimates of impact, such as those concerned with economic impact, to examine the particular outcomes of strategies and tactics, alongside the tactics themselves. This requires a shift in the way that event-related research is undertaken. In order for such analyses to be considered, it is necessary to undertake longitudinal or concatenated studies that take into account multiple, overlapping perspectives of the event over a longer period of time.

## Assessing Leveraging of Paraspport Events: Case Study

Two recent book publications, one by Cashman and Darcy (2008), and the other by co-investigator Legg and Gilbert (2011), both theoretically support the premise that hosting parasport events (sporting events for persons with disability) have some positive impact on community infra-structural accessibility and enhancing disability awareness, yet there is a shortage of scholarly evidence in the area to support these claims (Le Clair, 2011; Misener, Darcy, Legg, & Gilbert, 2013). As per the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with a Disability, all persons with a disability should have the right to participate in recreational, leisure, and sporting activities, as these activities can contribute to physical well-being, increasing social inclusion, improving employment prospects, and enhancing self-esteem. Yet, there is a lack of existing empirical evidence demonstrating the potential of parasport events to enhance community accessibility and influencing attitudes about disability, which is compromising the effectiveness of any strategies aimed to create social legacies from these events (Weed & Dowse, 2009). In essence, the event in and of itself is not enough to automatically create a sustainable outcome, but rather it is what cities and regions do to plan and implement strategies to maximize the opportunities presented by these events in order to create durable social legacies (Grix, 2012; Taks, Green, Misener, & Chalip, 2014; Ziakas, 2014).

Given our commitment to understanding the social value of major sporting events and the need to engage in research beyond the event project itself, in the remainder of this chapter we illustrate, with reference to a real case study exemplar, how a multi-methods approach can be implemented for longitudinal assessment of event leveraging. In this particular case, multiple, overlapping methods were employed pre-, during, and post-events as a means of addressing the complexity of parasport leveraging and legacy outcomes. Further, we replicate the design across two different event cases to highlight the need for critical comparative work, an area of investigation that is sorely lacking in event research, but even more so in disability sport event studies (Misener et al., 2013).

Within any research project it is important to align research methodology and methods to a conceptual framework. In this case study, we ‘framed’ our research perspective using Critical Disability Theory (CDT). The CDT ‘lens’ governed the choice of research aims and objectives for the study, because it focuses on the wider structures and attitudes that act as barriers to persons with a disability from maximizing their opportunities for full participation in community life. Chadwick (1996) has argued that the disability community is one of the largest minority groups vulnerable to social exclusion and marginalization, too often forced into poverty, unemployment, and social isolation through dependence on the state. This is the result of systemic discrimination based on ablest assumptions, institutions, and structures that disadvantage persons with a disability. The predominant understanding of disability as an objective scientific construct presupposes that the disability or impairment is purely within the individual and can objectively be measured or cured through medical intervention. This approach places emphasis purely on the individual at the heart of understanding disability and ignores the social and physical environment. However, a more predominant understanding is that disability is socially constructed in relation to broader societal structures. In other words, social and environmental barriers, such as inaccessible buildings and transport, discriminatory attitudes, and negative cultural stereotypes are ‘disabling’ people with impairments (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Barnes, 2003). Critical disability theorists argue that this social model of disability, which frames disability as a complex political and social creation based on barriers, prejudice, and exclusion created by society (purposely or inadvertently) are the ultimate factors defining disability (e.g. Barnes, 2003; Chadwick, 1996; Devlin & Pothier, 2006; Prince, 2004).

For the purposes of our research, we framed our interrogations around the four conceptual areas that can present societal barriers to inclusion: (1) *attitudes*—emphasizing the negative attitudes, or lack of understanding towards disability, that impair opportunity; (2) *social support*—focusing on the importance of appropriate aids, resources, and enabling mechanisms to increase accessibility and opportunity; (3) *information*—in terms of the suitability of formats (e.g. braille) or levels (e.g. simplicity of language) or coverage (e.g. explaining issues others may take for



granted); and (4) *physical structures*—emphasizing universal design principles which focus on the broadest levels of accessibility in physical spaces (Thomas, 2004). Using these areas as a guide, we framed our research questions around the ways in which an event can present a potentially powerful mechanism for addressing inequality and the broader social processes that can enhance quality of life through increased participation in community life. This CDT lens offers a conceptually coherent means of exploring both exclusionary social structures and the ways in which events are being used to enable greater levels of community participation of persons with a disability. It also allows for increased theorization on critical disability theory as being advanced by numerous scholars in the field of sport, disability, and events (DePauw, 1997, 2000; Howe, 2008; Misener, 2015; Shapiro & Pitts, 2014).

Informed by CDT, our overarching research aim was to examine how the hosting of different forms of sport events for persons with a disability are leveraged to create opportunities for community participation, and influence community attitudes towards disability. In order to make this aim more achievable, we set out a number of more specific research objectives emphasizing the conceptual areas of CDT: (1) to compare and contrast social legacy tactics, strategies, and programmes (i.e. leveraging associated with social and physical space); (2) to analyze spectator, volunteer, and community members' attitudes and awareness of disability (pre- and post-event); and (3) to develop a framework for leveraging parasport events to benefit participation opportunities across the four areas of CDT.

## Methodological Preoccupations

In order to move away from the snapshot evaluations typical of events, we employed a multiple case study longitudinal replication design (Yin, 2008). Given that part of our preoccupation was with the differences in the structure of events for parasport, we were interested in longitudinal comparisons of the leveraging strategies and outcomes of these particular approaches. For the purpose of comparison, two large-scale sporting events were chosen: the 2014 Commonwealth Games (Glasgow, Scotland) and the 2015 Pan/Para-pan American Games

(Toronto, Ontario, Canada). These events were chosen due to their similarity in size and scale, and because they represent unique cases in terms of how they involve para-athletes in competition. One event is integrated, where athletes with a disability compete alongside able-bodied athletes (Commonwealth Games) and the other is non-integrated, where the able-bodied and disability events are separated by time and space (Para-pan American Games). Additionally, each of the cities set to host the respective Games had established specific objectives in relation to increasing accessibility and advancing social inclusion for persons with a disability in the host region. Glasgow 2014 (G2014), organizers of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, had a set of policies in place related to the social impact of the event, with one policy focusing specifically on legacy in terms of accessibility and inclusion (Glasgow 2014, 2012). Similarly, Toronto2015 (TO2015), the organizing committee for the 2015 Pan/Para-pan American Games, set out a vision of an inclusive community focused on increasing opportunities for diverse participation in community life (TO2015, 2012). Both in Glasgow and Toronto, the research team had unique access to Organizing Committees and other stakeholders, and along with their scholarly expertise in events, this allowed for a comprehensive, in-depth exploration of social inclusion and accessibility strategies. Further, as per calls in the scholarly literature (e.g. Carey et al., 2011; Foley et al., 2011; Misener & Mason, 2008), an examination of these two events moves academic attention beyond merely questioning *if* events are opportunities to increase social inclusion, to a detailed examination of *how* the events are being used to develop tactics, strategies, and programming related to increasing opportunities for participation of persons with a disability—a particularly underrepresented area of research.

## Tools of the Trade: Methods

An interpretive exploratory case study approach was utilized, allowing for the evolution and refocusing of questions and objectives as the project evolved. Given that we were interested in examining differences between integrated versus non-integrated event outcomes, we utilized a multiple case replication design (Yin, 2008). One of the cases chosen was a

**Table 9.1** Type of evidence used in comparing Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games with the 2015 Para-pan Am Games

Type of evidence	Glasgow 2014	Para-pan Am Games 2015
Documentation	Bid documents Glasgow City Council Scottish Legacy Framework	Bid documents Social capital strategy Evaluation reports
Physical artefacts	Media reports Marketing and promotional materials (brochures, posters)	Media reports Marketing and promotional materials (brochures, posters)
Direct observation	Observation of Glasgow 2014 parasport sport events	Observations of Toronto 2015 Para-pan sport events
Semi-structured interviews	20 Strategic interviews (Organizing Committee, policy, disability sport)	Strategic interview
Targeted interviews: On-site surveys w/ volunteers and spectators	Scale of attitudes towards disabled persons Glasgow household survey	Scale of attitudes towards disabled persons
Focus groups	Glasgow city volunteers post-event	TO2015 volunteers post-event

large-scale event, where athletes with a disability were integrated into the overall sporting programme, and the other large-scale event functions where there is a distinct event for athletes with a disability. Thus, our intention was to compare and contrast these distinctive cases: an integrated and a non-integrated event using the same or very similar methods. Of the six sources of evidence suggested for case studies (Yin, 2008), we used documentation, two types of interviews, physical artefacts, and direct observations. Additionally, we conducted surveys pre- and post-Games focused on the component of attitudes and awareness for three subset groups: volunteers, spectators, and the general public. Table 9.1 provides examples of sources of evidence utilized for our cases.

## Documentation Analysis

In understanding major sporting events, it is important to go beyond the *said*, to consider the *unsaid*, the *seen*, and the *experience*. In other words, in our view it is insufficient to analyze bid documents, local or central

government policy documents, or marketing and promotional materials in isolation from how these ‘texts’ are made real and enacted through the delivery and evaluation of the event itself. That is not to denigrate the importance of analysing the *said*—the official narratives that organizers and other stakeholders promote for the event. For this reason, we started our analysis of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games by assessing official documentation for references to disability and, specifically, to the paraspport component of the Games, drawing on the CDT lens described above. This approach was also repeated around the Para-pan American Games in Toronto in 2015. Each document of interest was collected, subject to detailed interpretive analysis, and then keywords and themes collated in a spreadsheet for further coding.

This process was invaluable in terms of ensuring our level of understanding of the policy environment, and also in generating insights into the particularities of official strategies and plans as they related to the disability sport elements of the Games. We assumed that, given the focus on accessibility and inclusion of the Games, this process would yield important insights regarding the major influencers involved in devising and implementing leveraging tactics. While it certainly provided important details, in the case of Glasgow it was also demonstrative of the ‘policy thick’ environment (Ward, 2003) of legacy planning. In other words, there was much written in the policy rhetoric about intentions to use the Games for broader social outcomes of inclusion and accessibility, but very few concrete courses of action in the plethora of policies. Numerous levels of government, and various organizations, had policy objectives of developing strategic initiatives for leveraging the Games, but for the most part, the Organizing Committee developed this effort centrally without working with these other groups.

## Strategic Interviews

Starting with a documentation analysis provided the research team with a foundation upon which to interrogate further the proclamations made in the pre-event phase. Here, we sought the perspectives of decision makers on how the Games were being utilized for broad-based outcomes. In order to do this, we strategically targeted members of the Organizing

Committee, various levels of government, and disability sport organizations. This approach is important for a broader understanding of the processes associated with leveraging, and also to be clear about the longitudinal process. Given our interest is in more than just the snapshot of pre-Games, we needed to ensure a broad base for understanding how leveraging tactics were being implemented at various levels, because the Organizing Committee ceases to exist once the Games end. This is a critical consideration in event-related research. Further, we needed to be strategic in considering our interviewees and the process associated with understanding the fluidity of data collection. From a CDT perspective, we also needed to ensure that the voices of those most affected by the process were heard and, as such, we also secured access for a focus group session with disability sport leaders to strengthen the research process. Further, our approach was concerned with ensuring that we were in a position to capture the embodied intricacies of event-related developments and associated leveraging tactics. For these interviews, we used an interpretive analysis process, drawing on CDT. Here, it was important for us to be reflective about what was not being said in terms of the critical investigation. It is important for researchers to manage the delicate balance between securing high levels of access for interviews, whilst retaining a critical stand on the subject. Further, as we intend to revisit these perspectives over the longer term, and perhaps go back to some of the interviews given the fluidity of the process, we have to be conscious of the ways in which these perspectives are being represented in all forms. This has often been a concern for those adopting a critical approach to the study of events in that organizers stay away from speaking with critical scholars because of a fear of criticism. Yet, the insights gained from these interactions are highly valuable to the overall processes.

## Observations

In light of the critical social theoretical perspective we took with this research project, the intent of the observations portion was to observe not only the institutionalized practices which reinforce ableist understandings of the sporting environment, but also the disruptive or interpretive

forces in these observations. We were fortunate to have secured high-level on-site access to the events around Glasgow 2014 for our observational work. The research team established a particular protocol for observation, ensuring two researchers were on-site for each observation session for both clarity of purpose and adherence to protocol. It should be noted that while we were fortunate in our access, this was no small feat. We had to work closely with the Organizing Committees and International Governing Bodies to secure this level of Games access. This has often presented a challenge for researchers in accessing event-related research; thus, we acknowledge this constraint and emphasize the need for partnership in securing access.

Our observations were guided by an interpretive framework centering primarily on three of the four critical areas of CDT: information, social support, and physical infrastructure. Our aim was not to conduct an audit in terms of assessing communications or accessible design, but rather to understand more about the event process for what visitors/spectators experienced in the venues. For example, in the case of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, an integrated event, spectators were privy to all events and in each session particular kinds of information about the events were presented. In many cases, Channel 4's LEXI classification system was used as guide for understanding paraspport events, but presented in varied and different ways depending on the venue and sport. We were also fortunate to have access to spectator areas where our conversations with members of the public offered insights into their understanding of the process and their reception of the information presented. Further, social supports were observed in various ways including volunteer accessibility teams to assist visitors with a disability and in-competition support services for para-athletes.

Each member of the research team was responsible for completing observation templates and free-flowing logs about their observations. These were critically analyzed by members of the team and used to understand nuances in the interview and survey data. For example, given that in some venues, little information was given about the paraspport events or athletes, one might expect, according to CDT, that those spectators' attitudes might be less influenced by the event than others who received further information about the parasports.

## Surveys

Given our interest in CDT, which emphasizes the role of attitudes towards persons with disability as being a critical disabling factor, we also needed to consider how to interrogate this perspective. We chose a large-scale survey as a means of gaining insights into some of the most significant issues relating to attitudes, however, whilst recognizing that this approach is somewhat counterintuitive to our interpretive, critical, approach. Given the emphasis of this study on employing a critical theoretical lens, there existed a tension in relying on a positivist tool to secure data within a largely interpretivist project. However, the value of the survey technique is that it enabled us to trace changes over time, thus holding policy makers accountable for their promises vis-à-vis proposed changes. Moreover, we also recognize that attitude change does not equate to behavioural change, which is certainly a limitation of most approaches to evaluating behaviour, highlighting the difficulties with understanding the true nature of social change as a legacy outcome.

We used a highly validated questionnaire, The Scale of Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons (SADP), and adapted it to fit the setting and the events. Certainly, there are pitfalls with this instrument (as there are with all research methods), but it offered a way to address the sensitive subject of attitudes towards disability with our three subset groups: spectators, volunteers, and the general public. Again, we faced a conundrum when attempting to employ the survey because of the controversial nature of the questions and its length. For event-related research, we often have little time to capture information and therefore we had to drastically reduce the number of questions and variables included to make it a realistic option for on-site surveys. We also faced the challenge of capturing attitudes pre- and post-event. Fortunately, we were able to access a sizeable database of volunteers' attitudes before and after the Games because of our relationship with the Organizing Committee. We surveyed volunteers before they attended training so that we could compare attitudes before they had been exposed to detailed information about inclusion and accessibility. As is often the case with event-related research, we could only secure on-site snapshot access to spectators and, thus, had to construct a survey tool that captured the same information as our adapted

SADP with questions specifically about the effect of the event. We utilized on-site intercept tablet-based surveys to collect this data. Again, it is important to note that, typically, researchers are not afforded the opportunity to be in and around event zones for data collection. However, we were given permission to be in the ‘last mile’ in order to conduct our surveys, resulting in a sizeable data set for the Commonwealth Games research which will be duplicated for the Para-pan American Games in Toronto (TO2015).

We faced a different methodological challenge for the general public surveys. We had hoped to conduct general household surveys pre- and post-events to determine the impact of the event on members of the host population. However, we were constrained by a number of factors relating to resources, access to sample sets, and a lack of culture of data participation. In the UK, regional household surveys are more common and thus we were able to tie into an existing survey through our partnerships with local government agencies. In Canada, these types of surveys are much less common and we were unable to secure a similar level of access despite our efforts.

## Methodological Conundrums—Insiders and Outsiders...

We face a number of issues as researchers hoping to study events and the overall process of legacy planning, development, and outcome evaluation. From our perspective, we face one significant challenge relating to the use of CDT in the study to which this chapter refers. None of the research team had direct experience of the challenges of disability or of participating in parasports. While one member of the research team has a long history of experience with persons with disability, parasport, and the Paralympic movement, we recognize that this is not akin to living with disability on a daily basis. We have thus been particularly conscious in recognizing our status as ‘outsiders’ in the evaluative process, when employing a CDT perspective. Further, we have made efforts to ensure that the voices of those most affected by disability have been included in our research efforts and used to inform broader methodological



deliberations. Similarly, we acknowledge that we did not work with persons with a disability in community settings to explore and understand better their lived experience of using Games venues, accessing the city's transport networks, and affording them the opportunity to subject our research findings to critical scrutiny. We intend to explore these aspects more fully in some follow-up focus groups, in particular focusing on the journey of a person with a disability looking to access sport and recreational activities.

