Finding Common Ground: The Conception of Community Arts Festivals as Spaces for Placemaking.

Abstract

The present research posits the significant role that arts and cultural festivals play in contributing to placemaking and generating well-being within communities. Placemaking is recognized to be important when considering how to improve population health and well-being, and festivals can be seen to amplify those benefits. Drawing on qualitative data gathered from interviews with festival organizers in south-east England and deploying theories of space from Foucault and Massey, the present article posits that community arts and cultural festivals can support the positive creation or transformation of pro-social spaces that could support community acceptance and well-being, the ability to live together and cohesively and accepting difference.

Highlights

- Four themes show arts festivals may contribute to contribute to well-being and place.
- Community festivals seek to instil a connection and sense of belonging to place.
- Access and participation in the arts may be enhanced by using everyday places.
- How festivals reimagine and use space may develop community and enhance public health.
- The paper explores interrelationships of spatial theories of festivals and placemaking.

Keywords
Arts festivals; placemaking; community well-being; heterotopia; community assets

Introduction

There is a plethora of festival research undertaken from an economic, tourism and business perspective. However, there is a smaller body of research which seeks to understand the human impacts, for example: experience (Biaett, 2019); social capital building (Arcodia and Whitford 2006); sense of place (Derrett, 2003) social phenomena (Duffy and Mair 2018; Quinn, 2019); quality of life (Jepson and Stadler, 2017); and volunteer networks (Jarman, 2018). However, the contribution of urban arts and cultural festivals to health and well-being is under-researched. This article describes the findings of a small qualitative study that interviewed festival organizers. This study seeks to engage with, and embed, the findings in a theoretical discourse that spans academic disciplines, fostering a discussion about the contribution of festivals and their deployment of space and place to support health and well-being. Thus the paper proposes a thesis setting out a body of research that will require additional investigation with festival attendees and volunteers to evaluate the true benefits of these community events and the ways in which they are conceived, designed and realised. What we propose here is a theoretical model upon which a more detailed evaluation of the festival experience could be based.

For the purposes of this paper, health is described in its broadest and most holistic sense rather than the absence of disease, and recognized to be influenced by external factors, alongside personal beliefs and sense of mentally being well. Here, well-being is described as being eudaimonic. That is, that there is an individual and personal sense of human fulfilment and growth leading to a state of flourishing, influenced very much by the context of individual and communal life (Ryff and Burton, 2006).

Placemaking has become a popular concept in discussions that link community studies with arts and culture, as well as health and well-being. Whilst subject to varying definitions, particularly relating to town planning, placemaking broadly relates to the assets within a community, the organisation

and accessibility of community spaces, and how these contribute to health and well-being (Corcoran and Marshall, 2015).

Place, and in particular its characteristics and design, shape how we live our lives and can influence behaviours of people that live in them (Heller and Adams, 2009). These physical and environmental characteristics include the opportunities to walk and cycle with access to green and public spaces (Koohsari et al., 2017), the access to affordable, healthy food, and the ready access to employment, goods and services (Jones and Yates, 2013). These complex environmental determinants can impact positively or negatively on human health (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Therefore the activity of placemaking is considered extremely important when considering how to improve population health and well-being.

It can therefore be seen that more than physical characteristics and services, placemaking is about the active creation of a prosocial environment. This is an environment that influences individuals and communities to behave cooperatively in ways that may benefit the health and well-being of others (Dovidio et al., 2012). Thus to cooperate, communicate, share experiences, culture, memories and heritage (Corcoran and Marshall, 2015) could reduce social isolation and the number of groups leading parallel lives. This form of cooperation contributes to placemaking through the creation of active participation in civic decision-making and the opportunities for that to be shared equitably within a community (Alevizou et al., 2016; Locality, 2018). Placemaking should be a collective process (Blokland, 2009) and therefore, should be actively planned and organized with community, so that people do not have a sense that they are having ideas and initiatives imposed upon them from above or outside (Andrews, 2014). Platt and Knight (2018) argue that whilst grassroots festivals embedded in place can contribute to the placemaking process, it is not without tensions and challenges.

