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Title: Festivals, Public Space & Cultural Inclusion: Public Policy Insights

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Abstract

This paper investigates if and how cities conceive of festivals staged in outdoor public space as a means of achieving cultural inclusion policy objectives. The inclusion of culture in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) creates an imperative for cities to scrutinize their approaches to making their cities inclusive. Festivals offer potential in this regard and this study examines the ways that Barcelona, Dublin, Glasgow, Gothenburg and London incorporate festivals into cultural inclusion policies. It relies on secondary research to critically analyse a range of current policy documents, informed by Ball's (1994) ideas about policy contexts: (a) of influence, (b) of policy text production, and (c) of practice. Findings confirm existing assessments of the festival landscape as being complex (Maughan 2009). They show that while the cities studied have a long history of strategizing about festivals, this has not yet led to dedicated policy attention. Overall, in line with work by Whitford, Phi and Dredge (2014), a market-led approach to festivals dominates, although evidence of a policy rhetoric linking festivals to cultural inclusion is present. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that policy thinking about how festivals can achieve cultural inclusion is neither sufficiently comprehensible nor 'joined up' across relevant policy domains.

Keywords: Festivals, cultural Inclusion, public policy, public space, Europe

1. Introduction

Urban policy makers have long paid attention to festivals, assigning them particular roles in line with shifting political priorities. In recent times they have become synonymous with neo-liberal agendas and central to entrepreneurial cities' efforts to generate commerce, regenerate place and stand out on the highly competitive global stage. Indeed, for some time now, the event policy environment has been market-dominated (Whitford, Phi and Dredge 2014).

This situation has tended to be negatively viewed by academic commentators. Market-dominated policy aspirations are critiqued because festivals do not necessarily deliver the kinds of economic outcomes expected of them (Kwiatkowski & Oklevik, 2017), and because they often have serious shortcomings in respect of environmental sustainability (Hazel and Mason 2020). In addition, such policy aspirations overlook the potential for festivals to contribute to social and cultural sustainability. Academic studies point to festivals' potential to 'promote equality, cultural diversity, inclusion, good community relations, and human rights' (Pernecky and Lück 2013, p. 26), and to foster civic norms that support the capacity for living with difference in otherwise segmented cities (Barker, Crawford, Booth and Churchill 2019). However, claims like these have not yet influenced policy-making to any noticeable degree. Indeed, according to van der Hoeven & Hitters (2019), little is known about the policy conditions that could support the achievement of all of these values.

This paper investigates if and how cities conceive of festivals staged in outdoor public spaces as ways to encourage greater cultural inclusion. It follows Martiniello (2015) in recognising that the relationship between the arts, culture and inclusion is under-explored, especially in respect of how city authorities might assist by pursuing particular kinds of political narratives and creating particular kinds of supportive conditions. Allied to this is an understanding that public space is a critical ingredient for creating public life in cities (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1998, Amin 2008) and for encouraging open participation in society. The paper is cognisant that achieving social and cultural inclusion is now a key societal challenge for cities where ethnic and cultural diversity has become an indisputable reality (Saukkonen and Pykkönen 2008). It is also aware that the use of culture as a development tool has become more prominent because of its inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in SDG 16 with its focus on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and in SDG 11, which focuses on making cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable. Hosagrahar, Soule, Fusco Girard, and Potts (2016) argue that urban policy makers will need to try new approaches and make concerted efforts if they are to create an inclusive future. Undoubtedly, festivals will feature in many of the approaches that cities will use to this end, but is there evidence that city

governments see a role for festivals in promoting inclusion? If so, how is this manifest in policies and actions?

Empirically, the study analyses policy documents pertaining to festivals and to cultural inclusion in five European cities: Barcelona, Dublin, Glasgow, London and Gothenburg. The paper begins by reviewing the literature on the role that both festivals and public space can play in developing cultural inclusion. It goes on to review the festival policy literature before proceeding to present and discuss empirical data generated from a critical analysis of policy documents.

2. Festivals and cultural inclusion

For Wally Ryan and Wollan (2013) modern consumer society is inseparable from the construction of spaces of display like festivals. Indeed, in recent years, festivals have turned into progressively dominant platforms for cultural production, distribution and consumption (Négrier 2015). The seemingly relentless festivalisation of cities (Ronström 2016) is now a well discussed phenomenon but amidst the generally negative overtones of this debate, sight should not be lost of the fact that festivals have historically been a force for social sustainability, habitually renewing the lifestream of a community (Falassi 1987), reproducing and perpetuating memories, and reinventing traditions and practices. Investigating how festivals create possibilities for different cohorts to take part in society, to participate culturally and come together communally has been advanced using a number of conceptual ideas. The event studies literature has often used concepts like social network analysis (Jarman 2018, Mair and Duffy 2020), stakeholder theory (Andersson and Getz 2008) and innovation networks (Larson 2009) to study the inter-relationships and interactions that characterise festival activity. All of this literature shows that festivals offer possibilities for different cohorts of people to find common ground and develop *communitas* (Wu, Li, Wood, Senaux and Dai 2020). They are inherently communal, produced in and through the interactions and networking of diverse agents coming together in time-space, usually with something of a shared purpose.

Numerous empirical studies argue that festivals of various kinds can foster inclusion. These tend to build their arguments around social and cultural inclusion in tandem, partially because it is very difficult to speak about culture without referring to the social. The growing body of festival studies drawing on the concept of social capital to study the dynamics of interactions between audiences (Arcodia and Whitford 2007, Wilks 2011), residents (Finkel 2010) and community groups (Devine and Quinn 2019) is a case in point. In contrast, cultural capital is relatively infrequently studied in festival contexts (Weber, 2018). Nevertheless, singular arguments are made about festivals and cultural

inclusion by Getz (2007), for example, who argued that they foster belonging and sharing among family, community and other social and cultural groups, and by Rokam (2005) who pointed to the role that they play in reproducing shared histories and developing a shared sense of community among groups of people. The body of work specifically investigating multicultural festivals has made several claims about cultural inclusion, often with respect to the crucial role that they play in facilitating the expression and reproduction of cultural identity (Picard and Robinson 2006). McClinchey (2008) credited festivals with fostering a sense of belonging. Buch, Milne and Dickson (2011) argued that they help to reproduce traditional cultures, while Lee, Arcodia and Lee (2012) considered them to be important for building cultural diversity and hence for strengthening multicultural societies. More recently, Hassanli, Walters and Williamson (2020) and Hassanli, Walters and Friedmann (2019) have argued that these kinds of festivals create opportunities for attendees from multiple cultures to deepen existing social ties and forge new ones through the sharing of experiences.