On the other hand, we have been afforded a tremendous opportunity through our positioning as, variously, members of the Bid Team (Glasgow 2014), volunteer, observer, and legacy-planning team member. Each member of the research team has played a different role and level of involvement in these aspects, affording us '*insider*' access to personnel, information, and programming associated with each of the Games. In each event a member of the research team was involved as a member of the Bid Team and continued to work closely with the Organizing Committee in the early developments of the various Games aspects. Further, we worked closely with each Organizing Committee and International Federation to secure on-site access to the Games in a cooperative manner. Being close to the activities of bid teams, local and central governments, and the Organizing Committee is a double-edged sword. As critical event researchers, access to the inside of the organizations and events we study can be difficult to secure and, for some, distance provides greater freedom to advance critical commentary without fear of negative ramifications. However, it is our view that event researchers need to be visible within event stakeholder communities, bringing in critical perspectives whilst developing more nuanced analyses of the complex political, economic, and social landscape within which most large sporting events operate.

## Concluding Thoughts

To conclude, we want to draw attention to a number of important issues. As a critical event researcher (and the term itself needs more scrutiny) it is imperative that you engage with broader ontological, epistemological,

theoretical, and methodological preoccupations when studying the event phenomenon—no matter whether your focus is upon sport, culture, or business events. In the research outlined in this chapter, we foregrounded a commitment to a critical disability theory lens, which provided us with a framing device with which to include some activities and discount others. The CDT lens also informed our methodological choices, so that we made decisions about the most suitable tools not based on fixed paradigmatic dogmas alone. Instead, we also selected those approaches which enabled a longer-term view of the phenomenon. As a researcher there can exist a tension between paradigmatic purity (i.e. positivism = quantitative methods) and research objectives. In this chapter, we have tried to demonstrate that a raft of alternative methods can be utilized effectively to gain deeper insights into a phenomenon, but that these need to be chosen carefully and their limitations recognized throughout the process.

Finally, we suggest that critical event researchers need to make stronger efforts to immerse themselves in the event phenomenon they are studying if the credibility of the field is to be strengthened. Though it is sometimes easier to produce critical research from afar, drawing on secondary sources and observing from outside event barriers, we believe that the interactions, exchanges, rebuttals, and reworking of research findings that often results from an engagement with real event actors produces more robust and important outcomes.

## Notes

1. Persons with disabilities may experience functional limitations that non-disabled persons do not experience, but the biggest challenge comes from mainstream society's unwillingness to adapt, transform, and even abandon its 'normal' way of doing things. This so-called 'normal' way of functioning emphasizes an ableist understanding of social structures (Campbell, 2009).
2. LEXI is Channel 4's decoder service developed for the London 2012 Paralympic Games to explain classification system for all Paralympic sports.

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# Part III

## Encountering the Event

# 10

## Participatory Research: Case Study of a Community Event

Rebecca Finkel and Kate Sang

### Introduction

This chapter explores participatory approaches for researching special events. Increasingly, participatory research has been considered an effective research strategy for qualitative social research inquiry because it converges the scientific with the lived experience (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). This practical element lends itself well to the study of event environments. However, it should be noted that in order to examine an event critically, participatory research involves more than simply attending or performing in an event. Although these are activities the researcher may want to pursue in the course of the study, participatory methods involve more systematic, detailed, and in-depth examination in order to produce reliable and valuable data. Participatory research often involves multiple instruments and techniques and is often utilised in conjunction with mixed methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and/or surveys. This chapter sets out the main methodological approaches for participatory research in an events context, including various methods which can be employed.

One of the key elements of participatory research is the equitable partnership approaches to planning and conducting the research in conjunction with community members and/or community-based organisations (Bergold, 2007). Participatory research views research participants as experts in the field of study and, as such, involves them in the knowledge-production process; thus, research projects are co-designed from inception through to completion (Gyi, Sang, & Haslam, 2013). This can be applied to events studies by examining the culture of the event through observation, participation, stakeholder meetings, collective reflection and analysis, and other sensory and visual techniques. The ‘group’ and ‘culture’ being examined are the events audiences and environments. Although events are temporary in nature, anthropological and sociological frameworks can still apply. This has been successfully done in a few events studies through the years (see Finkel, 2006; Goldblatt, 2013) and can be considered a viable and useful methodological approach for events researchers and students to employ for impactful and relevant research.

In the following sections, the central principles of participatory research will first be examined, including the stages and varied models for conducting this type of research. In order to illustrate participatory research techniques further, a case study is then set out based on participatory research conducted at a community event located near Edinburgh, Scotland. The research is based on stakeholder meetings, survey questionnaires, collection of visual data including photos and videos of the event environment and visitors’ experiences, and the researchers’ personal observations and interactions. This can be considered an apt and accessible example for demonstrating this kind of methodology, as community events highlight the societal, economic, and cultural dimensions and discourses of events studies. It also democratises the research process; research is conducted *with* participants, rather than *on* a community.

## Participatory Research Processes

Participatory research follows qualitative methods practices by being an iterative process, incorporating research design, analysis, reflection, and



action. The main distinguishing principle of participatory research is the democratic development of the research agenda, processes, and actions. By co-creating the research with the community, participatory research is often labelled as empowering (Evans & Jones, 2004) because it helps the community to find solutions to problems and improve situations. The role of the researcher is to help move the project forward and lend methodological expertise for conducting the research which the community deems important and would be helpful for the community. The definition of community can be problematic in some instances, however, as it may not be based on geographical boundaries per se. A snowball-sampling approach can be a useful method for finding out about other potential stakeholders from the ones already identified (Bryman, 2001). In the case of special events, it is important for the researcher to understand who the stakeholders are and who constitutes the community for the event. This may be the organisers, the local authorities, the funders, the audiences, the performers/producers, the residents near the event site, or a combination thereof. There is scope for marginalisation if the researcher does not make this an inclusive process, so it is important to take time at the outset to understand the various perspectives and voices that need to be heard and reach out to ensure accessibility for all those with an interest. As van der Riet and Boettiger (2009, p. 1) suggest, the research dynamics, such as 'who talks and who acts in the process; whose knowledge dominates in the process; whose language is used as a medium in the process; and how is the knowledge produced' are all considerations to enable participation. It is not appropriate for the researcher to select who constitutes the community for participation. Also, diverse and broad stakeholder involvement can be advantageous in forging relationships between sometimes disparate groups. It also increases the potential for more comprehensive identification of relevant issues (Krishnaswamy, 2004) by facilitating the expression of multiple voices within the research context (van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

Participatory research seeks to relocate the power in the research relationship from the academic as expert in control of the project to community members driving and shaping the study as part of the research-generating team. Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) argue that there are four types of participation in co-researcher relationships:

*Contractual*—community members are contracted into projects by researchers and act as informants;

*Consultative*—community members are asked for their opinions and consulted by researchers before interventions are made;

*Collaborative*—researchers and community members work together on projects designed, initiated, and managed by researchers;

*Collegiate*—researchers and community members work together as colleagues, combining different skills in a process of mutual learning.

According to Cornwall and Jewkes (1995), most conventional research approaches favour the contractual relationship, which maintains rather than challenges power relations. However, participatory research aims to adopt collegiate approaches. In reality, most participatory research projects rely on multiple types of relationship interactions during the course of the research process. They begin with collegiate relationships being established, but often move into consultative or contractual relations during the analysis and findings stages (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995).

Heeg (Bergold & Thomas, 2012) describes the different stages for the role of the researcher: (1) ‘foreigner’, (2) ‘mobilizer’, (3) ‘service provider’, (4) ‘information provider’, and (5) ‘ally’. In the initial stages, then, it is important for the researcher to establish rapport with the community, or representatives from the community, and develop trust. As the goal is an equitable relationship for knowledge production, respect for what each participant brings to the research should be fostered without uneven power relations entering into the conversations. Acknowledging the social capital of the participants is helpful in delivering fruitful outcomes. Regular interaction, often in person, is useful for establishing this kind of symbiotic relationship at the outset and ensures that shared understanding with a common language is being developed to help progress the research process (Krishnaswamy, 2004).

There are considered to be four main stages of participatory research (Olshansky et al., 2005):

- Reflecting: discuss and define the research problem in an open and inclusive manner

- Planning: researchers create strategic framework for how to work with the community to investigate the research problem
- Acting: methods are carried out for data collection
- Observing: research team analyses the data, often with the community, for knowledge sharing and collective understanding.

There are differing models of participatory research, which share guiding conceptual principles and follow these stages but vary in order to accommodate the landscape and context of the case examples in which the research is applied to achieve the goals of the practical setting.

*Action Research* is associated with social change and a commitment to social justice as well as knowledge creation, where the researcher is conducting research but also working for the improvement of the community (Bell, 2010).

*Community-Based Participatory Research* is a variation of participatory research, which communicates with the community through a 'reference team' in order to facilitate the community-academic research relationship (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998).

*Participatory Learning and Action* emerged in rural settings with a development agenda and emphasis on community-led research and a process of collective analysis and learning (IIED, 1998).

*Feminist Participatory Action Research* places particular emphasis on reflexivity, self-inquiry, subjectivity, as well as equality issues (Maguire, 1987).

Thus, there is potential for significant research impact on policy, practice, and governance through participatory research approaches. In terms of critical events studies, any of these models could be applied depending on what the community would like to achieve with scholarship.

Like all research, ethical considerations need to be taken into account when conducting participatory research. Due to the high degree of responsibility placed on research participants, it is argued that participatory research has the potential to be highly ethical if conducted in accordance with socially responsible principles (Banks et al., 2013). Along with the standard issues which all researchers must take into account (including accountability, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality,

data storage and protection), reflexivity and relationship management are important ethical aspects for participatory research due to the community collaboration aspects of the methodology. Another challenge that may arise is the blurring of boundaries between the researcher and the researched, especially if the researcher is also an activist. It is in these instances where professional practice may be called into question or present dilemmas due to the dual nature of the academic as advocate (*ibid*). Often, this is something to be discussed through the processes of research governance and ethical approval processes within the researcher's institution.

## Case Study of a Community Event

A community-based participatory research project was co-conducted with a community event near Edinburgh, Scotland. In this section, the authors consider the challenges faced as researchers working with a community organisation experiencing a rapid period of change. As participatory research is still an emerging approach being applied to critical events studies, the research undertaken was guided by the principles of the co-operative enquiry model proposed by Reason (1994). This model has four phases:

1. Researchers and participants agree on the area which will be studied.
2. Researchers and participants work together engaging in the mutually agreed actions. Through this, the researchers become both co-researchers and co-subjects (or participants) of the research.
3. The researchers become immersed in the research. This may include implementing a change.
4. Researchers and participants work together to share their experiences of the research and the data and re-evaluate the research questions posed in phase 1.

This treats the relationship between the researcher and the participants in a more equitable manner. A decision must be taken 'not to treat the research partners as *objects* of research, but rather as co-researchers and *knowing subjects* with the same rights as the professional researchers'

(Bergold & Thomas, 2012, p. 30). As such, the research participants are a clear and active part of the research process, and both the academic team and the community members make no claims of objectivity. Indeed, given that the co-operative research process values the expertise of all participants, objectivity is not desirable. As Reason's (1994) stages indicate, research end users are members of the research team engaged in co-conducting the research at each stage. In the following sections, the authors set out each of the phases of the participatory project. A list of key project actors can be seen in Table 10.1.

### Agreeing on the Area of Study

The authors were approached by a Board of Trustees member (B1) of a community organisation (VillageA) to see if scholarly activity could help inform the next stages of development for a particular community event (EventA). The Board member was known to one of the researchers, so rapport was already established; however, the other members of the Board were not known and, thus, trust needed to be developed further with the community representatives for this event. B1 provided the university research team with an idea of where they felt the research team could work together to enhance the effectiveness of the community event. The details of the community event are redacted to preserve anonymity; however, the event occurs at regular intervals throughout the year and

**Table 10.1** Key research actors

Pseudonym	Description
VillageA	Community organisation working with authors
EventA	The monthly community event under study
B1	Authors' main contact on VillageA Board of Trustees (Project Champion)
B2	Community development officer employed by VillageA Board of Trustees during early phase of project
B3	Community development officer employed by VillageA Board of Trustees in latter phase of project
Authors	University research team. Author A (Finkel), expertise in critical events management; Author B (Sang), expertise in participatory research methods

is an integral component of the activities of the Board of Trustees of VillageA. The project brief provided by B1 was to undertake empirical research to identify how EventA could grow in its reach, that is, attract more visitors. Drawing together our expertise and the research brief, the authors developed a proposal, which was presented to the Board of Trustees by B1.

## **Working Together to Identify Mutually Agreed Actions**

Along with providing a research proposal to the Board of Trustees on the areas where research could help their practical efforts, the authors also sought ethical clearance in advance of conducting any field work. Focusing on the research in the context of community outreach helped the researchers to reflect on the potential of their contributions and the meanings of the event to the community. At this stage, the authors were asked to communicate with a recently appointed employee of the Board of Trustees (B2). The authors were advised to liaise directly with B2, as she had been appointed to develop EventA. The authors contacted B2 on the email address provided by B1, but did not receive any replies.

A challenge emerged that should be highlighted, as it demonstrates how working with community organisations does not often go as smoothly as initially anticipated. It also illustrates that members of community organisations cannot be viewed and treated as a single entity. Within organisations and communities, there are multiple perspectives and sometimes disparate motivations, which can add layers of complexity for co-researcher relationships. As Cornwall and Jewkes (1995, p. 1668) suggest, 'In reality, researchers can find competing, changing and contested versions of community needs.' In this instance, although the researchers were approached by a colleague on behalf of the community organisation and made every effort to work equitably with the Board of Trustees as democratic co-producers of knowledge, the authors encountered a member of the community organisation (B2) who appeared to be resistant to working co-operatively. B2 was hired by the Board of Trustees and was intended to be our point of contact and liaison at the event.

However, B2 did not respond to any emails, phone calls, and did not engage with the researchers at events.

During an informal discussion, B1 revealed that B2 had expressed a desire not to work with us, although no reason was provided. As there had been no prior contact between the research team and B2, the reasons for these interpersonal difficulties were therefore unknown. The researchers were professional in all communication and continued to co-produce the requested survey questionnaire and undertook ethnography at the event as initially agreed. Unrelated to the research, B2 and the Board of Trustees parted ways, and the research on this project continued with renewed engagement with the Board of Trustees. This renewed engagement was facilitated by the appointment of a new development officer for the Board of Trustees for VillageA. This new officer (B3) had experience of conducting social research and was keen to work with us to develop the project to ensure it was academically rigorous while maintaining the needs of VillageA. Relationship maintenance and professional communication are necessary to sustain partnerships for successful participatory research. Further, it is important that the motivations for all research participants are understood.

After ethical approval was granted and B1 sought approval from the rest of the Board of Trustees for the researchers to be involved, a face-to-face meeting was set up with the new community development officer (B3) assigned to community engagement. The purpose of this meeting was twofold: firstly, to find out how the researchers could assist with efforts to increase the visitor numbers to Event A and secondly, given the difficult previous relationship, to develop a rapport between the authors and B3. The researchers let B3 take the lead and explain the background of the event, its origins, and the hopes for the future. As a monthly event with competition from events in nearby Edinburgh, there were concerns about the future sustainability and identity of EventA. B3 suggested finding out more about the consumer side of the event would be most helpful in the first instance. This involved finding out more about the events' attendees: where they came from, why they attended, what they liked about and wanted from the event, how this could be improved or changed. The questionnaire was initially developed by the researchers, but then incorporated the Board's suggestions and input in an effort to co-create the sur-

vey instrument. Board support was considered paramount for the success of the research, and the researchers worked with B3 to find out what the Board felt was most important to discover. Once approved by the Board, it was suggested by B3 that the survey was administered to attendees at the event by the Board and community volunteers, as they knew many of the event attendees from the local area. Because of this familiarity, it was felt that attendees would open up and let survey administrators know honestly how they felt about the event, which would increase the reliability and validity of the survey results.

## **Becoming Immersed in the Research Project**

Along with the survey, the authors conducted an ethnographic study of the event employing participant observation and visual methods in the form of photographs and video. Further, as with previous participatory research, the researchers kept detailed research diaries which also form part of the data (Gyi et al., 2013). Attending the event multiple times helped to confirm initial impressions and also provided multiple observations of the event in terms of attendees, vendors, entertainment, and the use of event spaces. Our field notes showed that the visitor volume of the event was seasonal but also was affected by the presence of nearby events. For example, a charity cake sale near EventA seemed to encourage increased attendance during one of our visits. The diary notes also suggest that visitors were interacting with each other rather than visiting the stalls at the event. The photographs revealed clusters of people socialising in the open public spaces more than the areas around the stalls. As B1 had suggested, the social aspect of village life which could be gained through attendance at the event seemed to be as important to visitors as the stalls. Performances, such as live music by an amateur community orchestra and local school groups, also reinforced the community nature of EventA. On one visit, a fundraiser for the school was seen to increase attendance due to people supporting the performing children.

These field notes were conveyed to B3 in order to compare with the survey results. As outsiders from the community, the researchers viewed the event from a different lens than the predominantly local commu-



nity survey respondents. However, this helped to formulate a more holistic view of the event for the Board to consider when looking to make changes in the future, especially as one of their objectives was to draw in attendees from further afield.

The authors' field notes during this phase of the project reveal our own reactions to EventA, as we were both researchers and consumers of the event. Notes reveal that while the event was welcoming, on behalf of the stall owners, it was difficult for us to interact with members of the Board of Trustees. This was mostly the result of the dual role of Board members, both as researchers and as working at the event. Further, working with B3 was complicated by her part-time status and conflicting priorities.