A number of relatively recent reports from a diverse array of bodies and organisations have focused on the importance that place can play in our

everyday lives (e.g. British Academy, 2017a; Dyer, 2016; Local Government Association, 2017; Locality, 2018). Baroness Andrews' *Culture and Poverty* report for the Welsh Assembly Government in 2014 served to initiate public interest originally in Wales, but then further afield. She highlighted the importance of what the Welsh call *cynefin (pronounced kin-ev-in)*, a difficult word to translate into English, but one which evokes the sense of local pride and belonging emanating from history and heritage within communities, as well as the memories and stories of those who live there. The British Academy's *Where We Live Now* report (2017b) highlights the ways in which '*places matter*':

> *[Places] shape the way we live our lives, feel about ourselves and the relationships we have with others. Moreover, places – not least because of their history, character and physical form – contribute significantly to personal and societal well-being. […] Most of us have immense affection for the places where we live: they might be places where we grew up, live or work now; where we have family and other relationships; and places are full of memories, stories and our lived experiences.* (2017b, p, 1-2)

With its focus on spatially inspired well-being, the British Academy report chimes closely with the recent *Creative Health* report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW), which underlines 'the power of space to be uplifting' by 'profoundly engag[ing] the senses of sight, touch and sound' (2017, p, 65). All of these different reports lay a common emphasis on the importance of a sense of place to health and well-being. However, to date, there is little focus on the way that particular spaces or sites might inspire a deepening of such well-being, a gap this article seeks to address. Taking as its focus arts and cultural festivals in the community, the study reported here examines the extent to which they can stimulate or contribute to well-being in this placemaking context from the ways in which they are conceived and designed spatially by the organizers, in an attempt to

develop a sense of community cohesion and unlock health-promoting assets within that community.

Drawing specifically on spatial theories of Michel Foucault and Doreen Massey, and underpinned by qualitative data drawn from a small study of eight community festival organizers in south-east England, we posit which characteristics of community festivals might be able to facilitate the development, and deepening, of *cynefin*. Furthermore, we suggest that community festivals might thereby contribute to a '*living legacy*' (Brownett, 2018, p, 76) and the creation of an enduring community of cultural citizenship. The article explores the extent to which festivals of this kind might be regarded potentially as 'therapeutic landscapes' (Williams, cited in Cattell et al., 2008, p, 546), which are deemed to comprise 'natural and built environments; social environments; and symbolic environments' (Cattell et al 2008, p, 546). We contend that community-based arts festivals can be viewed as concrete *and* metaphorical focal points with the capacity to bring different individuals and groups together, to promote health and well-being, and foster social capital and community cohesion.

Theoretically, the important spatial role for festivals can be mapped through the work of Foucault (2008) and Massey (2005). In their different ways, their theories envisage space as having transformational potential. It is our contention that Foucault's concept of the 'heterotopia' can meaningfully be applied to the way local arts festivals can transform community space (Foucault, 2008). He perceived heterotopia as sites contiguous with everyday spaces; connected to, and yet apart from, those spaces. These spaces facilitate transformation through the activities that they engender. By changing our perception of familiar spaces, heterotopic sites thus have the ability to draw us out of ourselves and potentially generate a capacity for self-evaluation precisely by splintering the familiar. They help us, therefore, to see familiar things from a fresh perspective, potentially challenge our prejudices, and

thus can change the way we view the world around us.[1] Similarly, Massey's work on space explains how our perceptions of the world might also be transformed. She lays her particular emphasis on the way that space has the potential to bring us into contact with others, whom we might not otherwise encounter, and thereby to experience 'a collection of interwoven stories of which that place is made' (2005, p, 119), and thereby evoke a sense of *cynefin*, in other words. In *For Space*, Massey elucidates in her introduction the supposed distinction between space and place, before indicating that her study was inspired by a decision to resist the distinction, especially as 'place' was traditionally seen as meaningful and 'space' as somehow abstract and meaningless (2005, p, 6). So, for the purposes of this article and its specific focus, we use the two terms as synonyms, siding with Massey, whilst acknowledging their potentially different nuances and uses in other contexts. There is simply not sufficient scope in this article to engage with well-worn discussions about any semantic differences between the two terms, where our principal focus is necessarily on community festivals, placemaking and well-being.