3. Festivals, cultural inclusion and public space

The foregoing discussion points to the potential of festivals to encourage cultural and indeed social participation. However, this paper is particularly focused on festivals staged in outdoor public spaces, and it is contended that when the potential of public space is allied to that of festivals then their combined potential to generate particular kinds of sociability, social exchange and social co-existence becomes more pronounced (Pinochet Cobos 2019). While the publicness of public space is a much discussed and very complex topic (see Carmona 2010 and Smith 2016 for a detailed discussion), it is not possible to further problematise it here. Instead the paper adopts Smith's (2016: 18) realistic and reasonable definition of public space as that which is 'available for use by any person and at no cost'.

In focusing its enquiries on festivals staged in public space, the authors are aware that an important public good associated with public space is that it offers opportunities 'to construct social ties and civic norms that bind loosely connected strangers' (Barker et al. 2019, p.495). Public space is a critical ingredient for creating public life in cities, the life that takes place in the public realm through the casual encounters between people who differ from each other (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1998, Amin 2008). Barker et al. (2019, p.498) refer to Sunstein's labelling of streets and parks as 'key public fora', where diverse people congregate, becoming exposed to all kinds of expressions of difference in ways that 'serve a well-functioning democracy'. Sezer (2018) also suggests that the role of public space in shaping public life is key for the socio-cultural inclusion of immigrants, offering visibility for different groups, opportunities to interact and engage with others, and a chance to express cultural values and so assert citizenship.

Introducing public space into the discussion about festivals, policy and cultural inclusion opens up new ways of thinking about festivals and inclusion. Leitner (2012, p.890), for example, has discussed how creating unusual opportunities for engagement, encounter and interaction can create new spaces, destabilising normal boundaries and affording possibilities for new kinds of interactions 'across difference'. Festivals may constitute such an 'unusual' opportunity. Ye (2019) draws on Askins and Pain (2011) to explain that the materiality of place can influence the tone or atmosphere of a setting. This is very relevant in festival settings where materiality is often premised on encouraging participative and co-creative activities, and active engagement via shared interests. All of these activities create potential for new connections to be made. These ideas clearly connect with Montgomery's (1998) detailed description of the diversity of public spaces. It is very likely that festivals contribute to diversity in that they influence and often stretch the 'opening hours' of public spaces, create meeting places and spaces for people watching, add to the variety and composition of activities in the public zone and generate an array of varied activities. All of these contributions encourage interaction between actors and so enhance the vitality of urban space as evidenced by the presence of people that they draw into public spaces at different times of the day/evening. Furthermore, certain public spaces, because 'of their affective dimensions and the nature of the interactions they foster' can function as 'convivial spaces' (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014, p.347), where encounters with difference are fostered and intergroup mixing is facilitated (Barker et al 2019, p.511). It is in situations where shared activities are encouraged that loose ties of connection can contribute to the generation of simple recognition and the sharing of interests and values between different groups, if not necessarily to greater communality (Gilmore 2017).

4. Festivals in the urban policy arena

The overall tenor of the discussion so far is that festivals staged in public space can help to foster dialogue between diverse groups by creating alternative structures of identification and social configuration (Kappler 2013). However, an important consideration raised in this paper concerns the extent to which these theoretical ideas inform policy thinking. The degree to which policy-makers actively seek to nurture the potential of festivals to enrich public life, create social encounters in public space and encourage cultural inclusion will have a strong bearing on whether potentials are realised.

There is no doubt that cities throughout the world use festivals as a strategic tool and invest heavily in them every year (Newbold et al 2015). Many commentators note that festivals and events have become increasingly politicised in recent decades as city governments use them instrumentally to further neo-liberal policy agendas (Foley, McGillivray, & McPherson, 2012). Quinn (2019) noted that arts festivals have become a mainstay of urban development, urban regeneration and urban tourism

policies, and numerous empirical studies show this to be the case. As Quinn (2019: 264) went on to state, the prevalent instrumental use of festivals generates a range of 'contested reactions'. However, while countless articles explain that festivals and events have been politicised in this vein, in-depth, critical understanding of policies and policy-making remains elusive (Getz 2009). This has long been the case: a recurring theme in the literature has been to critique the lack of cohesive strategic thinking about festivals and events whether at national or city level. According to Ilczuk and Kulikowska (2007, p. 6), festival policy can be understood as 'coherent, intentional action undertaken by any level of public authorities concerning festivals', but their survey of 20 European countries found that only three countries had 'at least elements of' public festival policy: Austria, France and Portugal (Ilczuk and Kulikowska 2007, p. 44). Maughan (2009: 57) wrote about the 'relatively weak links between festivals and non-cultural policy agendas, and tensions which hinder the development of the sector' (p. 57) and this assessment has been repeated often in the literature (Getz 2009, Whitford 2009). Getz (2009, p.62) argued that 'public policy pertaining to festivals and other planned events is generally fractionalized ... not comprehensive ... and fails to integrate events effectively with all the relevant policy domains'. Relatedly, Whitford, Phi and Dredge (2014) note the lack of attention paid to event governance.