### **Working Together to Share Their Experiences of the Research and the Data and Re-evaluate the Research Questions Posed in Phase 1**

At the time of writing, our involvement with the project has ceased. Working with B3, the authors were able to develop a questionnaire which was administered by members of the Board of Trustees. Through informal discussions with B1, it was revealed that seasonal effects of research need to be considered. The event is open air, and the poor weather during the course of the project resulted in difficulties in conducting the survey. For example, B1 commented that her hands became cold while helping visitors to the event complete the survey. While surveys can allow for large amounts of data to be collected from a range of people, it is important that those undertaking such research at events consider their practicality.

As with other participatory research, the co-researchers (in this case the community organisation) took full ownership of the project. While this is a sign of a successful participatory project, it complicates the extent to which the authors were able to be fully updated on developments with the project. The Board of Trustees did not share the results of the surveys with the authors, so we were unable to provide suggestions on how the resulting data could be used. However, B1 has approached one of the

authors with a request to join the Board of Trustees, suggesting that this lack of communication is not the result of a desire to sever the relationship. At the current stage of the project, it is not possible to know to what extent the participatory research project achieved the initial aim of increasing visitor numbers. Further, as B1 reflected, all of the Board of Trustees were volunteers with a range of external priorities. Therefore, EventA was of less concern than other priorities, for example, members' own employment or the financial planning for VillageA. However, informal contact with B1 suggests that working with us was a useful exercise for the Board of Trustees. Knowledge gained for the Board of Trustees includes:

An understanding of the importance of their development officer and the extent to which that person's priorities are aligned with the organisation's.

The limitations of standard research approaches, for example questionnaires, for collating data on visitor experiences. This is in part due to the difficulties of undertaking social research outside due to the Scottish weather.

The need to broaden the range of perspectives on the Board of Trustees. This has resulted in a recruitment drive to include members from outside VillageA.

Recent email and informal communications with B1 suggest that VillageA's activities have grown considerably in the previous 12 months. This includes the securing of a grant to employ a larger number of community event workers. EventA is currently one of a number of events organised by VillageA in an attempt to support the local community.

## **Authors' Lessons Learned**

In the following section, we consider our own reflections on the research process based on research diaries and our informal interactions.

Maintaining relationships with the key research actors was difficult. One of the authors had regular contact with B1 through avenues outside of the project, and this allowed the project to continue. However,

interactions with B3, while productive, were difficult to maintain due to her part-time status and EventA being one of many competing priorities.

VillageA was able to claim full ownership of the project, which indicates the success of the participatory element. However, this sense of ownership extended to reluctance to share research findings with the authors.

As external organisational actors, we were unaware of the tensions within the organisation. This was illustrated by B2's reluctance to work with us. Members of VillageA retained discretion as to the reasons for this difficulty and B2's departure from the organisation. As such, we were not able to work with B2 to overcome the difficulties and find a mutually agreeable way forward. One of the author's contact with B1 ensured that the project continued beyond this. This demonstrates the importance of a strong relationship between university research teams and the organisational champion.

Undertaking this participatory project while maintaining full-time academic posts resulted in a conflict of priorities, particularly in relation to time.

## **Suggestions for Participatory Researchers**

Develop research relationships based on honesty and mutual respect. This includes being receptive to differing perspectives.

Set expectations at the outset. If time and resources are likely to become an issue, make sure this is highlighted. This leads to fewer disappointments later in the project.

Ensure inclusionary and accessible practices are being conducted throughout the project by keeping communication channels open.

Agree to the aims and objectives of the project and collectively identify what outcomes would be beneficial for everyone. Also discuss what methods would work best for data collection and set out who is responsible for what in order to avoid confusion or conflict.

Build in time to reflect, evaluate, and learn from one another. An integral component of this is the collection of data. This includes keeping research diaries reflecting on all aspects of the project. These notes are data in themselves and will help to reflect on your own role in the relative success in overcoming challenges during the course of the project.

Although the goal is to make an impact, not all participatory research can instigate social change in the short term. Treat each project as a chance to make a positive difference and take on board lessons learned to improve practice for the next time.

Be open to what a 'successful' project may look like. While academics have certain priorities (publishing!), this is not a priority for community event partners.

## Conclusions

Critical events studies is still an emerging field; thus, there has been more scholarly investigation utilising participatory research approaches on related topics, such as sport management, tourism, and cultural studies. However, participatory research in sport management has mainly focused on physical activity, health, and nutrition and not as much has been undertaken on sporting events to date. Participatory research has been utilised on numerous occasions to study tourism topics, especially in relation to social change agendas. This is especially true regarding community-based participatory research approaches with regard to rural and developmental tourism (see Guevara, 1996; Simmons, 1994; Wearing & McDonald, 2002) and ecotourism (see Ellis, 2003). A gap in the literature exists regarding events tourism; thus, critical events scholars can learn from these past studies in order to pursue further inquiry in this area. Indeed, there is scope for future research given the increase in the number of international events and the widespread impact of these events on numerous communities. Cultural organisations and academics have conducted participatory research in order to understand the impacts of art spaces on communities (see Pain, 2004) as well as the development of the creative industries (see Haseman, 2006). Where festivals and smaller-scale events fit in with this also is an area for further examination.

Due to the relationship aspects of participatory research, it can often take more effort and a longer time to establish compatibility for academic-community partnerships. Students who want to use this as a methodological approach for dissertations and other projects should

keep in mind that it can be time-consuming to negotiate access, build relationships, and conduct a solid piece of research using participatory methods. Forging reliable two-way communication channels can often require consistent maintenance due to busy schedules and conflicting priorities. Thus, some pause for thought is recommended to discern if it is feasible to complete a good piece of participatory research in the time frame of submission deadlines. Building on existing relationships and/or previous organisational involvement would be more helpful for undertaking these methodological approaches, as rapport and trust would already be established and students could progress with the planning stages of the project.

Despite the potential to be time intensive, both special events and critical events scholars can benefit from these kinds of research approaches. As a practical discipline informed by social science principles, events research lends itself well to participation with the community with potential to develop meaningful research accounts based on lived experiences. Participatory research can provide data to facilitate a greater positive impact for event communities and stakeholders. For example, there is the potential to inform and even transform event content and meanings; this also links to the future sustainability of events by helping to shape events into experiential spaces people want to attend regularly due to shared connections. Planning for and evaluating legacy aspects of events also would benefit from participatory research, especially as long-term legacy impacts on host communities is an area in need of further study (Sadd & Jones, 2009). By working with communities and community organisations affected by an event, researchers can be more involved in legacy processes to help inform more reliable post-event outcomes which actually deliver on pre-event social change promises. Also, social justice issues connected with international events are increasingly becoming more prevalent and publicised (Finkel & Finkel, 2014). The importance of co-researching teams of academics and communities in addressing the myriad of human rights, gender equality, and social responsibility issues co-operatively should be a priority for the future research agenda for critical events studies. After all, 'Participatory research is built around the concepts of people, power, and praxis' (Finn, 1994, p. 25).

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# 11

## Researching from the Inside: Autoethnography and Critical Event Studies

Katherine Dashper

### Introduction

Events are experiences; episodes that are enjoyed, or sometimes endured, lived, and felt. The majority of research on events and festivals has been quantitative and focused on ‘impact’ in its various guises (e.g. economic, social, cultural, political, environmental) and so has largely failed to consider the nuanced lived realities of event experiences that make events worth attending and organising. There has been growing attention paid to concepts like ‘experiential marketing’ within the field of events management and event studies (Chanavat & Bodet, 2014; Lee & Chang, 2012), but there has been less focus on how groups and individuals experience events from personal and social perspectives. A growing body of research is beginning to focus on the experience aspect of events, and this can add to the richness of understandings of events as social, cultural, and political spaces (e.g. Holloway et al., 2013; Morgan, 2008; Ziakas & Boukas, 2013). Autoethnography is a useful research method to add to this growing literature. Autoethnography allows the researcher to use highly personal, often emotional and (hopefully) evocative accounts to



try and engage the reader in the event experience. Personal stories can be powerful ways through which to discuss wider social issues and have the potential to enrich critical event studies by providing alternative and revealing accounts of event experiences.

In this chapter, I discuss various ways in which autoethnography can be used to provide insight into event experiences. Autoethnography requires thorough consideration of how a personal story (the ‘auto’) links to wider social issues (the ‘ethno’) through carefully crafted writing (the ‘graphy’). Autoethnography is a demanding method to adopt, and has been subject to numerous critiques within the broader social sciences, but is gaining in prominence and is an interesting and challenging approach through which to engage students, researchers, and broader audiences in a variety of issues that underpin critical event studies.

## **Autoethnography in Critical Event Studies: What and Why?**

Autoethnography is a form of reflective self-narration in which ‘authors use their own experience in a culture reflexively to look more deeply at self-other interactions’ (Holt, 2003, p. 19). As such it is an explicit attempt to link ideas about the self and personal experiences to the wider culture and to others within that culture. Autoethnography can take varying forms, from personal narratives, to poetry, to performance, but all forms attempt to engage the reader/audience in the text, to elicit some kind of response and reaction and personal reflection on the issues raised or the methodology adopted (Ellis, 2004; Humphreys, 2005). As such autoethnography offers a useful method for exploring and understanding meaning in events research.

Much social science research within and beyond event studies, whether quantitative or qualitative in form, is conducted on ‘other people’ by a researcher(s). ‘Good’ research, as we are taught through research methods texts and courses, is objective and is not influenced by the researcher’s background, experiences, and position. However, this is not how research works. As researchers we choose to study issues, groups, and events because

they interest us in some way and we bring our personal, social, and academic histories with us to any research project. Feminist critiques have long challenged traditional representations of research reports as objective disembodied projects designed, conducted, and written by a seemingly all-knowing, but invisible, researcher (Aldridge, 1993). Such formats fail to acknowledge power relations in the research relationship and the important and inevitably subjective role of the individual(s) conducting the study and writing the report (Dauphinee, 2010). Autoethnography, possibly more explicitly than any other research method, represents 'an attempt to dissolve or at least problematize the subject/object relations within the research process' (Carrington, 2008, p. 426). By focusing on the self and the researcher's own story, self-narration can be a powerful way of beginning to break down some of the hierarchies inherent in traditional researcher/participant relationships, and offering readers a means of evaluating writers as 'situated actors', as 'active participants in the process of meaning creation' (Hertz, 1997, p. viii).

Autoethnography draws on narrative and storytelling traditions. Smith and Sparkes (2008, p. 5) argue that 'we live in a story-shaped world... [where] our lives are storied and identity is narratively constructed.' Consequently, exploring individual stories represents a valuable way of trying to understand the varied experiences and meanings associated with events. Autoethnographers attempt to create rich, evocative stories based around their own experiences that resonate with readers and are illustrative of broader social and cultural issues. As such autoethnography provides an avenue for exploring events as emic experiences, from the inside, in ways that can capture the complex, transitory, and often contradictory sensations of event experiences. As stories or narratives these personal accounts are constrained by storytelling norms and practices. As Sparkes (1999, p. 20) argues, 'I cannot transcend my narrative resources when telling a story about myself' and consequently how I tell that story is restricted by the stories available to me. 'Events in the past are interpreted from our current position' (Ellis, 2004, p. 118) and so any autoethnography reflects the author's thoughts, emotions, desires, and aspirations as understood at the time of writing, and this may be different to how the author would have constructed that story 3 years ago, or 3 years from now.

The contingent nature of storytelling and of autoethnographic accounts highlights the deeply social nature of such a form of research production and presentation as each individual story reveals wider cultural conventions, expectations, standards and morals. Individual stories thus offer an important tool for exploring both individual subjectivities and wider cultural practices and processes. As such autoethnographic accounts of event experiences can be highly revealing about the ways in which a culture, society, or group think and talk about events as social practices. A good autoethnographic account is never *just* an interesting individual story: it transcends the individual by ‘focusing both outwards on social and cultural aspects of the experience and inwards, exposing a vulnerable self that transcends the socio-cultural’ (Coghlan & Filo, 2013, p. 124).

Autoethnography could be considered ‘inherently poststructuralist’ (Gannon, 2006, p. 477) as it offers authors the potential to illustrate the fragmented and fractured nature of individual stories and accounts. Skilled autoethnographers such as Rambo (1995, 2005), Jago (2002, 2011) and Ellis (2009, 2010) illustrate the analytical power of such ‘messy texts’ (Denzin, 1997) for provoking reflection, discussion, empathy, and sometimes even disgust in the reader, illustrative of the productive potential of autoethnography to extend academic debates and push the boundaries of disciplinary knowledge. However, to achieve such outcomes requires the author to open up and expose themselves in a way rarely required in other forms of research (Dashper, 2015), and to develop their literary as well as analytical skills. This makes autoethnography a challenging method to adopt, but one which has great potential to further our understanding of event experiences and meanings.

## **Autoethnography in Critical Event Studies: How?**

Autoethnography as a method of social science research remains peripheral and personal; accounts have frequently struggled to gain publication in mainstream journals (Holt, 2003; Sparkes, 2000; Wall, 2008). Whilst that situation is changing within event studies, and there are now far more autoethnographic accounts published in a wide range of social science journals, it is rare to see autoethnography selected as a methodological

approach and there are few event-specific examples or guides for students and researchers to follow.

Ethnography also remains an underused method in event research, although a growing number of scholars are turning to this approach to explore and understand the meanings of event experiences for different groups and individuals (Davies, Ritchie, & Jaimangal-Jones, 2014; Holloway, Brown, & Shipway, 2010; Jaimangal-Jones, 2014; Mackellar, 2013). Autoethnography is closely allied to ethnographic traditions that try to understand and represent individual experiences on the participants' own terms and thus give insight into the richness and complexity of human experience.

There are two key types of autoethnography: analytic and evocative. Analytic autoethnography is closely allied to traditional ethnography and involves the researcher as a member of the research group or setting, and as actively present within the written text (Anderson, 2006). Personal accounts and insights are explicitly linked to wider sociological issues and theory (e.g. Anderson, 2011; Coghlan, 2012).

### **Evocative Autoethnography, According to Ellis (1999)**

...includes researchers' vulnerable selves, emotions, bodies and spirits; produces evocative and intimate detail; examines how human experiences is endowed with meaning; is concerned with moral, ethical and political consequences; encourages compassion and empathy; helps us know how to live and cope (p. 669).

It is also theoretically informed and advances knowledge in a given area, although in many such accounts theory is not explicitly referred to and traditional aspects of academic texts—such as method sections, and possibly a literature review—are often dispensed with. The analytic work is performed within the narrative itself as 'a good story is itself theoretical' (Ellis, 2004: 195). This is a challenging task to achieve, and requires emotional honesty, deep introspection, and a measure of literary skill. In the remaining sections, my comments apply primarily to evocative autoethnography, as this approach differs most markedly from more traditional research formats, but much of the discussion is also relevant to analytic autoethnography. Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang (2010) talk

about an autoethnographic continuum—between analytic and evocative—and suggest that the position along this continuum can vary by project and even within a piece of work. It is likely therefore that students and first-time autoethnographers will not be situated at the far evocative side of the autoethnographic continuum, as this requires skill, patience, and practise, but will be somewhere along the scale.

There are a number of texts to guide the would-be autoethnographer, from traditional research methods texts (e.g. Muncey, 2010) to more innovative forms of representation (e.g. Ellis, 2004). The following steps provide a starting point for an autoethnographic project and may act as a useful guide. However, autoethnography is an inherently personal and individual form of research and so individual authors will adapt and approach their work in various ways (Dashper, 2015).

## Selecting a Topic

Autoethnography is about connecting the personal to the social and cultural. Therefore an appropriate ‘story’ needs to be found. There are very few autoethnographic texts within event studies (for an example of analytic autoethnography see Helgadottir & Dashper, *in press*). However there are numerous examples in related fields, such as sport (e.g. Dashper, 2013; Laurendeau, 2014) and tourism (e.g. Noy, 2008; Scarles, 2010) which illustrate the wide variety of topics that can be chosen.

An autoethnography needs a good story; it needs to have the potential to interest, excite, draw the reader in, and provoke an emotional response. Given the growing interest in event meanings and experiences there is ample opportunity for autoethnographic accounts to add depth and richness to the event literature and push forward understanding of events as lived experiences.

## Data

The question of ‘data’ in autoethnography is complicated. Some authors intend to conduct an autoethnographic study of an event or experience and so plan in advance to write notes, take photographs, and reflect on the experiences and processes involved (Helgadottir & Dashper, *in press*).

However, very often it only becomes apparent that an experience would make a 'good' autoethnographic story after the event, sometimes even years later (Dashper, 2013). Clearly in such cases the researcher will have no formal field notes or recognisable data to use as a basis for constructing the narrative.

On such occasions, it is necessary to rely on what Wall (2008) calls 'headnotes' and the processes of emotional recall and systematic sociological introspection, imagining oneself back in the place and situation, both physically and emotionally (Ellis, 2004, 2009). This requires deep reflection, emotional honesty, and often some soul-searching to consider what it was about that experience that was sociologically relevant, revealing, and instructive. What happened? How did it make you feel? How do you feel about that experience now? How do your experiences relate to issues discussed in the wider literature?

## Writing

Once an appropriate story has been identified, and notes created around the experience, the process of writing begins. This is difficult and should not be underestimated. Academia encourages certain styles of writing that are often formal, detached, and dry and this is not conducive with evocative autoethnography. To commit to an autoethnographic approach to presenting research requires also committing to an overhaul of writing style. This can be fun but it is challenging to break out of deeply ingrained writing styles and traditions. Crafting autoethnographic vignettes which are evocative and analytically powerful is challenging but has great potential to make critical events research more methodologically rich (Humphreys, 2005). Expect to spend time rewriting.