By combining these two theoretical perceptions of the way space can be experienced and reimagined, and drawing on the interviews with festival organizers about the way they have conceived and designed their respective events, we argue that festivals have the potential to bring people together, and that these gatherings can positively influence our perceptions of the world around us. This contention chimes with evidence in *Creative Health* that reinforces how 'casual social contact at local level is central to building trust. Arts engagement, which often involves casual social contact at a local level, is regularly cited as a forum for building trust' (APPGAHW, 2017, p, 79).

In his work on interculturalism, Ted Cantle has highlighted, in particular, how certain groups lead parallel lives within communities that lack spaces where bridges can be built between disparate groups (Cantle, 2012). Such bridges

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[1] Peter Johnson's analysis of Foucault's inchoate concept of heterotopia has been very helpful in our own deployment of it in this present context. See Johnson (2006).

are needed to generate opportunities for meaningful contact in order to reduce suspicion and prejudice. By encountering what Massey describes as the 'multiplicity of trajectories' (2005, p, 63) that coexist in spaces, we are confronted constructively with the lives and stories of others. It is our contention, therefore, that community arts and cultural festivals have transformative potential, by adapting space, or our perception thereof, while at the same time creating an opportunity for casual social contact and trust-building through cultural engagement. As such, it recalls Emile Durkheim's notion of 'collective effervescence' (Ehrenreich, 2007, p, 2). However, by bringing people together in this way community arts festivals not only contribute to developing stronger social bonds, but also have a unique potential to contribute to well-being, since 'social relations in a multiplicity of aspects will nurture good health and social care ecologies' (APPGAHW, 2017, p, 80). As such, festivals have a unique potential to link health and place.

The existing evidence base about community arts festivals is limited, tending to focus on the economic and tourism benefits of festivals, rather than the production of wellbeing and social connections, particularly in poorer areas. Following unexpected findings from a research study intended to investigate social capital for generating wellbeing (Brownett, 2018), the paper responds to this lacuna. Specifically, we examine how community arts festivals deploy, and liberate access to, space and indicate the well-being benefits that can accrue as a result. Community arts and cultural festivals operating in everyday accessible places can, we argue, provide a basis for meaningful communal connection and contribute to collective wellbeing in communities. Further research will be needed to see if community arts and cultural festivals can indeed operate as the bridges Cantle identifies as necessary, and how inclusive they appear to be. However, from the data here we can see that the organizers conceive of their events as mechanisms to bring their diverse communities together, by seeking to unlock and use accessible public space in an attempt to make them as inclusive as possible. Our article therefore posits some of the ways in which we believe this organisation of space might support the festivals' aspirations to create common ground.

Methods

The design of the earlier research (Brownett, 2018) was intended as a small-scale prospective investigation into the social mechanisms of local community festivals. As such the approach was constructivist grounded theory, with the analysis being socially constructed (Charmaz, 2008), providing theoretical insights into how festival organizers reported that they embed their practice in their community.

Prior to this study, university ethical approval was obtained. One-to-one interviews with eight arts and culture festival organizers (hereafter referred to as interviewees) based in the south-east of England were undertaken. Laing and Mair (2015, p, 257 citing Szaryzc, 2009) indicate that a small number of participants for this type of study are typical. The participants for this study were identified via social networks and through snowball sampling. This strategy was chosen because the focus of the research was to find festivals that were seeking to engage a local audience, and were thus not always ticketed. Given the nature of these festivals, in the main they did not have a big marketing budget and were not advertising themselves outside of their locale.

Each arts festival offering, takes place in towns and small cities and is available free of charge or at low cost (see table 1). All of the coastal towns are areas recognized to be of high deprivation. In most cases, these areas were part of a wider arts regeneration initiative. Six of the eight interviewees, though assuming the role of festival organizer had come from an arts-making or artistic background. No financial incentive was offered to interviewees.