Researchers generally agree that a variety of political ideologies underpin the decisions taken to support festivals in different places (Dale and Newman 2010). Shin and Stevens (2013) argue that contemporaneously, urban policies in general tend to be shaped by a very competitive neo-liberal ideology. Accordingly, festivals usually attract attention and assume relevance within creative city policy frameworks that instrumentalise arts and culture as a development asset, as vehicles for consumption, branding, tourism and urban regeneration (Grodach 2017), as well as for economic development (Jakob 2013). For Degen and Garcia (2012: 2) 'culture in its widest sense, from cultural industries to museums or events, is regarded as a crucial pillar of economic development in the post-industrial city'. Not surprisingly, a great many studies critically consider how cultural events are instrumentally used in entrepreneurial urban policies to regenerate cities. Several studies have reflected, for instance, on how both Glasgow (e.g. Mooney 2004, Shin and Stevens 2013) and Derry/Londonderry (e.g. Doak 2014, 2018, Boland, Shirlow and Murtagh 2019) have sought to use festivity and culture more broadly as a means of transforming their cities. There is also a substantial body of research on the European City of Culture event (e.g. Garcia 2005, Boland 2010, Paris and Baert 2011). Much of the tone here is critical and communicates the well-rehearsed argument that festivals privileging economic-related policy goals can disempower local voices (Gotham 2005) and fail to connect with a broad cross section of diverse socio-cultural cohorts (Olsen 2013). Beyond this critical literature, researchers tend to overlook the social and cultural values associated with festivals in

favour of economic matters (Van der Hoeven and Hitters 2018), and few have considered how cities actively seek to use festivals to develop cultural inclusion through their public policy models. Hassen and Giovanardi (2018) are a rare exception. They wrote about Leicester, in the UK as an example of a city that over a number of decades has developed a series of multi-cultural policies, including investing in festivals, in the interest of creating a multi-cultural city.

Thus overall, there is very little in the festival policy literature about cultural inclusion and so at this point, it is difficult to know whether the potentials ascribed to festivals in the conceptual literature are acknowledged in the policy arena. UNESCO define cultural inclusion as the need to 'ensure cultural participation, access, and the right to express and interpret culture' (UNESCO undated). The World Bank (2017) defines socio-cultural inclusion as 'the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society – improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity'. Again, however, little is known about how these complicated concepts are being defined and operationalised by policy-makers in the context of urban-based festival and event activity. This study aims to address this deficiency by exploring the ways that European cities, particularly those with already ethnically diverse populations or with high levels of recent in migration, use festivals to achieve cultural inclusion.

5. Methodology

Specifically, this paper investigates if and how cities conceive of festivals staged in outdoor public space as a means of achieving cultural inclusion policy goals. The focus is on festivals staged in outdoor public space because it is thought that the combined potential of festivals and public space creates enhanced opportunities to promote sociability (Pinochet Cobos 2019). The study draws on a critical policy analysis approach to interrogate current policy documents, produced at city level, that pay attention to festivals. The source of these documents varied across the five case cities. Sometimes they were produced by the city municipalities, or by the Mayor's Office in the case of London. At other times, relevant documents were produced by agencies publicly funded and supported by the municipality. As already indicated, this is a complex and fragmented policy field. Using secondary research, the researchers identified the policy documents pertaining to festivals, discovering in the process that this necessitated including both documents pertaining specifically to festivals and events primarily, and to those that contain references to festivals e.g. city development plans, cultural strategies, tourism plans, cultural integration strategies. It became immediately apparent that relevant documents in the different cities were variously termed plans, strategies, or programmes. The difference between these documents was not very clear and following Becken, Whittlesea, Loehr and Scott (2020), it is argued here that in a policy context, the title of a document does not necessarily reveal its precise purpose. Accordingly, all of those documents pertaining to the current period and

containing references to festivals, were selected for study. For each city these included i) the city development plan, ii) a cultural strategy (or equivalent) if available, iii) a festival and event strategy (if available), or a tourism strategy if that is where the municipality considers festivals, iv) cultural inclusion-related policies if available. On average, four documents for each city were included in the study.

Each of the documents studied was subjected to content analysis to identify a number of a priori categories (Weber 1990) derived deductively from our research questions: a) how festivals are defined, b) how, and to what extent festivals feature, and in which policy documents, c) the policy objectives with which festivals are associated, d) the policy actions relating to festivals, e) explicit linkages between festivals and outdoor space and the public realm, f) specific actions relating to outdoor public festivals, g) how cultural inclusion is defined and used relative to other related terms, h) specific linkages between festivals and cultural inclusion or related policy objectives, and j) specific actions linking festivals to cultural inclusion policy objectives. All of the ensuing data from the five case cities were then drawn together. Data analysis was informed by Ball's (1994) ideas about policy contexts: (a) the context of influence, (b) the context of policy text production, and (c) the context of practice. This means that the documents were read to: identify the stakeholders and interest groups influential in constructing the policy discourses; identify and analyse references to festivals and events, and to cultural inclusion and related terms like diversity and interculturality and; identify the activities and initiatives produced to translate policy into practice. Acknowledging that policy documents are not written in a vacuum but are socially, economically and politically embedded in the contexts within which they are produced is important, and so context information was also gathered on the very varied city contexts.

6. Comparative analysis of the five case studies

This section begins with some contextual information on the cities, and background detail on the evolution of their festival policies. It goes on to detail the findings pertaining to the roles played by stakeholders and interest groups in shaping the policy discourses in evidence. The analysis of the policy texts is then presented, followed by an identification of actions taken by means of policy implementation.

6.1 City contexts and the evolution of festival policies

The study cities differ on many counts. In terms of population, London, an undisputed global city, towers over the other cities with 10.8 million inhabitants. Barcelona, with 5.4 million comes next,

while Dublin and Glasgow are very similar, each with populations of close to 1.2 million. Gothenburg is much smaller with 580,000 (Demographia 2019). All of the cities have ethnically diverse populations and face challenges in ensuring that people from multi ethnic backgrounds are included, and are able to participate meaningfully, in society. While Barcelona's population has been ethnically mixed since the early 1980s its ethnic diversity has grown rapidly in recent decades. Dublin's population has also become significantly ethnically mixed in recent decades. In both cities, statistics show a tendency for migrant populations to cluster, rather than to disperse evenly throughout city districts. Quite differently, in a European context, Sweden stands out as having been among the most willing of any European state to take in immigrants, and has encountered many challenges in the process. Indeed, Gothenburg is considered to be an extremely segregated city, not least since the (so-called) refugee crises in 2015. Two of the cities (London and Dublin) are capitals, which means that nationally, they have an unrivalled degree of political and commercial power, as well as a disproportionate large share of cultural institutions. Meanwhile Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia, an autonomous region in Northern Spain with a strongly pro-independence government. Three of the cities come from two of Europe's most populous and culturally influential states (Glasgow and London in the UK and Barcelona in Spain), which makes them central to the production and consumption of so many internationally prevailing cultural narratives. Politically, Gothenburg stands apart from the other cities in that the Swedish system of government is characterised by a market-oriented welfare democracy with an extensive public sector (Alestalo, Hort & Kuhnle, 2009).