## Sharing

Possibly one of the most challenging aspects of autoethnography is sharing the work with others (Dashper, 2015). Academics and students become used to critique on their work, but the intimate nature of autoethnography can make criticism particularly personal and difficult to take. Autoethnography exposes the researcher directly in a way not common

in other forms of research and the author's personal feelings, flaws, and mistakes become open for wider audiences to see and pass judgement on (Jago, 2002; Snyder-Young, 2011). This places the author in a vulnerable position, which is both a risk and a strength of autoethnography as a method, as discussed further below.

## Autoethnography in Critical Event Studies: Ethics

When designing and conducting any research project, ethics are a primary concern. Ethical issues within autoethnography are complex. Although autoethnography is ostensibly a form of personal narrative and thus focused on the researcher, it is never *only* about that individual. Autoethnography involves co-mingled data; as Barton (2011, p. 432) explains, 'Telling my story inherently means sharing someone else's story.' When constructing an autoethnographic account based on event experiences it is highly unlikely that other people will not be involved in that story to some extent, as events are social, usually shared, experiences. What does this mean in terms of the ethics of autoethnography?

For some researchers, problems associated with involving others in a so-called personal narrative are hard to reconcile, as the narrative constructed will be one sided, presented solely from the perspective of the author (Delamont, 2007). For others, this is a question of informed consent—how and when to secure it, when other people feature in a personal narrative (Tolich, 2010). Others censure what they tell significant others who feature in an autoethnography to avoid hurt feelings (Ellis, 2007). Some researchers choose to fictionalise accounts or use composite characters to preserve anonymity (Sparkes, 2002), whilst others choose to write collaboratively to allow multiple voices to be heard within one account (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2012). These and other approaches are valid ethical responses and illustrate the impossibility of offering guidance on 'how to' conduct ethical autoethnographic research, as ethics need to be considered anew for each, different, study. As Josselson (2007, p. 538) argues, ethics in narrative research 'is not a matter of abstractly correct behaviour but of responsibility in human relationships'.

Ethical considerations in autoethnographic research extend beyond responsibilities to others who may be included in a personal narrative and encompass responsibilities to the author herself. Much of the power of autoethnography comes from the method's capacity to illustrate inconsistencies in the human condition, attending 'to incomplete, interpersonal, embodied lived experience' (Gannon, 2006, p. 477). Yet this makes the author vulnerable as her inner fears, concerns, and weaknesses are exposed in the academic text (Dashper, 2015). The decision about what, how much, and in what ways to reveal personal issues, thoughts, and feelings is an individual one which each author needs to consider carefully for each autoethnographic writing project. There is a balance to be struck between being emotionally vulnerable and open enough to construct an evocative story, and exposing the researcher in raw, uncompromising ways.

Within critical event studies evocative autoethnography has potential to reveal the complexity and depth of event experiences, and the deeply emotional meanings different people attach to those experiences. There is thus a great possibility to advance the field of event studies beyond largely mechanistic and technocratic concerns that dominate the literature (Dashper, Fletcher, & McCullough, 2014) and to illustrate the significance of events as social practices, but such accounts may also expose the vulnerability of the author. Such vulnerability is not necessarily something to be avoided, but requires careful consideration. Once published, an autoethnographic account is in the public domain, open to interpretation and critique, and authors need to consider how they will react to other people's responses to their personal stories (Dashper, 2015).

The ethics of autoethnographic research are thus complex, multifaceted, and contingent. There can be no 'how to' or standard ethical criteria that applies in all situations. Each author will need to give careful consideration to the ethics of their writing project and the responsibilities owed to other people featured in or affected by the narrative, to the author herself, and to the reader (Adams, 2008). Ellis (2007) argues that 'autoethnography is itself an ethical practice' (p. 26) as it engages with people, relationships, and emotion, and she urges researchers to 'act from our hearts and minds' (p. 4). This requires a different mindset than that usually adopted for academic work and pushes the author to consider deeply the ethical aspects of their research and writing.



## Autoethnography in Critical Event Studies: Evaluation

It should by now be apparent that autoethnography represents a departure from traditional forms of research, writing, and presentation, but it does not represent an ‘anything goes’ approach and is still guided by standards of rigour and validity, although these may be assessed using different criteria than for more traditional forms of research (Fleming & Fullagar, 2007; Sparkes, 2000).

Autoethnography has been subject to numerous critiques. For some critics autoethnography is ‘lazy research’ (Delamont, 2007), whilst others accuse autoethnographers of self-indulgence, narcissism, and navel gazing (Miller, 2008) or of producing work that lacks academic rigour and broader application (Freeman, 2011). Such critiques should not be dismissed out of hand, and require careful consideration. However, for many autoethnographers such critiques essentially miss the point of (evocative) autoethnography and the challenge the method poses to traditional academic formats.

Standard forms of assessing ‘quality’ in academic work, such as measures of validity, reliability, and generalisability, may not be applicable to autoethnography. That is not to say that autoethnography should not be all these things, but rather that the measures and criteria used to form assessments may need to be adapted. If it is to be credible as a method of social science research within critical event studies then autoethnography needs to be open to critique and criticism, but specific and modified criteria may be necessary to do this.

Several leading autoethnographic researchers have produced criteria against which it might be more appropriate to evaluate such narrative work, and these provide a useful guide for the would-be autoethnographer:

- **Evocation:** Does the narrative draw the reader in? What affect does it have on the reader, does it inspire empathy, compassion, revulsion? Does it provoke a response in the reader, intellectual, or personal (Ellis, 2000; Richardson, 2000)? One of the exciting aspects of autoethnography as a methodological approach is its potential to *show* the reader the experience and emotions felt, rather than *tell* them about it in a

more abstract manner. Therefore, both analytical and evocative autoethnography need to resonate with the reader in some way (Muncey, 2010), to create a sense of the lived experience of events and the personal and emotional meanings attached to them.

- Narrative flow and structure: Is it well written? For an autoethnographic account to perform its analytical work it needs to be effective as a story or narrative and to flow, although not necessarily in a linear format. Much as literary work experiments with temporal and spatial dynamics, so too can autoethnography (Bochner, 2000; Jago, 2002). By dispensing with many academic-writing traditions, autoethnography provides authors with the flexibility to create an account that reflects the complex and often contradictory nature of event experiences. Rambo's (1995, 2005) concept of a 'layered account' is a useful way to approach this.
- Believability: Does the story ring true? As a post-structural research method, autoethnography does not purport to represent a single 'truth' about any experience or emotion, and rather celebrates the ambiguity of lived experience and the situatedness of any account. However, the narrative needs to be credible, to feel 'real' in the sense of embodying an impression of lived experience (Richardson, 2000). Autoethnographic accounts need to contain concrete and rich detail, to relay not only facts but also feelings (Bochner, 2000). It is only through fleshing out the narrative that it can resonate with the reader (Collinson & Hockey, 2005).
- Ethical narratives: Has the author demonstrated reflexive self-consciousness? As discussed above, the ethical issues associated with autoethnography are complex and contingent, and there can be no universal ethical standards and guidance that apply in all cases. However, given the deeply personal and revealing nature of evocative autoethnography it is important that authors demonstrate that they have thought through the ethical dilemmas. Have they sought permission and/or input from others portrayed in the narrative? If not, why not (Ellis, 2000)? Have they thought carefully about how they, the authors, are presented within the account (Tomas, 2009)? Discussions of ethics may not always appear within autoethnographic narratives, but it is important that the author has thought these issues through thoroughly before writing and publishing an account.

- **Contribution:** What does this autoethnography add to our collective knowledge and understanding (Richardson, 2000)? Autoethnography is not autobiography and so personal accounts need to link to wider social and cultural issues—the ‘ethno’ part of this approach. Again this need not always be through explicit links to theory, or to wider literature, but the narrative should contribute to the richness of collective understanding about social life and event experiences in particular.

Autoethnography represents a challenge to traditional academic research formats and forms of representation and so the criteria used to evaluate such work might reasonably be expected to differ also. But autoethnography is still social science and so must be open to critique and evaluation. Validity can still be evaluated, by questioning the extent to which the narrative is revealing and informative about the issue(s) on which it is focused. Reliability is also a relevant criterion, as the extent to which the reader is ‘convinced’ by the narrative, in terms of evocation, illustration, resonance, and ethical self-consciousness, is important if a narrative is to be analytically effective. Finally, a modified notion of generalisability may also be relevant, as the extent to which the author illustrates the wider social significance of the narrative affects the usefulness of the autoethnographic account to contribute to enhanced understanding of event meanings and experiences.

## **Autoethnography in Critical Event Studies: Opportunities**

Autoethnography as a research method has potential to add rich depth and personal insight into critical event studies. Contrary to the views of some critics, autoethnography is not ‘lazy research’ (Delamont, 2007) and requires hard work, emotional honesty, vulnerability, and literary skill from the author. The decision to embark on an autoethnographic project should not be taken lightly as it will involve deep introspection and engagement with wider sociological ideas and concepts in an attempt to illustrate how a personal story can be revealing and illuminating about wider social issues. This is hard work, and may lead the author to confront

their inner feelings, motivations, and actions in a way usually avoided within academic work (Dashper, 2015).

Yet autoethnography can also be exciting: exciting to conduct and (hopefully) exciting to read. Evocative accounts of event experiences have great potential to extend knowledge about the meanings attached to events, to understand how different groups and individuals value and make sense of events within their everyday lives, and to question how events can be spaces of joy and inclusivity for many whilst simultaneously excluding, marginalising, and silencing others.

Recent critiques of event studies have problematised the field's focus on 'the very mundane operational dimensions of events' (Jago, 2012) that fail to engage fully with questions of power and legitimacy (Dashper et al., 2014; Rojek, 2013). Autoethnography provides researchers with a method through which to begin to address some of these critiques by exploring the complexity of event experiences and by allowing different voices to be heard within critical event studies. Autoethnographic narratives can be written from a variety of perspectives—organisers, volunteers, participants, spectators, workers, local community members, pressure group members, and so forth—to enable a multitude of perspectives to emerge that will contribute to deeper understanding of the nuances and lived realities of event experiences.

Autoethnography is a difficult method to adopt, as outlined throughout this chapter, but it can also be enjoyable, therapeutic, and even empowering for the writer (Dashper, 2013). Tomas (2009) suggests that through the act of writing and crafting autoethnographic accounts the author can come to new knowledge, about herself or about the phenomena under discussion. Autoethnography has potential to ignite interest and passion in critical event studies within scholars and students. The act of writing autoethnography can be illuminating, even occasionally transformative, for the author.

The decision to adopt an autoethnographic approach to conducting and representing research may seem risky to scholars and students in a developing field like critical event studies as it moves away from the traditional study of events that, to date, has been dominated by technocratic concerns and positivist research agendas. Autoethnography represents a departure from many academic traditions and some within the field may

be dismissive of such an approach and judge its worth harshly on the basis of traditional (and largely inappropriate) evaluation criteria. Would-be autoethnographers should not be perturbed by such attitudes as autoethnography has great potential for advancing critical event studies and engaging scholars and students from within and beyond the field. Creative and innovative approaches to representing research may challenge the status quo but, as Richardson (2000, p. 254) argues, (auto)ethnographers 'should not be constrained by the habits of somebody else's mind.'

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# 12

## An Ethnographic Approach to the Taking Place of the Event

Andrea Pavoni and Sebastiano Citroni

### Introduction

This chapter delineates an ethnographic methodology for researching events focusing on their contingent and conflictual taking place, without reducing the latter to a negligible syncope between events' *planning* and *legacy*. Consistent with a critical event studies perspective, our approach marks a difference vis-à-vis well-established ways to explore urban events.

We thus propose a methodological approach that is conceptually and empirically attuned to the conflictual, excessive, and material quality of the event. In fact, we contend that the management of, participation in, and outcome of events are the result of their turbulent encounter with the everyday life of the city. An encounter, full of frictions, conflict and contradictions, that offers promising opportunities for research, which ethnography permits us to unpack and explore, is proposed. By methodologically shifting the focus on the contingent taking place of the event and its telluric effect on the space in which it occurs, moreover, we are able to show how this approach, regardless of

its scale, context, and purpose, is able to provide valuable insights on its social, strategic, and political significance.

First, we briefly sketch the theoretical understanding of the concept of event that orients our approach. Second, we develop a brief literature review to highlight the specific limits our proposal aims to overcome and some of the inspirations from which it draws. Finally, we illustrate our methodology through two relevant case studies, a neighbourhood festival set in Milan, and the 2010 South Africa FIFA World Cup, as it takes place in Johannesburg.

## Event as Conflictual Taking Place

The event comes (*venire*) from outside (*ex*), disrupting the ordinary course of things. An event, therefore, is first of all a *taking place*, a formula that encapsulates at once a temporality (the occurrence), a topology (the place), and a process (eventing).

In his argument for an eventful sociology, Sewell (1996) proposes to overcome the limited understanding of the event originating from either ‘teleological’ or ‘experimental’ conceptions of temporality. The first reduces events to mere manifestations of wider historical processes. The second de-contextualises them as ‘interchangeable units’ for comparative analysis. An ‘eventful temporality’, instead, ‘recognises the power of events in history’, assuming them as ‘transformative’ in themselves, and as such able to ‘bring about historical changes’ (p. 262).

Radicalising this suggestion, events should be understood not only as transformative in themselves, but more precisely also as belonging to a temporality that coexists with and insists in history, whilst remaining radically *other* to it: ‘what History grasps of the event’, Deleuze and Guattari wrote, ‘is its effectuation in states of affairs or lived experience, but the event in its becoming... escapes history’ (1994, p. 111). The event is always, potentially, a ‘liberation’ from—a tearing apart of—the historical conditions and their causal chains. It is thus constitutively *excessive* to a given state of affair in which it is ‘registered’: an event always ‘exceed[s] its causes—and the space of an event is that which

opens up by the gap that separates an effect from its causes' (Zizek, 2014, p. 14).

In fact, the materiality of the event is expressed in the space, or rather, *spacing* of its excessive taking place. In Deleuzian terms, an event is 'that which, in what happens, has become and will become' (Badiou, 2007). In other words, events are inseparable from what becomes, they are always an 'eventing', excessive vis-à-vis their situation and as such productive, holding 'an expressive power as active interventions in the co-fabrication of worlds' (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 14). Eventful is the ever-present potential haunting the state of affairs of a given situation, holding the possibility for it to be otherwise. As Foucault clarifies, 'it is always at the level of materiality that it [the event] takes effect, that it is effect; it has its locus and it consists in the relation, the coexistence, the dispersion, the overlapping, the accumulation, and the selection of material elements' (1981, p. 69).

From a symmetrically opposed view, Badiou argues that the event is 'a pure break with the becoming', fundamentally rare, emerging out of the void of a (historical) situation, and as such constituting a radical rupture that cannot be incorporated within the parameters of the situation itself, and thus forces it to be radically modified (Badiou 2007). This understanding helps us further, emphasising the rupturing force of events. However, we believe it less equipped to grasp the generative materiality of the event, insofar as tending to reduce it to an 'expression of processes whose truth is best grasped by purely speculative reflection' (Barnett, 2011, p. 5), rather than to a materiality to be explored in the contingent terrain of political practice (Sinnerbrink, 2006).

For Badiou (2007) events do not occur in a vacuum, but always emerge out of a dense spatiality of bodies, forces, and intensive becoming, and whilst they should not be reduced to that, they cannot be addressed without it either. Space is never a *tabula rasa* on which events occur, but an always thick and contingent being-together that the event does not deterministically shape, but *in* and *through* which it takes place. This 'throwntogetherness', in Massey's efficacious term, is the 'event of place', that is, 'the coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing ... a locus of the generation of new trajectories' (2005, pp. 140–141).

Excessive, material, and processual: these dimensions of the event, expressive of its potential to produce novel normativities, drastically reconfiguring practices and ways of being, are encapsulated in what we may define as its essentially *conflictual* quality. Potentially, events bring ‘fundamental aspects of society, normally overlaid by the customs and habits of daily intercourse, into frightening prominence’—as in Victor Turner’s definition of conflict (1974, p. 35). Essentially, events *are* conflict. Here lies their radically ‘political’ quality, the affective resonance they generate, re-articulating the atmosphere and rhythm of being-together, ‘mak[ing] visible what had no business being seen, and mak[ing] heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise’ (Rancière, 1995, p. 30).

Looking at organised events such as festivals or demonstrations through this angle means focusing on this conflictuality as the very locus in which their dialectics and politics (management, participation, outcome, etc.) are played out. This requires going beyond the point of view of the organisers, as well as the categories through which impact and legacy are often (deterministically) explained. Whilst it is important to define organised events as apparatuses aimed to produce certain objectives, there is always an ‘actual immanent moment, and an actual site wherein the apparatus’ efforts precipitate or insist’ (Rahola, 2014, p. 391). This is the eventfulness of the event, its conflictual taking place, as ‘the point at which the formal structure, as it were, falls... into contingent reality’ (Zizek, 2014, p. 65). In this sense, even the most organised events are always potentially ‘destabilising events’ (Gotham, 2011, p. 200), ‘moments of discontinuity’ that may reveal the ‘dynamic, transformative, conflictual’, and contradictory quality of urban space (Dansero, Del Corpo, Mela, & Ropolo, 2011, p. 196).