Festival	Cultural Offering	Location
P1	Opera, Dance, Theatre, Community Arts	Coastal Town

P2	Opera, Dance, Theatre, Community Arts, Parade, Visual Arts	City
P3	Parade, Community Arts, Street Theatre, Community Production	Coastal Town
P4	Music	City
P5	Parade, Community Arts, Street Theatre	Coastal Town
P6	Music, Visual Arts	Coastal Town
P7	Three interlinked festivals, Music, Dance, Theatre, Community Arts, Visual Arts, Community Production	Coastal Town
P8	Community Arts, Visual Arts	Coastal Town

Table 1. Festival Offering

The interviewer conducted semi-structured interviews lasting between 30-60 minutes. Open directive questions were asked around the themes of the type of festival offering, the intended audience, the aims of the festival, the unintended consequences of the festival, festival evaluation and whether the generation of well-being was an aspiration. The purpose of this interview approach was to enable participants to provide their own narrative and thick description (Geertz, 1983). The interviews took place in a venue of the interviewee's choice to facilitate their ease and candid contribution. A portable recording device was used to capture the interview, which was then transcribed verbatim. Interviewees were encouraged to indicate where commercially sensitive or confidential information had been revealed so that this could be redacted prior to analysis. An earlier pilot study had revealed this to be of utmost importance to festival organizers, as funding for arts festivals is highly competitive. All data was treated as confidential.

In order to identify major themes the interview transcripts were re-read and audio recordings played to ensure familiarity with the data. A coding handbook and inductive open coding identified patterns of meaning and further

descriptive codes were assigned. In sum, 17 codes were identified, later collated into four themes. Two coders agreed on the themes, using thematic analysis complementary to the chosen methodology, and grounded in a theory-driven approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Findings

Below we discuss the four key findings of our thematic analysis which we named, *Cynefin*, Spaces for Participation, Spaces for Being Together and Spaces for Transformation. The discussion that follows illustrates how these themes are important in terms of the potential contribution of community arts and culture festivals to a sense of place and well-being. It is important to recognize that although we write about them as discrete themes, they are overlapping concepts, which will further addressed in the ensuing discussion.

Cynefin

Throughout the interviews there was a strong articulation of *cynefin*, even if it was not described using this term. Respondents referred to a strong sense of place and belonging, interwoven with memories, stories, history and heritage within the community. The importance of history, heritage or the traditions of places were central to festival construction and imagination:

> *"[The festival was] connected with the dockyard [...] it was absolutely heaving with people [dressed as] sailors and ladies[...]dressed as whores going up to the men and saying 'round the back for a sixpence'. Everyone had such good fun [...] the old boys loved it, 'cause they were sailors."* [P5]

The importance of wanting to show off the geographical place to outsiders and celebrate its particular qualities was also a key motive.

> *"[...] the summer festival, was to do something that showed the best of the place and started to reveal what it has to offer [...]people outside have a low perception of the place. [...] that's a really powerful reason for us to do it. You have to be rooted in the place but the pri-*

mary actual reason was to go, look at this amazing place." (P1)

The personal connection of belonging to a place and its community is argued to be one of the domains essential to good health and well-being (Atkinson et al., 2017). Furthermore it is one of the key principles of the Healthy New Towns initiative (NHS England, 2018). However, Atkinson highlights that the common values, understandings of place and cultural heritage are essential for realising community well-being and yet may prove exceedingly complex to evaluate empirically (Atkinson et al., 2017). The later discussion will go on to posit a model that we believe might function as an evaluation framework for ascertaining who comprises community festival audiences and what benefits they derive from participating.

Arts and cultural festivals seek to use of space to elicit cooperation, and collaboration is critical to the identity of the festival and the development of placemaking:

> *"and it comes back to the idea of what would happen if you break down the walls of the art centre and invite the community to help you programme the space."* [P7]

Festival organizers interviewed reported that the location of their festival was often decided by the availability of low-cost or free local places. However, they reported that they specifically chose to celebrate the location, its heritage, and the stories and memories that permeate these places. Therefore the use of community spaces naturally complements and amplifies this ethos, with the inherent 'potential to engender deeper knowledge of the community roots and the meaning of the landscapes to them' (Andrews 2014, p, 50).