The cities' associations with festivals and events differ substantially on a number of fronts. London and Barcelona, as the largest cities in the study, have long traditions of staging mega and large-scale events of all kinds. Both have hosted the Olympic Games, London having done so three times, and both cities have by now long traditions of strategically using events to further urban regeneration and international positioning goals. Barcelona has been doing this since at least since 1888 when it hosted the first World Exhibition. Both cities also have long histories of investing in festivals, as distinct from business and sporting events. In Barcelona, for example, the late 1970s – early 1980s saw a revival of cultural festivals in a move to democratise public space and recover Catalan popular traditions after the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975). Recent decades have also seen festivals and events like the Fòrum Universal de les Cultures which dates to 2004, being used as an opportunity to achieve marketing, economic and urban development goals. Gothenburg's urban transformation since the 1980s highlights the fact that urban re-design, specifically the role of public space and the importance of culture, events and tourism have played a key role in the city's development since the 1980s (Franzén, Hertting and Thörn 2016). Like Gothenburg, Glasgow's regeneration as a city has been closely bound up with the strategic use of events, including cultural events, since the 1980s. Its

designation as European City of Culture in 1990 achieved particular international renown for the city in this regard. The evolution of strategic thinking about events began later in Dublin, arguably in 1995, when the national and city governments in combination, initiated the St Patrick's Festival with clear tourism motives. Its experience in hosting large scale international events is more modest than the other cities to date, although its *Culture and Creative Strategy Dublin (2018-2022)* document aims to make culture central to the city's position global competitiveness and reputation in the future.

6.2 Influential stakeholders

For Zamanifard et al (2018) public spaces are shaped through the influence of multiple actors and stakeholders and the same holds true for festival policies. Much has been written about how festivals are produced through networks of diverse actors and stakeholders, although it seems that local government is a particularly crucial stakeholder (Smith, 2012). The analysis of the policy documents found this to be the case for all the study cities. In four of the five, the municipality produces an overarching city development plan that theoretically informs policy thinking across all domains including festivals. London is governed by the Greater London Authority, led by the Mayor of London. One of the Mayor's key responsibilities is culture, and its strategies and policies, supported by London and Partners (the Mayor's promotional agency) strongly shape festival activity in the city. In the case of London, the Mayor's role is supplementary to the work of 32 Boroughs. These Boroughs, many of which have population sizes comparable to small cities, regulate and support events staged in their own localities (Pugh and Wood 2004). In the other cities, the municipality plays a key role in regulating the sector, granting licenses and applications, providing financial and in-kind resources, developing various guidelines on best practice, and organising festivals themselves.

While municipal governments, and the Mayor in the case of London, are central players, all of these public stakeholders work in collaboration with different stakeholders to bring festivals to fruition. When the city is the capital city and/or when the event at issue is of national or international significance then multi-level governance is apparent as the municipality/Mayor partners with other public partners (state agencies or government departments) to conceive and deliver activities. Such arrangements can cause tensions as city and national priorities are not always in alignment. Collaborative approaches involving citizens are also evident in Gothenburg where private property owners are identified as important stakeholders in strategic decision-making about planning for events in the city. Similarly, in Barcelona, the current municipality set up a Citizens Platform to involve citizen participation in municipal decision-making, including in respect of decisions about festivals.

Further complexity comes in the form of public-private partnerships and this is often most apparent when it comes to translating policy into practice, taking actions and delivering festivals. In Gothenburg, collaborative arrangements between public and private stakeholders have shaped the urban regeneration of the city since the 1980s. The destination management organization (DMO) Göteborg & Co. was established in 1991 and used to be a public-private partnership although it is now fully public. The event organization GotEvent was established in 1999. These two municipal corporations promote the development of Gothenburg as a city of events and as a tourist destination. Collaborative arrangements were also introduced in Glasgow, where the council established Glasgow Life, an arms length external organization dedicated to supporting festival and event activity. It sets the policy context, creates the strategies and most of the actions related to culture, sports, festivals and events in the city. In addition, the city has an Event Board, tasked with aligning festivals and events activity with political priorities. Festivals and events in the city are also heavily promoted by city authorities, primarily the now defunct DMO, the Glasgow Conventions and Marketing Bureau. In both of these cities the strong influence of sectoral interests promoting tourism, destination positioning and urban development is particularly obvious. However, it is the case that in all cities, links with tourism bodies, economic development agencies, community groups, cultural organisations and national bodies are strong. In Dublin there is a strong intention to develop partnerships to increase cultural participation in the future, according to strategic priority 5 of the city's *Culture and Creative Strategy Dublin (2018-2022)* document. The nature of public-private partnership involved can be very influential in influencing policy and practice. For example, when the DMO in Glasgow was operational (until 2018/19), only those events with the potential to contribute to the visitor economy were given strategic city-wide support and resources. This obviously had negative implications for those events privileging cultural inclusion and diversity objectives

6.3 Festival policy texts

This section reports the findings from the analysis of the policy texts. A key finding is that four of the five study cities do not have policy documents dedicated to either festivals or events at the city level, although it can be noted that many London boroughs do have event strategies. Instead, mentions and references to festivals can be variously found in policy documents spanning from overarching city development plans to sectoral specific plans usually culture or tourism related. Dublin is the one exception, and this is the city with the least experience of using festivals or events as a tool of urban policy. It produced its first dedicated events strategy of which festivals form a part, in November 2018. While Glasgow developed a new Event Strategy just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has not been published.