As Elias and Dunning (1971, p. 31) observed, organising an event always entails a ‘controlled decontrolling’, an attempt to spectacularly manage into a ‘normalised’ exceptionality the contradictory and hazardous task of simultaneously generating *and* regulating enthusiasm. The ‘resonant fusion’ of the crowd that is at the same time the dream and nightmare of event organisers, who rely in this ‘fusional instant that *produces the event*’, at the same time are aware of the danger of this ‘explosive mixture’ (Boullier, 2011). If most of the times the task of event organisers can be thus described as the attempt to *pacify* the event into a consensual outcome by depurating it from its conflictual potential, it is crucial not to

reduce critical event research to a similarly pacifying approach. Instead, we intend to be faithful to the antagonism of the event, accounting for the frictions generated at the encounter between the eventful lines of flight and the attempts to control them. Events are shaped by this turbulent negotiation. The contingent form they take as result of the latter, we explain below, is inherently political. Here, we aim to translate this understanding into a methodological approach. Prior to that we proceed to situate our endeavour within the existent research.

## Researching the Contingent Conflictuality of Events

Notwithstanding the ‘predominance of the case study approach and descriptive level of much events research published in academic journals’ (Connell & Page, 2012, p. 9), this is generally accompanied by an insufficient attention to the conflictual and material dimensions of the event. The overarching tendency is to resort to a ‘set of preexisting [*sic*] social, cultural, economic, or political conditions too often... explain[ing] away the eventfulness of events by referring them back to a set of conditions that structure and, ultimately, determine them’ (Anderson & Holden, 2008, p. 143). Empirically, this is often tied to a temporal separation of the event, which is either pre-emptively explained a priori—that is, framed through its preparatory phase, for example, organisation routines, practices, programmes (Stadler, 2013)—or a posteriori, as exemplified by the current emphasis on impacts and legacy (Sharpley & Stone, 2012 p. 352). This approach ignores the very fact that

‘the social effect of an event is that it is experienced as a particular situation because the effect relies on a ‘drift, an unplanned result of the cumulation of adjacent interactions’ (Linstead & Thanem, 2007, p. 1489), that includes the intensification of people’s sensed and lived experiences’ (Pløger, 2010, p. 859).

Besides such a temporal mismatch, empirical research on events also betrays an insufficient ‘spatial consciousness’, often considering their

unfolding and implications separately from the material settings and overall spatial conditions in which they take place (Hall & Page, 2012, p. 150). Of course, the relevance of space is formally emphasised by most analyses of events (Connell & Page, 2012). Yet, this is generally done from a managerial understanding of the context of the event (Sharpley & Stone, 2012, p. 352), considering uniquely the official framing of events—that is, their ‘desired effects’ rather than ‘emerging effects’ (ibid.)—and thus ignoring its contingent and material taking place.

Synthetically, two major methodological obstacles prevent the possibility of researching the latter dimension. First, inadequate research methods, and in particular the use of techniques—such as questionnaires—providing empirical evidences that are separated from its spatio-temporal contingency (Stadler, 2013). Second, the tendency to uncritically frame the event, its occurrence and implications, through assumptions that are not supported by an appropriate empirical attention to its conflicts and contradictions. This is for instance the case of arguments assuming urban events as inevitable top-down processes of ‘spectacularization’ and transformation of the urban in ‘staged experience’ (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011)—an approach that, however, too often implicitly assumes individuals as passive consumers of hegemonic spectacles, rather than potential active agents that may resist and re-appropriate them through counter-hegemonic narratives (e.g. Jones, 2012).

It is not surprising then that attention to the material, dynamic, and contingent dimensions of the event emerges in those studies that are exploratively and critically focused on their explicitly conflictual aspects. This is, for instance, the case of Giulianotti’s study of Premier League as diffuse sport mega event, where the focus on the ‘disquiet, transgression and resistance’ (Giulianotti, 2011, p. 3304) emerging in this context allows to highlight the opaque link between commercialisation and securitisation in the transformative processes affecting stadia. Useful tools and categories in this sense come from social movement studies, as for instance in della Porta’s suggestion to analyse social protest by looking not only ‘at what produces protest but at the “byproduct” of protest itself’ (2008, pp. 27–30). That is, analysing the protest not as an instrumental and ‘dependent variable’, ‘explained on the basis of political opportunities

and organizational resources', but rather as an 'eventful protest', as such to be explored in the contingency of its occurrence and in the immanence of its effect (ibid.). For instance, by looking at the way 'during the course of a protest resources of solidarity are created (or re-created)' and a sense of community is formed (ibid., p. 31). From another perspective, Boullier's (2011) work on urban events similarly underlines the capacity of events to overflow spatially and temporally beyond their pre-given boundaries—a capacity that derives directly from dynamics that are internal to the event, that is, its taking place, stressing how this aspect can be grasped by empirically exploring their contingent and material dimensions.

Attuning to the excessive and situated quality of the event requires focusing on this conflictual *encounter* between the event and the city. Since events always take place, we stress, *going* to these places is necessary in order to explore how the urban vibrates on the effect of this turbulent occurrence. There is 'something tangible about collective events', Latham and McCormack observe (2009, p. 67), a 'phenomenological this-ness' that needs to be accounted for. Yet, as Pløger suggests, 'the event is a twofold production of significance by its forms of visibility (capturing space) and modes of articulation (mode of action, discursively)' (2011, p. 864). Therefore, studying the event requires a sensibility simultaneously attuned to its territorialisation and deterritorialisation, that is, to both its contingent occurrence in the here and now as well as its prolongation into other space-times (Brighenti, 2010a)

A sensibility that, we believe, ethnography is able to provide. Having a direct and insider knowledge of the event in its unfolding is crucial if we are to grasp how it takes shape and resonates through space and time. Interesting works in this sense are those of Frey and MacGillivray (2008), Schreiber and Adang (2010), and Millward (2009), who focus on the turbulent relation between the actualisation of an event through promotional, performative, physical, and normative means; how this affects fans' perceptions and actions; and how it is reworked by them. Similar sensibility is shown by Duffy, Waitt, Gorman-Murray, and Gibson (2011), who compellingly explore the role of bodily coordination and rhythmic synchronisation, showing how the material unfolding of the event, the conflictual interaction that its 'throwntogetherness'

engenders, is the key dimension through which it takes shape as well as, we add, the locus of its 'political' potential (e.g. del Barrio, Devesa, & Herrero, 2012).

Following this inspiration, in the next section we illustrate our methodological proposal through two relevant case studies.

## Case Studies

The choice of case studies emphasises the adaptability of our approach that, regardless of scale, resists the temptation to pre-emptively and uncritically 'explain away' the event. Moving beyond the rhetoric endorsement of the official framing of the event, we instead look at what the event actually produces and how, in its contingent, material, and conflictual encounter with the urban space. Notwithstanding their differences, both case studies can be usefully approached through two analytical categories.

First, the *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin, 1941), which frames the interpretation of the event as a subversion of the institutional order and everyday routine. Here we show how, if this category is to be usefully operationalised to study events, it should not be taken for granted, but always critically and empirically calibrated to the contingent singularity of the studied event.

The second selected analytical category refers to the political potential embodied by the form in and through which the event takes place (Jackson, 1992; Rancière, 1995). We contend that it is crucial, by moving beyond preventive assumptions and post-event evaluation, to explore the shape the event takes in its contingent unfolding, since it is in this very unfolding that non-obvious insights on the political meaning and impact of the event itself may be grasped (del Barrio et al. 2012; Hall & Page, 2012).

How does the event shape and is shaped by the space in which it takes place? Does this lead to a pacification of its relations, a bracketing of power and socio-economic inequalities, or instead the event allows to make visible and evolving latent conflicts?



## 2010 FIFA World Cup, Johannesburg

This case study looks at the 2010 South Africa World Cup in the city of Johannesburg, in particular focusing on the way perceptions of safety and danger shape the everyday life in the city, and the role played by the World Cup in this context.

Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) rightly suggest that Johannesburg should not be stereotyped as a 'space of fear'. Yet, its shrinking public space, fragmented patchwork of malls, gated communities, townships, business districts, and huge highways, is undeniably engulfed by an atmosphere of uncertainty and danger, which shapes the way in which it is traversed and experienced. In Sao Paulo, Caldeira writes, 'narratives and practices impose partitions, build up walls, delineate and enclose spaces, establish distances, segregate, differentiate, impose prohibitions, multiply rules of avoidance and exclusion, and restrict movement' (2001, p. 20). Through a self-reflexive ethnographic exploration of Johannesburg we are able, first, to detect a similar pattern in its constellation of formal and informal advises, narratives, warnings, clues, tips, and so on, and second, to observe and experiment their 'real', that is, material effects in 'tuning' the everyday life of the city along a danger/safety axis (Pavoni, 2011).

In this way, the researcher soon realises that traversing the public space of Johannesburg is an activity 'tuned' by certain ways of looking around, being looked at, and mapping the space. First, a constant 'awareness of what people in the street around you are doing' (McCrea, Pinchuck, Reid, & Salter, 2002, p. 82). Second, a confident demonstration of belonging to the place: 'never look disorientated, always look confident [...] you don't have to seem that you don't know where to go [...] you have to rhythmise yourself'. As a result, traversing the urban space depends on a pre-arranged, syncopated, point-to-point, movement; traveling fast, minimizing stops, then relaxing in atmospherically sealed, private, bubbles: house, car, office, mall - a 'double rhythm' (Prior 2011), certainly influenced by, and yet transversally shared across race, class, age and gender.

Mega events are usually assumed as 'Trojan horses' allowing to implement politics of hyper-securitisation, surveillance, and control in the city

(e.g. Samatas, 2007; Boycoff & Fussey, 2014). In this context, however, the World Cup also appeared to many as a chance to generate a 'new-found sense of safety' (Urquhart, 2008), that is, to *ease* the anxious 'state of preparedness' through which the inhabitants daily traverse the urban space (Simone, 2004). Although obviously relevant, often the debate on the (positive vs negative) legacies of an event depends on a set of pre-existing (rhetorical, critical, ideological) categories that pretend to define a priori and/or a posteriori its impact. The ethnographic sensibility proposed here, instead, intends to move beyond these presuppositions, zooming in on the actual taking place of the event and thus accounting for the shape in which it unfolds.

The entry point chosen here was a specific spatial apparatus epitomising the way in which the symbolic, spectacular, commercial, and securitarian apparatus of the World Cup gains an urban dimension: *fan zoning*. The term refers to the enclosed live sites (*Fan Fests* or *Fan Parks*) where fans gather to watch matches on giant screens, and to the demarcated paths (*Fan Walk* or *Fan Miles*) that usually connect live sites to stadia. Although entrance to live sites is free, these spaces are fenced and filtered by search-and-seizure procedures looking for dangerous, edible, or promotional items incompatible with official sponsors. FIFA define them as a 'safe, recognised and exciting environment for visitors who have limited comparable alternatives'. Others instead see them as a tool to facilitate event-led processes of privatisation, commodification, and securitisation of the urban space (Eick, 2011; Hagemann, 2010). Again, our approach does not stop at this oppositional reading, and instead focuses on the *break* with the everyday space of the city that fan zoning actually brings about. This means looking not only at how fan zoning is resisted and re-appropriated by those populating these spaces, but also at the frictions generated by its eventful and excessive taking place. Here, this is done through participant-observation, employed as an experimental practice, intervening, touching, provoking, and breaching *à la* Garfinkel, that is, experimenting with the potentialities of the urban rather than merely observing them from a comfortable distance.

Thus, when in the city-centre fan park I ask a policeman for directions to the bus stop, he promptly warns: 'It's not very safe... no good

to go... stay here.' A volunteer adds: 'Outside is very dangerous ... the most dangerous place in South Africa.' Looking at my phone he then continues: 'Here is OK... [when you are outside] never pick up your phone, it's dangerous.' In another fan park similar questions find similar answers: 'It's too dangerous now, you cannot take a mini-taxi, I cannot guarantee you security.' Eventually, he insists on escorting me to my destination.

*Here* it is possible to take pictures, walk oblivious of the surroundings, pick up one's mobile phone without worries. There is no need to rhythmise oneself to the rhythm of alertness and confidence of the city, since this very rhythm has been *slowed down*, a space of 'safety' has been produced, encapsulated within a legal, securitarian, and physical fence. *There* lies a space of uncertainty and danger. This is what a Uruguayan fan suddenly realises as the closing time approaches. 'I haven't got any *problem* so far', he told me some time before. Now he adds: 'the thing is, now we park the car very far away from here ... now we are quite afraid of going back to the car because there's no light, we have not thought about that, but we'll have to go ... security is a *problem* in this world cup, definitively'.

In their ethnography of Germany '06, Frew and McGillivray (2008, pp. 191–192) emphasise how fan zones (officially introduced by FIFA that year) produced hyper-experiences of enjoyment and 'micro-level resistance to the everyday banality of work'. Yet, in Johannesburg fan zoning seemed to function more as a dispositif protecting the audience from the city than, as in Germany, the city from the audience (most notably hooligans). As a result, often they rather produced not-that-hyper experiences of 'relief', that is, micro-level resistance to the everyday anxiety of public space. When a clear physical and affective 'break' from the 'dangerous' outside was lacking, in fact, fan zoning collapsed, as was the case of the unfenced fan walk connecting the fan park to the Ellis Park stadium: the path traversed notorious neighbourhoods and was deemed too dangerous both by fans and authorities, who did not bother to advertise it too much.

We may say that in Johannesburg fan zoning appeared as a space in which 'you can walk around without any worries... a place where people blend and can forget about the past and current anxieties' (de Vries, 2008, pp. 21, 23). De Vries' definition of the mall in South Africa per-

fectly applies here, suggesting interesting considerations vis-à-vis the two hypotheses explored.

First, more often than the ‘carnavalesque inversion’ of the everyday routine, fan zoning seemed to reproduce and institutionalise the double rhythm of the city, by generating yet another set of exceptional, semi-private bubbles where one could be screened from the ‘dangers’ lurking outside.

Second, if the political potential of an event may lie in its capacity to make visible latent urban conflict and contradictions, such potential was eventually neutralised by the form taken by fan zoning in Johannesburg. As many have written, malls in South Africa play the role of quasi-public spaces where most of the everyday *public* activities (e.g. meeting up, hanging out, dining) are performed. However, these spaces remain privately owned, extensively surveilled, and strictly regulated, with high behavioural expectations and discretionary powers of control and exclusion (e.g. Kempa, Stenning, & Wood, 2004). This is the sort of exclusionary public space that fan zoning *de facto* reproduced, only apparently challenging the everyday anxiety of the city, but in the end confirming it. In fact, its physical, legal, and techno-securitarian boundaries simply displaced (real or perceived) ‘danger’ *outside* this safe, private, and commodified spatiality, rather than challenging its uncomfortable perception.

It is in this sense interesting to note how fan zoning worked out inside actual malls. Here, we could observe fans wandering around the mall and blatantly breaching its strict policies: drinking alcohol, drunkenly singing, smoking on the escalators, and blowing vuvuzelas. When applied to a space that was already *screened* from the outside, fan zoning functioned as a bubble within the bubble, opening up carnivalesque ‘spaces of enjoyment’ within a commodified space of controlled consumption, turning a ‘serial event’ into something closer to a ‘presence-event’ (Pløger, 2010). This is not to suggest that this would be, in any way, an emancipatory outcome. What we are concerned with is stressing the non-obvious outcome of the event, how this was dependent on its excessive, material, and conflictual taking place within an already complex reality and finally, and most importantly, how the ethnographic approach here proposed was equipped to detect these particularities.

## Popolando-mi Culture 2014, Milan

Via Padova is a 4-km street renowned in Milan as the place where most poor foreign migrants concentrate. Just like Johannesburg, Via Padova is stigmatised as dangerous in political and popular narratives (ibid.), which occasionally reach media national resonance. Popolando-mi is an 'intercultural street festival' aiming to explicitly challenge and reverse this stigma. Here we focus on the opening event, *Popolando-mi Culture*, a 'multi-ethnic parade' involving more than 300—mainly foreigners—performers. As we will see, the event did not reverse the institutionalised tuning of Via Padova: together with offering a stage for a variety of unpredictable performances, its material and conflictual unfolding confirmed such tuning and, similar to the former case study, simply shifted its spatio-temporal boundaries.

Immersing ethnographically in the everyday life of Via Padova allows the researcher to gradually elaborate a grasp on its stigmatised atmosphere. Although here a 'codified' street knowledge such as the one we found in Johannesburg is lacking, it is possible to ascertain a pattern of coordination among passing strangers that—consistent with accounts of Milan as a city 'characterized by the lack of sociability' (Foot, 2003, p. 40)—seems to take to the extreme the *civil inattention* typical of the public realm (Lofland, 1998). Everyone is implicitly invited to mind one's own business, avoiding eye contact (especially if you are a young woman), interiorising as routine the yelling drunkards at the street corner or the half-naked prostitutes spending their afternoons next to the exit of the local elementary school.

Understanding how this atmosphere is re-shaped by the 'multi-ethnic parade' requires immersing oneself, bodily and affectively, within the space of its contingent unfolding. At first sight this event appears to represent an instance of carnivalesque subversion. Even before its colourful, noisy, and chaotic stream irrupts into the Sunday routine of the street and disrupts the car flow (the parade was authorised but local authorities decide not to stop the car traffic), the parade seems to have already infected the neighbourhood with a sense of exceptionality, opening up possibilities for creative and unusual practices. While the performers are still gathering, a very old man in undershirt, with extreme effort, reaches a wall to modify

a 'W Berlusconi' sign into 'M Berlusconi. Ladro [*thief*]!' with a black marker. He returns on his footsteps, without even looking around, in the general indifference of the many people surrounding. Is such indifference a sign of the carnivalesque inversion of the everyday tuning or rather a confirmation that civil inattention still regulates street interactions?