Participation

As highlighted above festival organizers use community spaces for their events and report that they often liberate local spaces out of necessity. This

is both a financial decision, but often also as a result of a lack of, or restricted access to, cultural assets and purpose-built venues. They indicated that the consequence of using local spaces and sites actually has the potential to increase participation and engagement with the arts, as Andrews has posited (2014), though further evidence will be needed to evaluate the success of this aspiration.

Distilled from the 'multiplicity of trajectories' described by Massey (2005, p, 5), this theme describes both the spaces that allow people to bump into one another:

> "[...] you start to get this blending between people who initially thought that wasn't for them and they didn't understand, [but] are now completely part of it. And that activity in that pub connects those people to lives, to the wider challenges that are happening all the time." (P7)

and extends to an intended development of a safe space to animate individual, and collective, participation.

> "But the beautiful kind of hidden, or you know, the added value that was unexpected [...] that we'd engaged in such a kind of genuine family-oriented way; they all then felt so comfortable with us as a group that came into [the gallery] and they experienced a totally new cultural experience and engaged with people that they probably would never speak to. Because they were in this kind of safe environment that was actually facilitated by their children." (P8)

Atkinson has noted in her systematic review that there is evidence that events such as festivals generate neutral spaces for people to socialize, and in particular the use of natural spaces fosters active participation (Atkinson et al., 2017). However, whilst she provides no evidence for participation being a specific output of the chosen space, she acknowledges the sort of places

that the festival organizers in our research sought out can be defined as 'community infrastructure', that is, *'public places and "bumping" places designed for people to meet, including streets, squares, parks, play areas, village halls and community centres'* (Atkinson et al., 2017, p, 21)*.*

Being Together

In this theme festival organizers sought to create a momentary sense of community by purposely liberating the space for celebration in sites where that might not ordinarily happen such as the beach, community centre, church, harbour, water tower, empty shops or vacant buildings. The spaces used in this way are often already deemed communal or open, democratic spaces but not generally used for arts and cultural activities:

> *"One lady said, 'oh, I saw this amazing thing [...] there was this guy sitting in a chair, dressed as a polar bear telling stories'.   It was us. We put a yurt outside Debenhams at one of the festivals [...] and she said my kids loved it, it's the best thing I have ever seen in my entire life."* (P1)

This theme evidences that community events have the potential to facilitate improved social interactions (Bagnall *et al*., 2018). There is, however, always the danger that, albeit seeking to be inclusive, these festivals remain exclusive. In each case here, organizers stated that provision was made to try and create an event that was as open as possible and that everyday places were important in achieving that aim.

Cattell et al. (2008) describe the importance of the everyday places within a community for bringing people together to develop and maintain friendships, even in the most fleeting of encounters. In this way, quotidian settings comprise potential opportunities for escape, but are also essential in connecting people to the place where they live. The everyday spaces that the local community arts festivals interviewed here endeavour to liberate and reimagine, potentially allow such interactions to be fostered and strengthened, es-

pecially where people otherwise lead parallel lives or strong social bonds do not already exist. The findings of our own study appear to show that festival spaces are potentially important, therefore, for the contribution to, and the development of relationships with others through the casual contacts that arts and cultural gatherings can give rise to.

These festivals potentially provide space for human connection through shared cultural experiences, the transfer of personal memories and a sharing of stories, which ultimately celebrate the community and its heritage (Black, 2016). Story-telling and the sharing of cultural memory is recognized as essential to the ongoing development of community. This sharing underpins the notions of placemaking and *cynefin*. Stories and shared memories are the glue that connects people and potentially mobilizes neighbourhoods to act with collective interest (Russell, 2011). Furthermore, this story-telling and participation in festival events provides opportunities for communities to define, create and present their sense of collective self, and the place that they are from (Derrett, 2009). However, the question remains that more evidence is needed to demonstrate that local communities engage with the events and experience this benefit.