6.3.1 Festivals

An analysis of the policy texts in isolation showed no discernible pattern across the cities. They all treat festivals differently. All cities give some explicit attention to festivals in some of their policy documents, but the documents in question vary across the cities. Simultaneously, all of them have policies that implicitly refer to festivals in discussions on topics like cultural life, recreation, open space, parks, etc. So, for example, the most prevalent explicit discussion about festivals in Gothenburg is encased in a tourism discourse but events also feature in the city's *Programme for Cultural Life* which stresses the ambition to become a leading city of culture. However, events and festivals do not explicitly feature in either the current *Comprehensive Plan for Göteborg* (2009), or in the new plan being drawn up at present, although green spaces, outdoor recreation and their links to quality of life are clearly valued in this plan. In Glasgow, no one single policy document details the city's events strategy, although a new Event Strategy is due to be published in the near future. Instead, festivals and events are incorporated into a range of other policy areas including tourism, economic development, area regeneration, culture, sport, health and wellbeing. In contrast, Dublin has a dedicated *Event Strategy & Event Sponsorship Guidelines* document but this is very outline in content with surprisingly few connections to the overarching *City Development Plan 2016 – 2022*. Festivals feature in this city development plan, but much less frequently than events which are strongly emphasised in terms of animating the public realm and making the city attractive for visitors. Festivals, in contrast, tend to be written about in terms of multi-functional outdoor spaces and building sustainable neighbourhoods. Dublin also has a *Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018 -2022*, which was produced by the city in response to a national programme *Creative Ireland 2017 - 2022*. This strategy makes stronger reference to festivals, citing them frequently as examples of programme delivery, and linking them aspirationally to several strategic priorities including supporting artists, promoting cultural participation, developing collaborative approaches to increasing cultural participation and enhancing global competitiveness. In London, policy thinking about festivals is most obviously articulated in cultural terms through the Mayor of London's latest cultural strategy *Culture for all Londoners* (2018), although festivals also feature in a variety of strategies and policies produced by the Mayor. The Mayor of London's cultural strategy (2018) gives a high profile to festivals, aspiring in its second strategic objective to 'bring Londoners together through major cultural programmes, festivals and events' (p.68). This theme of 'bringing people together' through events is evident elsewhere in the strategy, with events allocated a key role in 'bringing people from all backgrounds together' (p.14), 'building bridges between communities' (p.56) and 'providing spaces where people

from all backgrounds come together’ (p.56). In Barcelona, while cultural planning is a strong priority in the city and festivals feature strongly within this, the city has no dedicated festival or event policy.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the policy texts analysed tend not to define what is meant by the word ‘festival’. Indeed, little, if any, attention is paid to distinguishing festivals from events. The one exception is Dublin’s *Event Strategy and Event Sponsorship Guidelines* (2018), which specifically classifies festivals and events into ‘premier’, ‘major’ and ‘city level’ categories on the basis of a range of funding criteria. The listing of criteria yield insight into how the municipality values festivals.

6.3.2 Public spaces

Across the five case cities, little specific mention is made in the policy texts of festivals that take place in outdoor public spaces. Nevertheless, public space is a very important concept in policy texts across all five cities. In Gothenburg, public space is defined as a fundamental aspect of a diverse cultural life in all its programs. The *Comprehensive Plan for Göteborg* (2009) stresses the value of green spaces and outdoor recreation for everyone, underscoring the links between the outdoors and good quality of life. In general, when policy documents discuss festivals they tend to draw clear associations between festivals and public space. In Barcelona, staging cultural activities in public space is clearly linked to the democratisation of culture. In 2016 the municipality published a mandatory report outlining concrete plans for cultural reforms in the city (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2016). This clearly expressed a desire to establish spaces that encourage co-existence and build social relations between different communities, and envisaged a role for festivals in this respect. Dublin’s City Development Plan frequently mentions festivals, events and outdoor space in one breath, noting for example, the need to upgrade the public domain to facilitate festivals and wishing to promote the active use of the public realm through the hosting of events. Dublin City Council’s *Event Strategy & Event Sponsorship Guidelines* document specifically identifies eight public spaces where events are encouraged.

In London, a notable feature about most of the events funded by the Mayor of London is that they are staged in one of the city’s most iconic and emblematic spaces, Trafalgar Square. This shows an awareness of the ways prominent public spaces can showcase key festivals, and, reciprocally, how key festivals can be used to reimagine public spaces. Trafalgar Square symbolises London in the eyes of many and so, by extension, the events staged here are deemed to represent London. The Square is controlled and managed by the Greater London Authority, which means the Mayor can leverage this space to promote and enact key policies, including those relating to cultural cohesion. The Mayor has tried to communicate that London is diverse, welcoming and inclusive for everyone by staging festivals here that celebrate ethnic and religious minorities (e.g. Africa in the Square, Diwali and Vaisakhi) in

addition to traditional festivities associated with white British identities (e.g. Christmas in Trafalgar Square and the Feast of St George). This not only promotes London's religious and ethnic diversity, it helps to reimagine Trafalgar Square, a space often associated with empire and state power, as a public space that is welcoming for everyone (Smith, 2016). In Glasgow, there have been recent discussions about the need for an Event Spatial Strategy which will consider which public spaces are suitable for what sort of cultural or festival activity.

6.3.3 Cultural Inclusion

All of the cities have at least one if not two cultural inclusion / cultural integration strategies and it was clear from the policy texts that Sustainable Development Goal 11 - to make cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable - is a major concern for all of the cities. In addition, both broader city plans and sectoral specific plans were often replete with references to cultural inclusion. In the *Glasgow City Council Strategic Plan (GCCSP) 2017 – 2022*, for example, the idea of inclusion is paramount, as it is in *Glasgow's Culture Plan (GCP) 2019*. The same can be said of the *Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022*, which strives to make the city competitive, resilient, socially inclusive and sustainable.