Similarly, later on, in an isolated spot of the parade there is an old dancer using their belt to lash the naked back of a young one, whilst the other dancers around laugh in amusement. Upon asking, the reply is that the 'new one is being baptised'. Besides the participant-observer, no one in the public is paying explicit attention to such an unusual scene, thus suggesting that the parade is not exactly producing a carnivalesque inversion of the street's everyday tuning.

My self-reflexive ethnography included a 6 months' participant-observation (as volunteer) in the organisation of the event. With the green bandana on my arm that event organisers wear during the parade, I offer to help a barman who is offering water bottles to the sweating performers passing in front of his bar. He shouts at me: 'I distribute these bottles! The water must be paid'. Evidently, the parade falls short of reversing the general circumspection/mistrust among strangers normally shaping the everyday life of the street. This implicit pattern of interaction still organises social interaction, although the event seems to be shifting its boundaries, temporarily including foreign migrants—normally a rather mistrusted category (*ibid.*)—among those that can be trusted, as long as they dance in heavy parade costumes hit by the summer sun. At the same time, the exceptional tuning of the parade opens up unprecedented possibilities of action, not necessarily *subversive* to the everyday tuning of the street, but strategically exploitable in different ways: for example, mixing with an indifferent crowd to reverse a political sign on the wall or profiting of an exceptional stage, in front of a numerous audience, to provide a positive image of oneself and one's own commercial activity.

Once the parade arrives in the local park the comments from the audience seem much less positive and enthusiastic than before. After 20 minutes the stage remains empty, the heat is relentless, the amphitheatre seats too hot for seating, and the info-point sign too small to be read from afar. Frustration ensues, as expressed to me by an elderly couple, 'Weren't there

supposed to be more shows? Nobody is telling us anything. They could at least hand out a program. Aren't you part of the organisers?'

A specific assumption is normally (uncritically) associated to the carnivalesque, that is, the fact that the 'subversive inversion' would be generated by the 'passionate and sometimes destructive impulses of its participants', in opposition to 'the orderly ambitions of its organizers' (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011 p. 403). Here, instead, it is the audience that seems to be actively trying to re-establish control, seeking to reduce the atmosphere of collective uncertainty created by the event. The loose control on the event exercised by the organisers instead provides much room to the proactive involvement of its participants, even when performing practices at the limits of legality (e.g. the belt lashing). The participant-observation of the event in its contingent taking place thus allowed to challenge too simplistic applications of the category of the carnivalesque, and its taken-for-granted assumptions about the sources of 'control and creativity in [seemingly] staged urban experiences' (ibid.).

Turning to the second hypothesis, here, similar to Jackson's (1992) study on Toronto's Caribana street parade, we may explore the 'variety of accommodations that have been made between the event's organizers and the police—including the routing and rerouting of the parade [...]—as indications of the limits that are set to the public recognition of marginalized cultures by the state' (p. 140). In fact, in each of its different editions, the routing of Popolando-mi was also the object of harsh confrontations between the organisers and the local authorities. Here, matters such as providing legal authorisation for the itinerary of the parade or stopping the car traffic during its passing can be clearly addressed as indicators of broader political conditions, notably the State's recognition of both migrant communities and the local associations representing them. Instead our approach, allowing to focus on the event's contingent 'presence-effects', provides a further angle to understand the political form of the event, as not only uniquely shaped by the organisers but also strongly affected by the uncontrolled participation of performers and audience. This permits to highlight that the form taken by Popolando-mi did not pacify ongoing local conflicts, but instead favoured their possible multiplication, from the quarrels of car drivers to quasi-legal practices such as belt lashing and graffiti writing.

As regards the hypothesis of ‘spectacularization’ (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011) of the urban space possibly produced by Popolando-mi, our approach provides two further precious insights on its political nature. First, as already noted, is the fact that it did not bring about a pacification of conflicts, as usually assumed to be the case for similar ‘staged urban experiences’ (ibid.). Second, the event did not exactly produce a carnivalesque subversion of Via Padova’s everyday life, but rather drew from and reproduced the latter. In fact, most of the very footsteps performed during the parade reproduced those rehearsed by young south-Americans in the public spaces of Via Padova, as well as in other places of Milan such as underground stations. Popolando-mi offered a stage for these performances to be looked at, hyper-visibility practices that were however already present in—and thus far from being exceptional to—the daily routine of the street.

At first sight, by attracting the attention of the public to its own spectacular unfolding, the parade seemingly suspended the everyday civil inattention, also expressing the potential of exhibition that is intrinsic to the very urban dimension (Brighenti, 2010b). On a closer look, however, civil inattention appeared as not reversed by the event, but simply spatio-temporally displaced: bracketed from the middle of the street during the parade but yet organising social interactions on its margins, for example, among spectators on the sidewalks or in the relational spaces in which occurred the aforementioned graffiti writing and belt lashing. As for the previous case study, the researcher’s immersive participant-observation allowed the exploration of the material taking shape of the event, permitting to verify specific research hypotheses and providing a precious insight into what an event produces in—and how it is shaped by—its context.

## Concluding Remarks

Exploring the conflictual taking place of events requires avoiding to presuppose their context as a *tabula rasa* on which events would produce self-evident impacts. Events occur in and through a dense spatiality made of practices, assumptions, affects, bodies, and a complexity shaped into



shared rhythms that ‘tune’ the everyday life in the city. As we have shown in this chapter, to grasp this material normativity we need to move beyond the ‘Cartesian window’ from which Lefebvre (1999) famously conducted his rhythm-analysis, in favour of a more immersive and participant ethnographic position. Understanding oneself as a body among other bodies (tangible and intangible, human and non-human), the researcher has to become a sort of ‘radio receiver’, constantly attuning to the frequencies of this being-together and the way s/he is tuned by them, or indeed a *seismographer*, capable of detecting the telluric waves generated by the encounter between the event and the space in which it takes place.

## Notes

1. Note that here Badiou is referring to the concept of event in Deleuze, that he opposes.
2. Of course the complexity of Badiou’s thinking warns against such a trenchant simplification, and a full critique of his position cannot be carried out in this context. However, his recent problematic attempt to force-fit the Arab spring within his conception of the event has shown—as many Arab commentators have demonstrated—how his approach, at the very least, runs the risk of erasing the contingent dynamics—the material taking place—of events (e.g. Kacem, 2011).
3. Policeman interviewed by the researcher, 14 June 2010.
4. A rhythm that is organised around cars, walking being understood as a sort of enterprise—‘get advice from your hotel prior to embarking on foot’—, to be avoided if possible (Department of Community Safety and Liaison [KwaZulu-Natal], (our emphasis). Incidentally, even when driving alertness must be kept high: ‘fasten your seatbelt, lock your door and only leave your window open about 5 cm [...] Be aware of you surrounding when you stop at a robot [i.e. a traffic light] or stop street’ (ibid.).
5. For instance, a white Afrikaans living in a gated community advises me against going to Bree St: ‘Wherever you go, don’t go to Bree.’ His black, Xhosa friend living in a residential area laughs at that: ‘Don’t listen to him. Bree Street is fine, just don’t go to Hillbrow.’ On a bus, a Xhosa girl

- living in Hillbrow explains: ‘Hillbrow is fine, just don’t go there at night’. A Zimbabwean guy squatting there instead points out that Hillbrow is safer than white suburbs, since Hillbrow ‘is busy’, whilst it is emptiness that generates opportunities for crime (from the field notes).
6. Organisation Committee of Germany ’06, quoted in Frew and McGilliray (2008, p. 187).
  7. Gundo, 21, interviewed by the researcher. This conversation took place at the Newtown unofficial Fan Park.
  8. This conversation took place in Innes Free Park FIFA fan fest, north of town, 18 June 2010. ‘Mini-taxis’ are old Toyota 13-seaters, mostly used by working-class people.
  9. Uruguay fan interviewed by researcher, 18 June 2010.
  10. Personal communication from a manager working on the Jo’burg City Safety Programme (JCSP). Similar was the case of volunteers in Cape Town whose black uniform which, differently from the sparkling yellow of their colleagues in Johannesburg, were often greeted with suspicion by the public. Here again their uniform did not produce an evident affective and physical break from the city.
  11. For example, this occurred in 2010 due to the urban riots that followed the killing of a young Egyptian in the street; also this occurred in March 2015 because of the contested visit in the neighbourhood of an Italian political leader of a racist national party.
  12. See: <https://www.facebook.com/FestivalPopolandomi>. The festival is funded by a private foundation with the official aim of enhancing occasions of cultural fruition in deprived urban areas that lack them.

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# 13

## Experience Sampling Methods in Critical Event Studies: Theory and Practice

Jonathan Moss

### Introduction

Borne of psychological investigation, experiential sampling methods (ESM) began to come to prominence during the 1980s as a means to investigate well-being (Schimmack, 2003). They increased in prominence, largely attributed to the work of Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1987) which highlighted research reliability and validity, and become widely advocated by Csikszentmihalyi in a broad range of publications (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 2014; de Vries & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006; Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). ESM were therefore demonstrated to be able to measure peoples' experiences; in situ, increasing eco-validity; in real time, minimising recall bias and over an extended number of days. For this reason it was able to contribute to the many experiential investigations including, affect, mood, behaviours and emotions of experience is significant and has been widely used to investigate an expansive remit of experience(s) including music in everyday life (Juslin, Liljeström, Västfjäll, Barradas, & Silva, 2008), pre-competitive emotions in sport (Cerin, Szabo, & Williams, 2001) and identity (Burke & Franzoi, 1988).

The aim of this chapter is to critically explore the author's use of ESMs for data collection in critical event studies (CES). Firstly, a concise overview of the ESM design will be discussed. Following this the chapter will consider the author's doctoral work and how it utilised a qualitative adaption of ESM called descriptive experience sampling (DES). Phenomenological in approach, the chapter will thus provide an outline to the difference in ontological and epistemological perspective that this qualitative approach necessitates. As it moves away from traditional positivistic explanations to more critical theory generation, it is this difference in philosophical lens that is required by events research. Following this, the chapter will discuss an overview of the implementation of the DES to gather primary data needed to ensure consistent and valid research. This will illustrate how, when the research philosophy and method are aligned, the use of experience sampling can provide an innovative approach to exploring experience at events and festivals.

## **An Overview of Experience Sampling Methods**

As mentioned in the introduction, ESMs are developed in the area of psychology that investigates well-being and since their development have become widely used in a number of different subject areas that wished to investigate experience. Another example is market research that has also adopted this approach when investigating affective experience (Andrews, Bennett, & Drennan, 2011) and for over a decade it has been supported as a viable approach to gaining further understanding of experiences in leisure activities (Mittelstaedt, 2001). Having ascertained its use in many areas of experience research, the chapter will discuss the details of this method.

As a method of investigating real-time subjective experience, ESMs were initially designed using a quantitative framework and with a positivistic grounding. Across a typical timeframe of 5–7 days, participants would be sent a number of signals through each day as a prompt to complete a survey-style questionnaire (Hektner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Schmidt, 2007). This provided insights about experiences in different

everyday settings from a within-person perspective and from a methodologically robust approach (Scollon & Kim-Prieto, 2003). Historically the information was recorded by the participants using a pen and paper as a response to a pager beep that they would wear for the duration of the data collection period. From these quantitative and rudimentary foundations however, a number of variations have been developed, embracing both new technology and different epistemological perspectives. For example, where beepers and hand-held organisers were used, they have been superseded by smartphone technology (Wood, Kenyon, & Moss, 2012). Furthermore, Smyth's ecological momentary assessment (2003), Riddle and Arnold's (2007) day experience method, and Kahneman's (2004) day reconstruction method are examples of variations drawn from the ESM template. It is saliently noted, though, by Scollon and Kim-Prieto (2003), p. 8 that 'many researchers do not make sharp distinctions between ESM and other sampling methods.'

## Descriptive Experience Sampling

One distinction that is important to note though is that ESMs were subsequently developed and adapted to collect not quantitative data but instead qualitative data. This adaptation is at the core of the doctoral research that this chapter discusses. It is an approach conceptualised by Heavey, Hurlburt, and Lefforge (2010) called the descriptive experience sampling (DES). This variation of the ESM method utilises a similar signal-participant response as previously noted, but unlike other ESMs the data collected is qualitative in nature. The DES was originally designed to develop a greater understanding into the illness of schizophrenia but it has been utilised in gathering data for many other subjective phenomena (Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007). At the centre of the DES method is the capturing of what Hurlburt (1990, 1993) refers to as pristine inner experiences. That is to say that once the signal has been sent to the participant, they are not asked a range of survey-style questions but are instead asked to record, 'whatever was on going in her experience at the *last undisturbed moment before the onset of the beep*' (italics in original,



p. 348). These recorded inner experiences are then expanded upon during in-depth interviews which take place within 48 hours of the initial data collection period.

The application of both ESMs generally, as well as DESs, is broad and has provided a large library of research into many different aspects and experiences of life. Their use in events is very limited however, with only one exploratory day-sampling approach (Riddle & Arnold, 2007) being used at a live music performance to provide any primary research into this subject area (Wood & Moss, 2015). Furthermore, they have as of yet not been used in a music festival setting. This is despite being used to investigate other music experiences; for example, everyday use (Sloboda, O'Neil, & Ivaldi, 2001; Greasley & Lamont, 2011) and the importance of music in peoples' lives (Krause, North, & Hewitt, 2013; O'Neill, 2002). This research method is therefore well positioned and with a large body of work to support it, as a means to contribute to the growing investigations into festival experience. Moreover qualitative ESM/DESs can facilitate the development of critical event studies by expanding psychological and sociological investigations which are, at present, in their infancy and are primarily quantitative in nature (Ballantyne & Packer, 2013; Laiho, 2004; Packer & Ballantyne, 2010).

## An Ontological and Epistemological Shift

Using new research tools that generate a different type of data which then requires analysing and validating is not solely based on the appropriation of various techniques. To have an impact requires the researcher and researcher to consider events through a different and sometimes more critical, philosophical lens. For the doctoral research discussed here, the ontological perspective was critical realism and the epistemological stance was existential phenomenology. Before considering the implementation of the DES at a music festival, the chapter will concisely outline these positions.

## Critical Realism

Based upon the work of Bhaskar (1978), this research is underpinned by a philosophical perspective that articulates that the tension between a realist ontology and a relativist epistemology can provide a critical contribution. That is to say that the postpositivist lens of natural sciences and the interpretivist lens of social sciences can inform each other to generate new truths. As Hartwig (2007) offers, critical realism (CR) is a social theory and a cognate practice that promotes truth and freedom by critiquing both science and other ways of knowing. Taking this further, Dean, Joseph, and Norrie (2005), p. 7) contend that it originates in transcendence theory of physical science and in doing so bridged the gap between positivists and conventionalists.

Against positivisms, Bhaskar conceptualises natural lawfulness in terms of powers or tendencies, rather than of regular recurrence of specifiable events. Against conventionalisms, he insists that natural things exist independently of human theories about them.

It is the removal of lawlessness and thus determinism that places science in a position to be understood as historico-cultural and provides CR with perspectivalism but that all perspectives are constrained by the real nature of objects of study. It is this that grounds the philosophy with an ontological realism and an epistemological relativism (Collier, 1994). However, Bhaskar's realism argues that while there are intransitive things that exist independently of human activity, the moment we study them, they become transitive and saturated with human activity and knowledge. This means that we can have true knowledge of real objects but that this knowledge is time and space specific and therefore can be replaced in the future. Moreover, Bhaskar's relativism is not an 'anything goes' (Dean et al., 2005, p. 8) perspective but one which admits the possibility and necessity of truth. This, then, helps overcome the problems inherent within not recognising how reality affects our knowledge and thus, avoids the epistemic fallacy (Groff, 2015).

## The Theory of Emergence and False Beliefs

At the centre of this research are CRs theories of emergence and false beliefs. CR recognises the role of natural sciences in uncovering the power of things and that human sciences can be a science in that it uncovers specifically human powers and an explanatory critique of false beliefs (Hartwig, 2007). This again is achieved by the transcendence of the tension between hermeneutic and positivistic stresses; there is for Bhaskar a way to unite both agency and structure of explanation and understanding (Collier, 1994).

Emergence is a concept that provides a non-reductive basis for explanations of complex phenomena (Bhaskar, 1998). It is when existing entities or powers combine and form a new power or entity. Collier (1994) uses the properties of water to illustrate; while water is the fusion of oxygen and hydrogen, its properties, while unable to exist without the properties of this fusion, should not be reduced to them. In addition, water cannot contain any properties that hydrogen and oxygen do not contain separately. Water, then is the result of a Gestaltian (more than the sum of its parts) emergence (Elder-Vass, 2004). The game of chess provides another example of this because, despite the rules and the objective features of the game, they cannot predict an outcome because the laws themselves are unable to generate anything. The generation of the game and the result come from the social world, the players and their decisions (Corning, 2002). This provides an understanding in a non-reductive way; the mind and the brain are interdependent but on different levels. The mind needs the brain and the brain needs physio-chemical processes to function but, from a non-determining emergence perspective, it is from this that the mind emerges. This clearly is distinct from a reductionist view of the brain being nothing but the chemical processes.

### False Beliefs

The final aspect, or cornerstone of CRs contribution to this research, to be discussed here, are its considerations of false beliefs. Freedom, for a CR philosophy, is not the freedom written about in other critical individualistic theories but that it comes with necessary constraints.