Space for Transformation

Using the concept of heterotopia, we suggest that the arts and cultural festivals at the heart of this research seek to reimagine everyday spaces, by using activities or events to create a permeability within what might ordinarily be considered a fixed and boundaried space with a set function, be it a beach, a shopping centre or a pub. This permeability enables the festival participant to safely step outside of their everyday self by entering the festival-generated heterotopia and engaging with the cultural experience. As an example, one of the festival organizers interviewed described an art installation by local adolescents, in a deprived coastal area, as a walk 'up the hill'*"[…]which is how the kids would describe it - going up the hill[…] to experience a bit more of the cultural value of the area."* [P8]

Arts festivals also provide an opportunity for conversations about how the community are perceived or perceive themselves. Organizers talked about using small grants to fund consultative art works to help people get to know their local area, such as the walk described above, or to find out more about their local community, or how they felt about themselves: *"[W]e did a consultative piece of work as an art installation, [...]Two words came out, [...] "apathy" and "dirty" from every respect [...]."*(P1)

This research finding also describes how the festival seeks to creates an atmosphere that inspires conversations and facilitates transformation in the participants, for example, through active curation of an environment that festival participants and local contributors would find conducive to feeling relaxed or safe. However, we also noted that the described festival's use of space, combined with the specific cultural offering, appeared to stimulate a wider, more communal, transformation of how the community sees itself and the opportunities available: *"the [cultural] landscape here is changing [...] I would say that our summer festival is driving that change"* (P1). Here too further evaluation will be needed to ascertain the extent to which this potential is realised or felt by those participating, to underpin the anecdotal evidence of the organizers themselves.

Discussion

The four identified themes of our research - *cynefin*, spaces for participation, being together, and transformation - show that arts and cultural festivals in particular have the potential both support and demonstrate their essential role within the placemaking agenda, most especially when conceived and designed in such a way that accessible public space is used. The Halton *Cultural Manifesto for Wellbeing* (Halton NHS Commissioning Group, 2017) provides a good example of how the arts in general can support residents to imagine new kinds of connected communities; to develop their own

strengths and abilities, so that they can live independent lives and develop health resources within the places they live. Based on the interviews with festival organizers and their observations about how they set up the festival space, our thesis is that community festivals might amplify these benefits.

Through the reimagining and repurposing of space, community festivals have huge potential to create new (or renewed) physical and emotional connections, which might lead to generating a sense of belonging by changing our perspectives. The heterotopic space thus established could be truly inclusive and intercultural, uniting Foucault and Massey's respective interpretations of space. A note of caution here, is that we acknowledge that there is not yet specific evidence of this in our findings, and additional evaluation will be need to assess who attends these festivals and what well-being benefits they might derive from them, and therefore whether the aspirations of the organizers are matched by the outcomes. Other authors note tensions brought about by loss of place (Friedmann, 2010) and commercial festivals (Jarman, 2018), however this reimagining of place in combination with careful curation, such as in the eight festivals under examination here, has been shown by other authors to achieve stronger community inclusion (Devine et al., 2019). Duffy and Mair (2018, p36) argue that festivals can allow for communal expression and offer a place for *'transgressive and subversive messages'*. It is our contention that the eight festivals here have been carefully conceived and curated by the organizers to deploy space in such a way that might facilitate placemaking and foster well-being.

The way that community arts and cultural festivals are consciously located within towns, and then often in smaller neighbourhoods therein, might foster a process for more than just multiple fleeting connections, but also for stories and memories to be shared or, made individually and collectively. Festivals can embody a 'sphere of coexistence of a multiplicity of trajectories' (Massey, 2005, p, 63), generating a Durkheimian collective effervescence whereby participants come together for communal activities that transform and connect at an affective level, potentially building the bonds

and transactions essential for the formation of social capital. Specifically, we argue that the organization of an arts festival within the chosen space can facilitate a transformative process, through the stirring of emotion, memories, and perhaps *cynefin,* of which there is anecdotal evidence in our data. Research has noted that organizers must purposefully embed and enact this process into in the vision and mission of the festival (Jarman, 2018) for it to create any such transformation, as the festival organizers under scrutiny here report that they actively endeavour to do. McClinchey (2015) argues that sense of place is not to do with the perceived authenticity of place but is instead socially constructed by those with a specific interest in the creation of place, belonging and attachment, an approach upon which the eight southeast festivals here are predicated.