Precisely who the cities are striving to include is sometimes unclear from reading the policy texts themselves. In the Mayor of London's *Cultural Strategy 2018*, diversity is a key concept. Events are allocated a key role in 'bringing people from all backgrounds together' (p.14) and while the emphasis is clearly on ethnic diversity, mention is also made of the need to improve access for deaf and disabled people. This Strategy also sees the potential for festivals to 'highlight and promote more of London's diverse cultures' (p.57) and to 'celebrate European communities' (p.60). The population groups that Glasgow wishes to include are people who live in the city: 'all citizens have access to the city's cultural life and its heritage' (GCCSP p.11). The main goal of its policies is to tackle inequalities within the city. On occasion, particular mention is made of groups including the LGBT community, refugees and asylum seekers or black and ethnic minorities. In its Culture Plan, specific focus is on 'under-represented groups', although quite who these are is never made very clear other than to say that they include 'people who have been historically marginalised' or are 'the most disadvantaged people'. Relative to Glasgow, Dublin city's policy documents are even more vague about who exactly it wishes to include. For example, its *Culture & Creativity Strategy 2018-2022* seeks to develop a city that is 'welcoming, tolerant and inclusive of cultural diversity' (p.35, p.61) and throughout it has references to 'every person', 'everyone', 'access for all', 'people of all ages and abilities' and to children. It recognises physical and socio-economic disadvantage, aiming to remove physical or financial barriers to participation. In the city's Development Plan the idea that the city is made up of 'sustainable

neighbourhoods' and of local communities seems important, but exactly how these are defined is not made explicit.

Explicit mention of festivals in the cultural inclusion texts is missing in most cities. Dublin, for example, has an integration strategy dealing with diversity and inclusion (*Dublin City Council Integration Strategy 2016-2020*) but festivals and events barely receive a mention here. Festival and events don't feature prominently in the Mayor of London's strategy for equality and inclusion either (*Inclusive London 2018*), although they receive occasional mentions in respect of bringing communities together, encouraging greater tolerance, and helping to reach newer communities. The city's social integration strategy (*All of Us 2019*) makes no mention at all of festivals or events.

Like London, Barcelona puts a major onus on its cultural policies to promote what it calls interculturality. In its *Citizenship and Immigration Plan 2018- 2021 and the Barcelona Interculturality Plan 2016-2019*, there is a clear commitment to recognising diversity, equality and intercultural dialogue. The latter expresses the goal of building an egalitarian city where people from all cultural backgrounds share rights, duties and opportunities. While there is no explicit reference to festivals, their importance can be inferred in how the council has committed to encouraging interaction between citizens and to promoting the use of shared spaces, sometimes through the staging of events and festivals. The important role of neighbourhood as opposed to city centre spaces is also underscored in these plans.

Gothenburg acknowledges its issues with segregation and lack of inclusion in the municipality's *Equal City - Making the Entire City Socially Sustainable* policy document. As with Barcelona, in the absence of explicit references to festivals, it is reasonable to infer that festivals are relevant when the text mentions, among other things, the value of qualitative leisure-time, the value of interaction between different groups through the use of existing and planned meeting-places/venues, and the importance of public spaces and public leisure activities. Diversity and inclusion are clearly dealt with in its *Programme for tourism and event development* and its *Programme for Cultural Life*, where the ambition to become a leading city of culture and events is stressed. In addition, the notion of how culture, including events and festivals, should be implemented as a strategy to increase inclusivity in society is defined and elaborated, e.g. how culture can leverage multi-culturalism and children's quality of life. Finally, in the city's *Programme for City Equity*, the importance for young people to meet and integrate in public space, and the value of recreation where culture is accessible through the physical environment are defined as important factors, although the specific role envisaged here for festivals is not very clear. In summary, the five cities include lots of admirable policy rhetoric regarding

festivals and inclusion – and how these might be linked - but there is a consistent failure to provide the detail (e.g. around who should be included) that would make these policies clear and convincing.

7 Policy actions

The final part of the analysis involved focusing on the actions and activities enacted in respect of supporting festival activity in the study cities. Put simply, these actions were those taken to fund and support particular festivals. Examining this information often revealed the policy intentions of actors more clearly than the analysis of the policy texts. This was particularly the case when it came to understanding how festivals are understood as a tool for cultural inclusion and how they relate to public space as a means of achieving these ambitions. In Barcelona, for example, festivals do not feature strongly in the policy texts, but it is clear from the actions of the municipality that it ascribes a strong importance to the role that festivals play in fostering interculturality. A clear example of this is the development of La Mercè into a grassroots, diverse and participatory social event involving districts throughout the city. Additionally, the municipality also supports festivals celebrating cultural diversity (e.g. Barcelona Chinese New Year, Pakistan Day and Philippine Independence Day). Another example is the introduction since 2016 of various measures to decentralise cultural activity and festivals around the city. Similarly in London, the actions taken by the Mayor in financially supporting events bear out the focus on ethnic diversity with most of the supported events linked to celebrations of the city's diverse ethnic communities e.g. Eid, London Mela, Vaisakhi and Africa in the Square. Dublin's use of festivals to further inclusion goals can be seen most clearly through its actions: its *Culture & Creativity 2018-2022* strategy details its support for the Chinese New Year Festival and for the Festival of Russian Culture in 2018, even though ethnic diversity is not a core theme in the document. The city has an integration strategy dealing with diversity and inclusion (*Dublin City Council Integration Strategy 2016-2020*) but festivals and events barely receive a mention here.

Earlier it was noted that understanding 'who' the cities are aiming to include is quite difficult to discern, but analysing the actions adds clarity. Glasgow Life, the arms-length agency responsible for festival and event delivery in that city is required to list 'equality outcomes', and an analysis of recent actions shows a focus on the cultures of those of Scottish-Asian and British-Asian ethnicity, on diversifying the festival and event sector workforce, and on encouraging events to initiate community engagement processes. Additionally, the Glasgow Mela festival, delivered by Glasgow Life is frequently mentioned as the city's response to the cultural inclusion agenda, showing a focus on the city's Asian population, although closer analysis reveals that this event is primarily for the city's South Asian population.

Overall, analyzing the policy actions gives insight into the diversity and power dynamics at play among the festival stakeholders involved in the case cities, as the range and type of festivals staged gives some indication of prevailing policy priorities. In London, for example, the Greater London Authority spent approximately £1.2million (net) on a programme of events mainly aimed at celebrating London's cultural diversity including Chinese New Year; London Mela; Menorah; Notting Hill Carnival; St Patricks Day; Pride in London; and Vaisakhi. The cultural priorities evident here far outweigh the tourism priorities: beyond emphasising their role in enhancing London's food offering and in boosting arrivals in the autumn season, festivals don't feature very much in London's latest tourism strategy (London and Partners, 2017). London's destination marketing agency has worked hard to bring new sport and business events to the city, but with few exceptions, hasn't devoted as much attention or resources to festivals.