False beliefs however, are an obstacle to this freedom and CR provides an understanding of the sources and nature so that it will more expediently arrive. Complex powers compose both the natural and social world and where empirical answers are unable to understand the real or the actual is where false beliefs are to be found, either placed or having emerged. True and false beliefs arise because the complexities of the natural and social world are not presented in an immediately intelligible form and it is therefore important to distinguish between those that are true and then offer a critique of those beliefs and what they are about. Thus, the cause will be revealed and the falsities apparent. Bhaskar argues that it is capitalist societies generate false beliefs and they are accepted not for varying, individual endowments of reason but because of the nature of societies construction of everyday life. CR argues for providing explanations to the source and nature in a drive to elucidate the individual to the necessary and unnecessary constraints and thus move individuals closer to emancipation (Hartwig, 2007). It is this explanatory critique which exemplifies the crux of the explicit value position not being at the expense of explanatory, objective science. In summary, Dean et al. (2005, p. 11) state, 'It invokes the possibility that values may be discovered as part of such a science, or that there may be well-grounded arguments which reveal the conditions of human flourishing.'

With the key aspects of the ontology highlighted, the chapter will now consider the epistemological stance that can be the link between critical realism's lens and DES's method of data collection, that of existential phenomenology.

## Phenomenology

Looking at this research through a critical realist lens, while also acknowledging its basis in the exploration of experience and therefore within a social science sphere of enquiry, the research takes an interpretivist, hermeneutic perspective to this investigation. This again is a step away from the traditional events research perspective of reductive, positivistic view that aims for widely generalisable findings but instead, focuses on the idiographic, subjective details of the experience. In doing so, it aims to gather rich narratives of

the experience that illustrate deep insights into what music festival experience might be, not what positivistic research has reduced it to.

## Phenomenology in Event Management

The study of events, like psychology nearly 30 years ago, is experiencing a limitation in its current epistemological stance (Smith, Harre, & Van Langenhove, 1995). The positivist logic and empiricist impulses do not generate the theoretical insights required by a subject if it is to develop and thrive (Aitchison, 2006; Getz, 2012). The epistemology of this research then, is founded upon an interactive psychology that broke away from the discipline's strive to be seen as a natural science and applied to a subject that is experiencing similar constraints. These constraints in psychology were defied because they were increasingly seen as, 'redundant' (Smith et al., 1995, p. 2). If this current research is to facilitate this progression, what must existential phenomenological (EP) epistemology in events research epitomise?

The first response to this question is that, unlike positivistic approaches to research, as is detailed by Giorgi (1995), the object of study in EP comprises the same consciousness as the researcher. This means that while phenomenological research can be systematic, methodological, critical, and generalisable, these should be measured using different criteria to that of the natural sciences. As an example, Giorgi (1995, p. 27) states:

One may perform cause-effect analyses with things and one may come up with universal laws about the behaviour of forces. But one would have to speak of the unfolding of motivational relations over time with humans and of the role of meaning in determining the value of human life. Causes and motivations cannot be lumped together; neither can forces and meanings.

It is worth affirming that this research is not against the pursuit of knowledge in the natural sciences. Remembering the ontological position of the research, it understands the relationship of how both paradigms can inform and develop new truths. What it is stating, however, is that if the focus of the research involves humans, then their consciousness must be accounted for in the research epistemology and thus, the choice of method.

Persson and Robson (1995) argue against an experimental and positivistic approach to music experiences and that the research should be conducted in a real-world environment. Sloboda, O'Neil, and Invaldi (2001) and Juslin et al. (2008) both agree that it is important to consider the context when seeking to understand musical experiences. In contrast to deterministic approaches to music festival experience, this research undertakes a different kind of investigation. Like that of Pike (1972), this phenomenological exploration focuses on the immediate lived experience and 'is not exclusively concerned with the objective musical events, but with these events as they are psychologically integrated in experience' (p. 262).

## Existential Phenomenology

Phenomenology offers new and challenging perspectives to events research and the research in this chapter uses Ashworth's (2015) adaptation of existential phenomenology as its epistemological foundation. This strand of phenomenology is built upon Husserl's early twentieth-century work (1925/1977, 1931/1960) which contests two phenomenological fundamentals. The first was to address the disparity between concepts and experience. Husserl saw that the former was not grounded in the latter and, therefore, there was a significant lack of clarity and appropriateness between the two. This meant that phenomenology had to, as the Husserlian slogan states, return to the things themselves, as experienced. This perspective was supported by Husserl's other theoretical foundation which states that there is nothing more fundamental than what is experienced and all investigation should use this as its starting point. Therefore, as Ashworth (2015, p. 11) states:

The correspondence of a person's experience to reality, the cause of that reality, or its motivation, and any claim made in the literature about the nature of such experiences—all must be set aside. Any assumption that one aspect of phenomenon takes precedence over any other must be suspended prior to experiential evidence.

Returning to the ontological position of this research, whilst taking note of Bhaskar's theory of emergence as a Gestalt concept, the sense

of things being more than the sum of their parts is again discussed. In Husserl's (1936/1970) book *The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology*, he uses this phrase to unify existentialism and phenomenology. This is reasoned by establishing experience as not a matter of lawful response to variables but as a system of interconnected relationships and meanings which he termed 'lifeworld'. This can only be researched from a first-person perspective and one that acknowledges the consciousness of the participants.

## Lifeworld

In correspondence to Smith's (1996) adaptation of Husserl's fundamentals, this research was undertaken with the phenomenological exploration of the participant's lifeworld in relation to their lived experiences at live music festivals. It also pursued this investigation with Ashworth's (2006) assertion that these subjective lifeworlds have universal features that must be considered when undertaking research from a phenomenological perspective. These are as follows:

**Selfhood:** Concerned with social identity; 'Identity is undeniably part of sociality our identity links us to others and is provided by interaction with others' (p. 216).

**Sociality:** Concerned with how the experience affects our relationships with others; 'Other people are a central part of our lifeworld especially because the evidence from them of our selfhood is so direct' (p. 216).

**Embodiment:** Concerned with how the situation relates to feelings of a person's body and how we see vulnerabilities and physical strength.

**Temporality:** Concerned with how the meaning of time, duration, and biography relates to the experience the person is in.

**Spatiality:** How people perceive the space that is laid out as part of the experience and the variables of meaning the space can have; 'Moreover, this "geography" will not merely be a physical, but there will be social norms and a host of other meanings associated with the place' (p. 217).

**Project:** 'How does the situation relate to the person's ability to carry out the activities they are committed to and which they regard as central to their life?' (p. 217); this includes emotions of pride and regret. This project may be at the core of their lifeworld.

Discourse: Concerned with the type of terms used to describe the situation; what are the social, educational, commercial, and ethical expressions.

Mood-as-atmosphere: 'Moodedness' (Ashworth, 2015, p. 13), or being there as a state of mind.

So far, this chapter has discussed the DES method: its origins, development, and how its use must be underpinned by a philosophical position that is contrary to a large body of event research. This was detailed to demonstrate that the research has a strong foundation and methodological approach. The following section of this chapter discusses how DES was implemented for primary data collection with the aim of acquiring a phenomenological exploration of experience at live music events.

## Implementing a Descriptive Sampling Method

The aim of the author's doctoral research was to explore the meaning of experience at live music events from a phenomenological perspective. This was to be achieved by gathering data in situ, collected in real time and also enabled the participants the opportunity to provide their meaning of what these experiences involved. Therefore, the method that was used was a descriptive sampling method supported by phenomenological interviews, and the data yielded was then analysed using Smith's (1996) interpretative phenomenological analysis. This was done as a means to provide the research with a unified approach that would gather rich and deep data which when analysed using a consistent technique would then demonstrate the results of strong reliability and validity. The methodological issues of implementation for this approach are discussed below and begin with consideration of the sample.

## Sample

The number of participants in this research was nine using a typical case approach. The sample size, appropriate to this research, based on Englander's (2012) work is to acquire a number of participants that are experienced in the phenomenon under investigation. The focus, therefore,



should not be on representativeness or generalisability of statistics and requires the researcher to know, beforehand, what the phenomenon is all about and that it is legitimate. Taking this further, contests that the verb ‘sampling’ is inappropriate for this type of research because the activities within the definition of sampling do not apply when ‘choosing cases’ for qualitative research (p. 1); this will be the terminology used from this point as echoed in the work of Smith and Osborn (2007, 2015). Patton states that when selecting cases for research, ‘The point is to do what makes sense, report fully on what was done, why it was done and what the implications are for the findings’ (p. 72). Moreover, they should be selected with a high regard for their ability to answer the research question. ‘The critical question to be answered by quantitative researcher in terms of selection of participants is thus: *Does the subject belong to the population that I am studying?*’ (*Italics in original*) (Englander, 2012, p. 20).

Therefore, the most appropriate selection method of the cases for this research was typical case selection. Emmel (2013) notes that this is when the ‘researcher chooses typical example cases to describe and illustrate the phenomenon they are investigating to the unfamiliar’ (p. 39). In this research, a typical case selection, the ‘knowledgeable participants’ (ibid, p. 39) were shaped by their previous music festival experience as this will drive the research to be information rich and credible, which are the key goals for qualitative investigation validity (Punch, 2013). In line with this sampling approach and exploratory research question, the literature supports a sample size of between 6 and 10 participants as being sufficient to provide rich and useful data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 1994). Giorgi (2006) explains that this approach to choosing cases allows the phenomenological nature of the experiences to be explained as the research asks each individual, ‘What was it like?’.

## Recruitment

The sample was recruited through a social media advert, and following this, any individuals who expressed an interest were invited to an online group forum for further information. From the registering of initial interest to the formation of the group the number of prospective participants was 21. From here, as the specifics of the research (date,

time, and involvement) became communicated, the sample was finalised at nine participants. Due to the research approach this number of participants was considered suitable.

## Participant Incentives

The participants were already attending the music festival and had purchased their tickets independently of the research and thus, they had already expressed their own desire to experience this festival. Due to the length of time the participants would be involved in the research and as a means to avoid issues of low morale, motivation, and dropout (Juslin et al., 2008), the participants were incentivised with the offer of food payment over the duration of the festival. In addition, the participants were also provided with external battery packs to ensure their smartphones would last the duration of the music festival without having access to an AC mains supply. This was important because while not having a functioning mobile phone may not have impacted upon their personal experience of the festival, it would have led to the participants dropping out of the research.

## Research Site

The phenomenological nature of this research requires a deep understanding of the individual experiences of each participant involved. Therefore, the music type, size, or location of the festival was not the primary focus of this experiential exploration. The festival chosen was The Green Man festival and was chosen because it occurs late in the festival calendar (14–18 August 2014) which provided the research preparation with more time to ensure it was well planned.

## Equipment

The participants all had use of their own smartphone; these were used so that the participant burden was minimised and they could also be used when there was no Wi-Fi/internet availability. They were also provided

with an external battery so that they could ensure their phones were charged during the entire research period. They were all asked to download the Supernote app (available for both iPhone and Android models) into their smartphone.

The improvements in technology and the lowered cost have significantly developed from pen, paper, and pagers, to palm-top personal organisers, to mobile phones, and now the latest research using ESM can do so with a smartphone application. This is supported by Raento, Oulasvirta, and Eagle (2009) who discuss the two main arguments for smartphone use in research is that firstly their 'flexible control' and secondly their 'cost efficiency' (p. 429). Furthermore, they recognise the smartphone's role in improving ecological validity. Firstly because they are an 'integrated and nonintrusive part of both the individuals' as well as social life,' so their 'Access' is strong and secondly, 'those phenomena accessible to smartphones can be studied without the researchers being present,' so they are capable of 'unobtrusive data collection' (p. 429). These factors, combined with real-time self-documentation provide greater control in ESM studies (Raento et al., 2009). Randall, Rickard, and Vella-Brodrick (2014) used the MuPsych application (app) to study music-based emotional regulation. This app has demonstrated high ecological validity (Randall & Rickard, 2013) but personal biases and expectations are still present in this type of approach due to the reliance on self-reporting (Bylsma & Rottenburg, 2010). In relation to this research, the app is not suitable for data collection due to its quantitative design and while there are qualitative apps available as illustrated in <https://faculty.unlv.edu/hurlburt/desinfo.pdf>, there were no means to download it, at least in the U.K. at the time of the primary research.

## Pre-briefing

The key part of this preparation was ensuring the participants were sufficiently well informed so that they were able to effectively engage and undertake their role as co-researcher. The purpose of the pre-briefing meeting was to enable this. In addition this type of meeting helps develop trust in DES research (Fuller-Tyszkiewicz et al., 2013; Scollon & Kim-Prieto, 2003) as well as in-depth interviews (Englander, 2012).

During the meetings, each participant was told that the research would cover a 5-day period beginning on Thursday 14 August at 12:00 midday and ending on Monday 18 August at 12:00 midday. During this time, they would receive notifications on a random basis via SMS messages. The message would state one word, 'Capture', and upon receiving it, the participants would be expected to record what they were experiencing at the moment they received the message. The smartphone application Supernote was used and enabled them to capture their experiences using words, photographs, or voice recording as well as logging the time and date at which it was received. How to use this app was also part of the pre-briefing. It was explained to them that they should feel empowered to 'capture' whatever they were experiencing at that time and that there was no 'right or wrong' response to the notification. The signals, while randomly organised, had been planned by the researcher. It was designed for the participants to receive them at unpredictable moments because as Hulbert and Heavey (2001) argue from their own research using DES, it means:

The bleep catches experiences in flight and most subjects report that the disruption is small and that it is possible to capture at least a substantial portion of the ongoing experience.

It was then explained to the participants that following the 5-day DES period, a one-to-one interview would take place with them within the next 48 hours and that it would last about an hour. The location for this was chosen by them as somewhere they felt relaxed. They were informed about their anonymity and the confidentiality and security of their data. They were also assured that this research had been subject to, and had passed, all Sheffield Hallam University's criteria for ethical research. Their right to withdraw at any time during the research collection and analysis process without the information that they provided being used was also made clear to them. They were also provided with a written copy of this information, a site map, and emergency contact information.

The DES was implemented as outlined but while the data collected was invaluable to the overall research, it provided only a starting point for the collection of the deeper phenomenological information. The interview technique that was used is discussed next.

## The Phenomenological Interview

The reason behind the use of phenomenological interviews was because it has strong support from past research and across disciplines as an effective approach to exploring peoples' lived experiences, a key aim of this research. When combined with Smith's (2009) interpretative phenomenological analysis it yields insights into those experiences that past studies have shown to be valid and, as a piece of qualitative research, generalisable.

The purpose of the phenomenological interview, as Roulston (2010:16) highlights, is:

To generate detailed and in-depth descriptions of human experiences. Thus, an interview structure that generates detailed information concerning these experiences as well as the participant's responses to the phenomenon of investigation is crucial. Since researchers want to understand the participants' feelings, perceptions and understandings, open questions are particularly useful in providing a format for interviewees to answer in their own words.

Finlay (2012:4) sees that phenomenology is now an umbrella term for a diverse means of enquiry, some of which contradict one another. Offering 5 points of unity, however, it is the following that should be, and is for this research, at the heart of phenomenological research:

Phenomenological research starts with the researcher who has a curiosity or passion that is turned into a research question. They want to better understand a particular phenomenon (be it a lived experience, event, or situation) and they forge a 'strong relation' (van Manen, 1997, p. 33) to the topic.

Punch (2013) notes that while the interview technique has been classified using a variety of typologies, the two main factors that are considered are structure and depth. The type of approach advocated here would sit at the far end of Punch's (ibid.) continuum. That is to say these interviews aim to yield a great depth and insight and do so with a largely unstructured questioning style. This is supported by Mittelstaedt (2001) who sees the open-ended or unstructured interview as a means to 'illuminate

the salient dimensions' of experiences (p. 151). For this research, the interview design was structured around the responses to the signals sent during the first part of the DES. There were, however, no predetermined questions and participants are able to discuss each entry in as much detail as they wished. It is this type of interview that allows the interviewees to focus on their experience and what they see as important in relation to it. Furthermore, this degree of 'structure' will help maintain the participant's focus and thus increase the chance of generating useful data which can be criticism, or concern at least, for this type of interview technique (Roulston, 2010).

From Mittelstaedt's (2001) comparative study of research methods it was found that 95 % of the sample found that the capturing aspects of experience using experience sampling to be very accurate because there was very little memory loss or bias. Furthermore 57 % found that the in-depth interview was the most accurate picture of their experience. This provides strong support for combining these two approaches by using a descriptive sampling method followed by the in-depth interview. Smith and Osborn (2007) support this by recognising this approach as the foundation of interpretative phenomenological analysis. This interview technique and the analytical process have been used to successfully explore the experiences of people in a number of health- and medical-related situations (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Since then, it has been used to investigate a wide range of socio-psychological phenomena including identity, well-being, and parenting and occupational health (Clarke, 2009; Smith, 2015). The potential richness of the data from using this type of interview technique, while also providing strong, credible, and reliable because of the analytical framework, demonstrates its suitability and applicability to this investigation into the experiences of live music festivals. This perspective is supported by Reid, Flowers, and Karkin (2005), p. 23) who conclude their review of the research approach by stating that it is becoming increasingly diverse in its application with research:

Going beyond traditional health psychology journals, and into social psychology, nursing studies, religious and existential studies, music, art and occupational therapy, and the 'traditional' journals of the medical profession...[It] is particularly suited to researching in 'unexplored

territory', where theoretical pretext may be lacking. Bypassing the closed systems of borrowed hypotheses and theories, it can instead provide meaningful and unexpected analysis of psychosocial issues.