8 Discussion

This paper seeks to understand if and how cities use cultural festivals to achieve cultural inclusion. The task firstly involved identifying the policy emphasis on festivals in the study cities and this proved to be a complicated task, confirming existing assessments of the festival landscape as being complex and difficult to unravel (Maughan 2009, Whitford 2009, Getz 2009). It became clear that attempting to study festivals staged in public space in isolation both from other kinds of festivals, and from events, is not possible, at least not in the cases examined here. In the policy documents under study, policy makers tend to use the terms without definition.

In an era of festivalisation (Ronström 2016), when festivals are widely acknowledged as being dominant platforms for cultural production, distribution and consumption (Négrier 2015), this research shows that festivals and events, much less festivals alone, do not constitute an activity that merits dedicated, comprehensive much less singular policy attention in these five cities. It is clear from the analysis of policy actions that policy makers understand the value of festivals, but the analysis of the policy texts produced an almost bewildering array of policy approaches, and revealed few discernible patterns in the five cities under study. It is clear from this study that international consensus on 'best practice' models for festival public policy has not been reached.

That is not to say that festivals are viewed as superficial activities, although it is difficult to grasp their importance from a reading of the policy texts alone, as much 'reading between the lines' and uncovering of implicit references to festivals is required. The rhetoric dominating the policy texts tends to be vague, aspirational and generalized in nature. References to festivals can feature in both overarching and sectoral specific plans but links between the two are often not drawn. References to festivals usually feature more predominantly in sectoral plans. Much more insightful was the analysis

of policy actions translating policy aspirations into practice. Noting the types of festivals supported and the ways in which they are linked into policy aspirations about e.g. privileging neighbourhood activities, quality public space, heritage preservation and quality leisure time activities, opened up much clearer lines of sight into how policy-makers 'action' festivals as tools of urban development.

This realization supports Ball's (1994) arguments about the usefulness of analysing a number of policy contexts in order to fully appreciate and understand how a cultural practice like festivals are viewed by policy-makers. It further prompts a call for much further policy research, not only into the analysis of policy documents as undertaken by Ilczuk and Kulikowska (2007), but into festival policy actions or practice. It is too strong to say this study shows a disconnect between policy texts and policy actions, but certainly there is a lack of clarity about how these fit together coherently.

Relative to festivals, cultural Inclusion was a much more central policy priority for the cities under study. In terms of terminology, different cities articulated the concept in different ways, using concepts like equality, integration, interculturality and diversity. Understanding precisely what can be inferred from each of these terms or how they inter-relate was too complex to determine. Furthermore, policies generally fail to explain precisely who is to be included and what inclusion means. In respect of the social cohorts that cities are aiming to include through festivals, groups defined by religious interests, ethnicity or nationality dominate. Groups defined by age, sexual orientation and socio-economic status (inferred in policy references to 'marginal' and 'disadvantaged' groups) feature to a much lesser extent. This suggests that much scope exists to further align festival activity with efforts to promote inclusion on a much wider set of terms.

Overall, the analysis suggests that a strong policy rhetoric associated with cultural inclusion ideals is evident in most municipal strategies. However, there is much less evidence to suggest that policy-makers are explicitly and coherently thinking about festivals as a way to further cultural inclusion. The analysis revealed some very strong policy narratives about inclusion that could easily translate into support for festivals. So, in London for example, the Mayor of London's *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy*, devotes a whole chapter (#4) to providing 'inclusive, accessible streets', recognising the inequity of access to the city's parks, and a promise to try and reduce these inequities, e.g. by building new parks and by providing better and safer access to existing ones. Yet it contains only a cursory mention of festivals. Equally, London showed examples of very good actions. The Mayor of London's *Cultural Strategy* clearly invests heavily in festivals, and specifically in outdoor festivals staged in iconic public spaces, as a way of promoting diversity and inclusion. However, the good practice in the latter did not seem to be any way connected to the policy thinking in the former. Overall, while there is much evidence to suggest that the cities understand that festivals can build

community (Binnie and Klesse 2018) and promote cultural understanding (Pernecky and Lück 2013), there is a lack of integrated thinking across policy domains, even in a city like London where there are evident policy strengths.

In terms of understanding differences between the cities in this respect, the findings point to the importance of studying policy in historical perspective. Relative to the other cities in the study, Dublin's population has become substantially ethnically diverse only in very recent decades. Dublin City Council's *Integration Strategy (2016-2020)* barely mentions festivals or events. This could be read as a missed opportunity to use festivals as a tool to encourage integration, but equally it can be understood as a factor of demographics. In contrast to Dublin, London has long been one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world and its policy support for festivals celebrating ethnicity and cultural diversity is surely a strong reflection of this fact. In the belief that policy approaches should be appropriate to individual places, findings like this point to the need to investigate how the complexities of place inform the shaping of policies. They also raise questions about the relationship between festivals and cultural inclusion / diversity. Do festivals help encourage diversity / inclusion or is it actually that inclusion/ diversity lead to festivals? If Dublin City Council, for example, plans future strategies to promote festivals as a means of fostering cultural inclusion should it focus on supporting broader multi-cultural events with more populist appeal as opposed to singular cultural expressions like Diwali or Chinese New Year?