Generally speaking, in-depth interviews are a more traditional approach to qualitative research so the specifics of implementation will not be detailed further here but Smith and Osborn (2015) provide a good overview and information regarding how to use them in primary research. As was noted earlier, the data was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis, and this is detailed in Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). The details of this analytical process will, however, have to be reserved for another chapter.

## Conclusion

The chapter was written to illustrate a new direction for event research. Using the psychological research tool of DES can generate new insights into events and festivals. The chapter discussed, however, not simply a new method of data collection but also a new research philosophy. This new philosophical lens sees not only events differently, but in addition, the very focus and reason for doing research. It is a critical socio-psychological perspective that can develop theory, permit new voices to be heard, and experiences to be explored. It is this type of methodological consideration and advancement, supported by those in social sciences, which will drive events studies forward.

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# 14

## The Strength of Festival Ties: Social Network Analysis and the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival

David Jarman

### Introduction

Charlotte Brontë'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. Brontë 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 out-moded 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 Fig. 14.1.

### 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

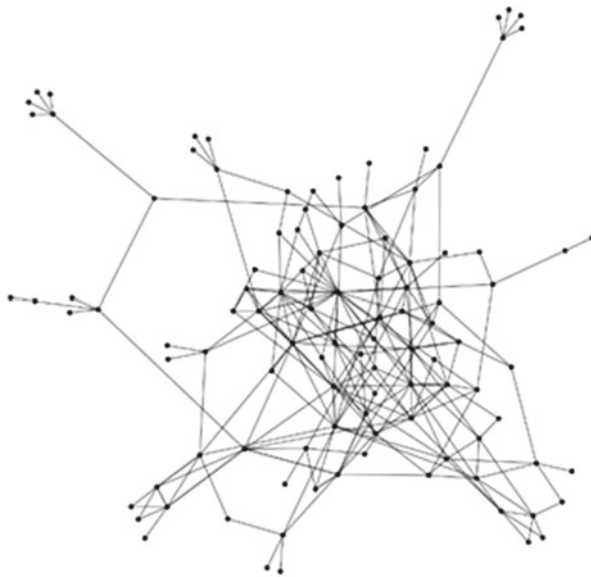


Fig. 14.1 Initial visualisation

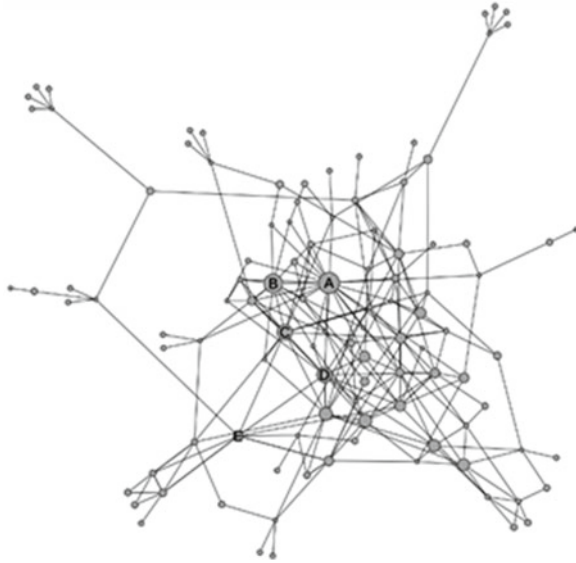
within Gephi, the EISF research then considered a range of hypotheses and questions to learn more about the festival and its staff network on the eve of the 2014 event. The following discussion draws out some of these results, as well as describing some of the key terms used in SNA.

## 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 14.2 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 A03 has the highest in-centrality rank (15 edges), followed by A29 (13), then B058, and A21 (both with 10). B079 meanwhile has a relatively low indegree centrality



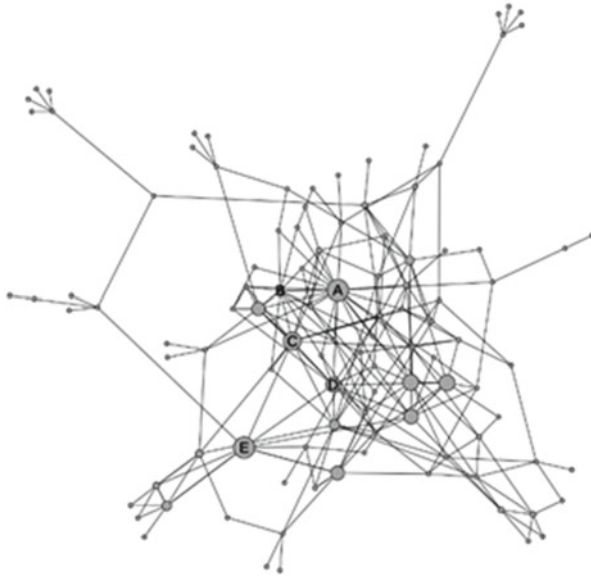
**Fig. 14.2** Indegree centrality

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.

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

In Fig. 14.3 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 B079 is now much more noticeable, while A29 is a fraction of its former size. Given the data available, B079 is shown to





**Fig. 14.3** Between centrality

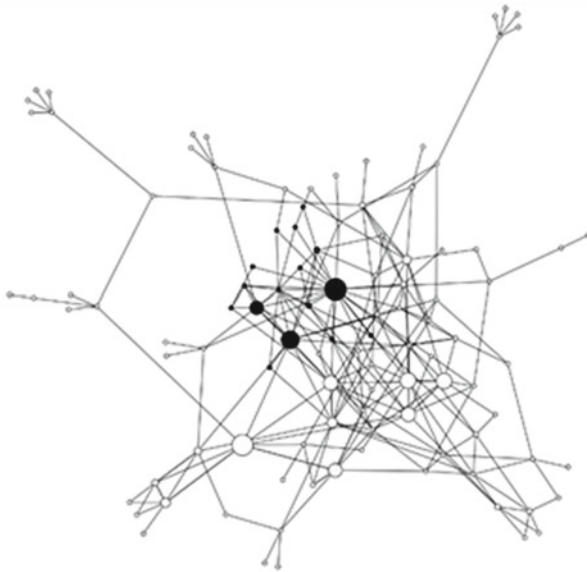
have an important role in linking parts of the network that would otherwise be more distantly connected. A29 fails to fulfil this role despite its high indegree centrality; it is likely, however, that they would be much more prominently reflected on this measure had they completed a survey and shown that they can recognise the importance of others as well as being seen as important themselves. The node with the highest betweenness centrality is A03 at a measure of 188.95, with B079 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 A03 has a greater claim to ‘global centrality’ because of its prominence within the network as a whole (Scott, 2013, p. 83). (A29 registers a score of 0.00.)

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 14.4 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



**Fig. 14.4** Cluster sub-group

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).

### 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 Fig. 14.5 is based on these data and supports the hypothesis: with the nodes labelled according to the responses given, and sized according to

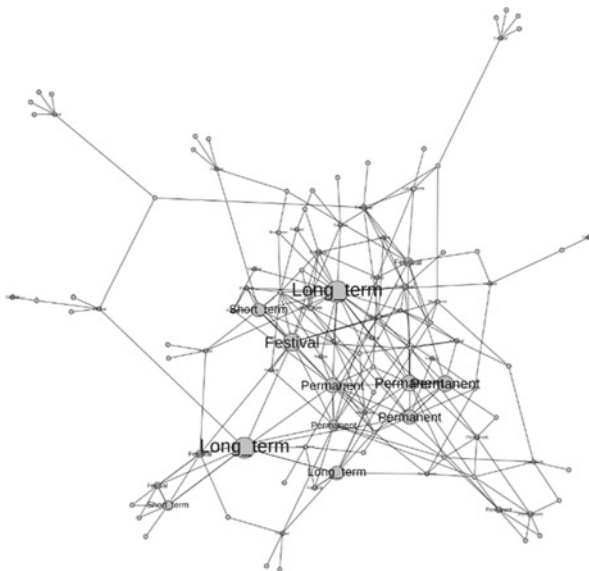


Fig. 14.5 Employment status

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 Fig. 14.6 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

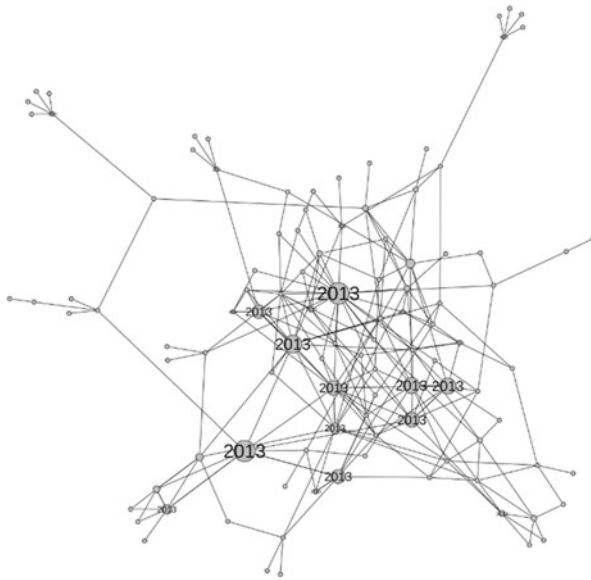
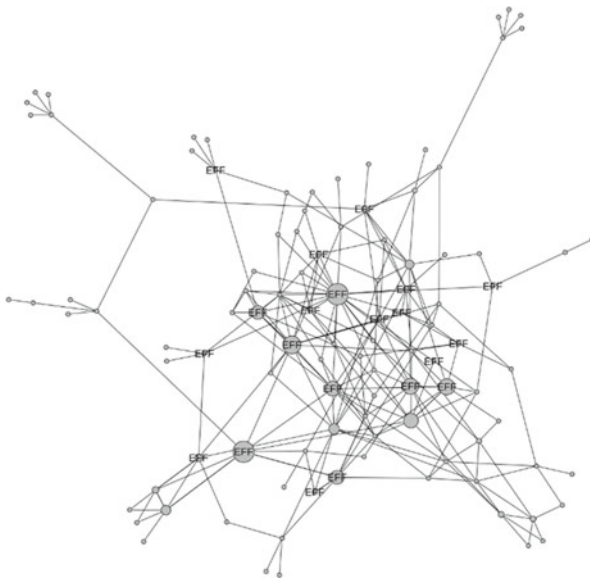


Fig. 14.6 2014 EISF

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.

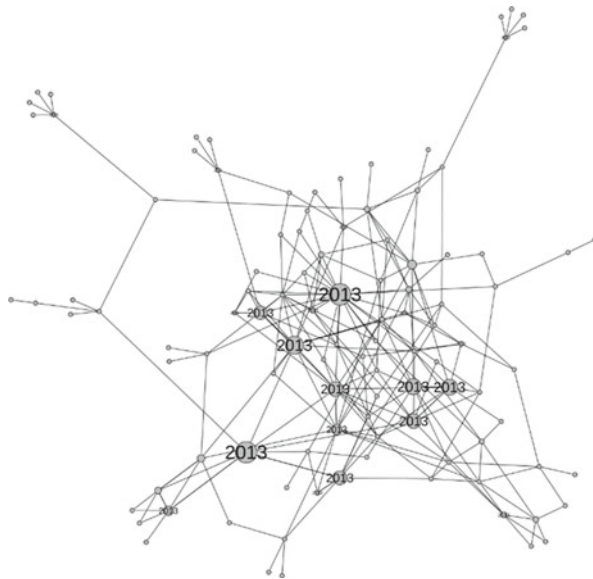
### **Hypothesis 5: The EISF's Social Network Reflects the Extent to Which People Establish Festival Careers by Moving Between Organisations**

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 Fig. 14.7



**Fig. 14.7** Employment status

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 14.8 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.



**Fig. 14.8** Edinburgh 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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# Index

## A

- archives, 91–2, 99–101
- autoethnography, 213ff
  - analytic autoethnography, 217
  - evocative autoethnography, 217–18, 221, 223

## B

- Badiou, A., 233
- Bakhtin, M., 238
  - Carnavalesque, 238, 242, 244
- Barthes, R., 77
- Bhaskar, R., 257, 259, 261. *See also* critical realism
- Boullier, D., 237
- Bourdieu, P., 19, 77

## C

- conflictuality, 231, 234, 235–8, 246.
  - See also* space
  - contested space, 112, 116
- constructivism, 63–4
- corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS), 149ff
- corpus linguistics (CL), 151, 157, 158
- critical discourse analysis (CDA), 131ff, 150. *See also* discourse-historical approach
- critical event studies (CES), 3–5
- critical realism, 134, 257
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., 253
- cultural festivals, 60–1, 81, 282.
  - See also* Bakhtin, M.
- cultural studies, 78, 112

## D

- deductive and inductive approaches,  
20, 21, 62
- Deleuze, G., 232, 233
- della Porta, D., 236
- Derrida, J., 133
- de Saussure, F., 78
- digital media, 94. *See also* social media
- discourse, 79, 134, 136, 156, 160, 234  
discourse analysis, 67, 79, 150, 159  
discourse-historical approach, 137.  
*See also* critical discourse  
analysis
- disruption, 133, 267, 290. *See also*  
Badiou, A.
- document analysis, 182–3
- Dunning, E., 23, 24–5, 234

## E

- economic impact, 175, 177
- Elias, N., 18, 20–3, 234
- Ellis, C., 216, 217–18, 221
- encoding/decoding, 77, 112. *See also*  
Hall, S.
- epistemology, 21, 260, 261
- Ethics, 60, 79–80, 199–200, 220–1,  
223, 263, 267, 292
- ethnography, 46, 63, 170, 217, 231,  
237
- eventful protest, 233, 237
- event typology, 65

## F

- Fairclough, N., 134, 150
- fieldwork, 38, 44
- figurational sociology, 18, 23, 25–6

## G

- gender, 163–4, 168, 209, 239
- Gephi, 294, 295
- Gramsci, A., 135–6, 139, 145
- Grotowski, J., 118–19
- grounded theory, 25, 63
- Guattari, F., 232

## H

- habitus, 77
- Halbwachs, M., 115
- Hall, S., 110, 112
- hegemony, 60, 135, 136
- historiography, 89, 90
- Husserl, E., 19, 261, 262. *See also*  
phenomenology

## I

- ideology, 115, 117, 126, 154
- Insider-Outsider Dichotomy, 38,  
46–9, 54, 187–8, 237
- internationalism, 88
- interpretivism, 19, 22, 26, 65, 186, 257

## J

- Jessop, B., 139

## L

- Laclau, E. 134, 136, 142. *See also*  
Mouffe, C.
- Lefebvre, H., 110, 116, 124, 247
- legacy, 41, 46, 90, 103, 118, 176, 177,  
180, 183, 187, 209, 234
- lifeworld, 262–3

## M

- Massey, D., 233  
 mega-events, 38  
   mega sporting-events (MSE), 40, 43  
   Commonwealth Games, 96–8, 98–9, 103, 180–1, 185  
   FIFA World Cup, 37ff, 232, 239–42  
   Olympics, 39, 88, 153, 159, 176  
   Pan/Para-pan American Games, 180, 181, 183, 187  
   Paralympics, 39, 88  
 memory, 109ff, 269  
 meta-narrativity, 140, 141  
 metaphysical present, 115, 118–24  
 mixed methods, 65, 67–8, 81, 195, 299  
 Mouffe, C., 134, 135  
 myth, 135, 141, 142. *See also* Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C.

## N

- neoliberalism, 133, 138, 145  
 Nora, P., 116

## O

- objective, 19, 22, 32, 62, 94, 179  
 observation, 26, 28, 40, 44, 77, 185, 196, 245, 289  
 ontology, 21, 61, 134, 257  
 operationalism, 225

## P

- Partington, A., 156, 160  
 phenomenology, 26, 62, 256, 261–2, 268. *See also* Husserl, E.  
 positionality of researcher, 24, 37, 47–9, 52, 54, 61  
 positivism, 19, 22, 61–3, 257  
 poststructuralism, 131, 133, 216  
 power, 60, 61, 66, 81, 93, 117, 124, 141, 198, 215, 258, 281, 286  
 Prell, C., 286, 287, 291, 293  
 principle of uniqueness, 81  
 problem of involvement, 17ff  
 project management, 42

## R

- Ranciere, J., 234, 238  
 research variables  
   dependent variable, 62, 73, 236  
   exogenous, 73  
   independent variable, 62, 73  
 Rojek, C., 22, 23, 280

## S

- snapshot research, 176, 180  
 social media, 133, 143, 170, 278, 304  
 social movements, 236  
   indignados, 131, 138  
   Occupy, 138, 146  
 social network analysis (SNA), 277ff  
 South Africa, 37ff, 96, 232, 239–42. *See also* FIFA World Cup

space, 109ff, 133, 180, 231, 233,  
236, 239–42, 262. *See also*  
Lefebvre, H.

spectacle, 89, 120. *See also*  
carnavalesque

sporting governing bodies  
Federation Internationale de  
Football Association (FIFA),  
37–8, 40, 239

International Olympic  
Committee (IOC), 38,  
88, 91

SPSS, 67, 77

stakeholders, 60, 74, 196,  
279–81

storytelling, 215

subjective, 26, 61, 254

## T

theory testing, 20, 37, 158

triangulation, 67, 72, 79, 81, 92,  
170

## V

van Dijk, T., 150

volunteer, 180, 186, 204, 244, 280

## W

Wodak, R., 150