Beyond the cultural inclusion agenda it is clear from the policy documents that large scale festivals and events are valued for their economic-related outcomes and are viewed as a key component in the entrepreneurial city policy tool box. This finding points to the prevalence, although not total domination, of a market-led approach, supporting Whitford, Phi and Dredge (2014). However, more latterly, there are signs of a growing awareness of the need for these city-wide, economic agendas to also address social inequality and foster inclusion, and to be meaningfully felt at the level of the citizen. Hence, in Glasgow, the GCCSP speaks about the 'need to ensure that our own citizens can benefit from the sporting, heritage and cultural life in the city' (p. 11), and in Barcelona there are ongoing efforts to encourage citizens to participate in municipality decision-making about, *inter alia*, culture and festivals. However, unsettling the status quo is not easy. Policies emerge through contestation and the influence of tourism interests encouraging international positioning and destination branding are particularly evident in some of the cities. In Gothenburg, for example, the strategic development of events in the city continues to be informed by a strong tourism narrative. Critics caution against the increased commercialization of public spaces (Kärrholm, 2008, Smith 2018) and calls continue for a

fuller integration of policies so as to more effectively derive the societal value of public festivities in public space (Kärrholm 2008, Smith 2018). In Glasgow the economic aspirations of the *GCCSAP 2014-2019* cloud out narratives of diversity and inclusion. In Dublin, the municipality's funding criteria for festivals and events make it clear that 'civic pride', 'vibrancy', 'wellbeing' and 'inclusion' are eligibility criteria for community events, but these do not pertain to larger, commercial events.

Simultaneously, the data suggest that achieving cultural inclusion and celebrating diversity are roles much more likely to be ascribed to festivals, possibly 'community' or ethnic festivals, often taking place outdoors, across neighbourhoods and city districts. Overwhelmingly, this research suggests that the cities think that they can best reach citizens at neighbourhood and community level while using the bigger commercial festivals and events staged in city centres to attract tourists. While this reasoning might seem obvious, it implies that cities do not value festivals in a balanced way and that policies do not show cognizance of how all festivals, irrespective of size and scale, represent multiple economic and socio-cultural potentials simultaneously.

Finally, one of the few commonalities across all of the five cities is that in most of the policy texts there is an important affinity between festivals and public space. In other words, public space is generally seen as vital in enabling festivals to meet the policy objectives they are expected to achieved. So, the staging of festivals in outdoor spaces is a policy objective to attract tourists (Dublin), regenerate city districts (Glasgow), celebrate diversity (London), generate inter-community dialogue (Barcelona) and promote inclusion among young people (Gothenburg). In Gothenburg this finding speaks to the high value attached to outdoor, public, green space and to the vital importance that access to such space plays in promoting equity, equality and quality of life. In London, the use of Trafalger Square, the city's main square, as the location for a large number of the cultural events supported by the Mayor of London points to an understanding of the highly symbolic value of space and what this can represent. Meanwhile, the Dublin City Plan frequently notes the importance of upgrading parks and the public domain more generally to increase the city's capacity to hold outdoor festivals and events. All this demonstrates an awareness of what public spaces can do for festivals and vice versa.

7. Conclusion

This paper has investigated if and how cities conceive of festivals staged in outdoor public space as a means of achieving cultural inclusion policy goals. The inclusion of culture in a number of the UN SDGs

creates an imperative for city managers to scrutinize their approaches to making their cities inclusive, and festivals offer much potential in this regard.

The findings confirm earlier assessments of the festival policy landscape as being very complex. While festivals have a definite presence in the policy arena, the data showed no easily discernible pattern in how policy makers approach festivals. Much clearer was the finding that all of the cities are deeply engaged in thinking about cultural inclusion, although they approach it using terminology that differs in ways that are not immediately obvious. While the analysis found much evidence of a policy rhetoric linking festivals to cultural inclusion, too often there were signs that policy thinking was neither comprehensively worked out nor 'joined up' across relevant policy domains. The clearest sign of this was the scarcity of references to festivals in cultural inclusion/integration strategies.

Festivals are a contested domain, and the influence of stakeholders emanating from commercial/entrepreneurial, cultural inclusion / diversity perspectives shape both policy texts and actions. The data seems to suggest that cities align events and large-scale festivals with economic-related objectives, orienting them towards multi-scalar audiences and positioning them centrally in the city. In contrast, they seem to align the remaining majority of festivals with cultural inclusion/diversity goals, privileging community audiences and locating them throughout the city. From this study's perspective, a key problem here is that the cultural inclusion agenda becomes confined to particular types of festivals leaving an array of festival potentialities under-exploited. While the findings highlight notes of dissent and attempts to disrupt deeply embedded entrepreneurial city narratives (Harvey 1989) in favour of a more 'hopeful' approach (Waitt 2008), unleashing the fuller potential that festivals represent is a major challenge.

The methodological approach of analysing the policies in terms of their contexts of influence, texts and practice was found to be very useful in reaching a fuller understanding of how policy makers conceive of festivals. In this very complex policy landscape, analysing the practice was particularly useful in revealing dominant policy priorities and further research adopting such a perspective is advocated.

The study was particularly interested in festivals staged in outdoor public space but found little specific consideration of festivals defined on this basis. However, across all cities, public space and festivals are connected in that the public staging of festivals is seen as vital to achieving a range of aims, not just cultural inclusion. Nevertheless, there is much more scope to develop policy thinking about how this connectivity might deliver better inclusion outcomes. The literature review underscores the potential of festivals staged in public space to stimulate social connectivity and foster inclusion. However, the analysis found that discussions in the policy documents do not capture the

multi-layered theoretical understandings of how outdoor festivals in public spaces can create conditions that facilitate social engagement and cultural inclusion by e.g. changing the ways it is used (Smith, 2016), functioning as 'convivial spaces' (Nowicka and Vertovec 2014) and creating particular kinds of sociability (Pinochet Cobos 2019). Neither do the policies show a concerted awareness of the need to resource festival making that destabilises the normal boundaries of city spaces thus encouraging new kinds of interactions (Leitner 2012).

Further research into festival policy and governance frameworks is needed to further understand why this is the case and how the situation can be redressed. Olsen (2013) called for the creation of new and more holistic policy frameworks to chart a way forward. However, festivals operate in very complex contexts. As this study shows, they are liable to feature in any number of policy and strategy domains, yet rarely are they treated comprehensively as practices with the potential to enrich a city on a number of fronts simultaneously. Accordingly, it can be extremely difficult to actually pin down cities' policy thinking. This is not to simplistically argue for a singular policy focus on festivals. Indeed Mangset (2018) has queried the wisdom of relying on a single sectoral, overarching approach to cultural policy given the highly globalised and highly mobile nature of contemporary society. Festival-policy thinking needs to be placed in the context of the wider urban strategies, including those relating to cultural inclusion.

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