Given the austerity measures of the last decade in Britain and the documented impact of widening inequalities on health and well-being across the life course (Marmot, 2018; Marmot, 2010; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009), it could be argued that arts and cultural festivals have an enhanced, and important, role within in community settings by seeking to create inclusive spaces for the kind of casual social contact during communal arts engagement that can help build trust (APPGAHW, 2017). They have the potential to help the development of mutual and reciprocal connections within communities for the benefit of all. Brownett argued that there is some evidence that local festivals enable community members to unlock health-promoting assets and develop a '*living legacy*' (2018, p, 76). Taking this idea forward, it is argued here that the living legacy might have a double function in festivals orientated around placemaking, in that it might arise individually, bringing attention to a hitherto unknown personal skill or strength, but may be also considered a community resource. In other words, it further emphasizes, and potentially activates, available community assets such as opportunities, people and places, or it might positively influence how the community perceives itself or the future.

Arts and cultural festivals should therefore not be considered utopian, elitist or exclusive, but seen instead as a key to unlocking community assets, especially when they are conceived and designed as events to attempt to bring

local communities together in open and accessible spaces and places within the locality. This is because festivals produce, and liberate, creative spaces that animate these assets, allowing the community to perceive of itself and the available spaces differently. Daily norms are thereby disturbed, and perhaps neutralized, by these heterotopia, within which multiple trajectories allow new personal and communal configurations to be perceived and new interactions to be created. As a result, arts and cultural festivals can create common ground between individuals and groups that might not otherwise meet, and thereby generate enhanced health and well-being benefits within the community as a whole.

Thus far this paper has combined a number of sociological concepts. It has further postulated that they may overlap when applied to the role that arts festivals play in placemaking and community processes important to good health, as understood by local authorities and the NHS. Synthesising the two theoreticians, Foucault and Massey, with our own findings from the way the festivals have been conceived and organised, we offer these three relationship maps to demonstrate the ways in which we think such community events, designed and curated as the eight festivals here have been, can support well-being.

Through the use of the three conceptual maps we hypothesise that there is a complex relationship between the spaces temporarily occupied by festivals, the communities that live in and around these spaces, and temporary communities, that is, the visitors to the festival, many of whom might come from outside the community. However, it is through these interactions that the potential exists for these community-based festivals to generate a sense of common ground as heterotopia and thus foster well-being benefits.

Map 1. The psychosocial processes of arts festival linking the individual to the community - adapted from Brownett (2018, p, 79). In this map, the broken line is an invisible permeable membrane denoting a permanent or temporary community created by the festival. It is important to note here that

processes of how the festival creates participation and develops connections that benefit individuals has not been described by this article. The map is presented to provide a framework that the two subsequent maps can be built upon.

Map 2. The interrelationship of festival spatial themes are mapped against Foucault, Massey, and Durkheim.   In this map the broken line remains the permeable membrane between a range of communities, but now denotes the festival heterotopia. This membrane represents the contiguous space that exists alongside, or within, existing space. Almost as if passing through a veil, the space is transformed, perhaps by the festival's ability to showcase stories from the local heritage and those of others from outside (multiple trajectories). Consequently the individual might potentially be drawn outside themselves, able to see things from a different perspective, by virtue of the cultural experience and a cosmopolitan interaction with others (Appiah, 2007) within the heterotopia. Communal collaboration and engagement with the festival theoretically provides space for social contact and trust building. In map 2 it is shown as collective effervescence but is envisaged to overlay social capital shown in map 1.

In Map 3. The previous two maps are overlaid to show their relationships to one another. Thus sociological theory, festival processes and the interrelated themes of festival space findings can be seen to demonstrate the festival diffusion effect.
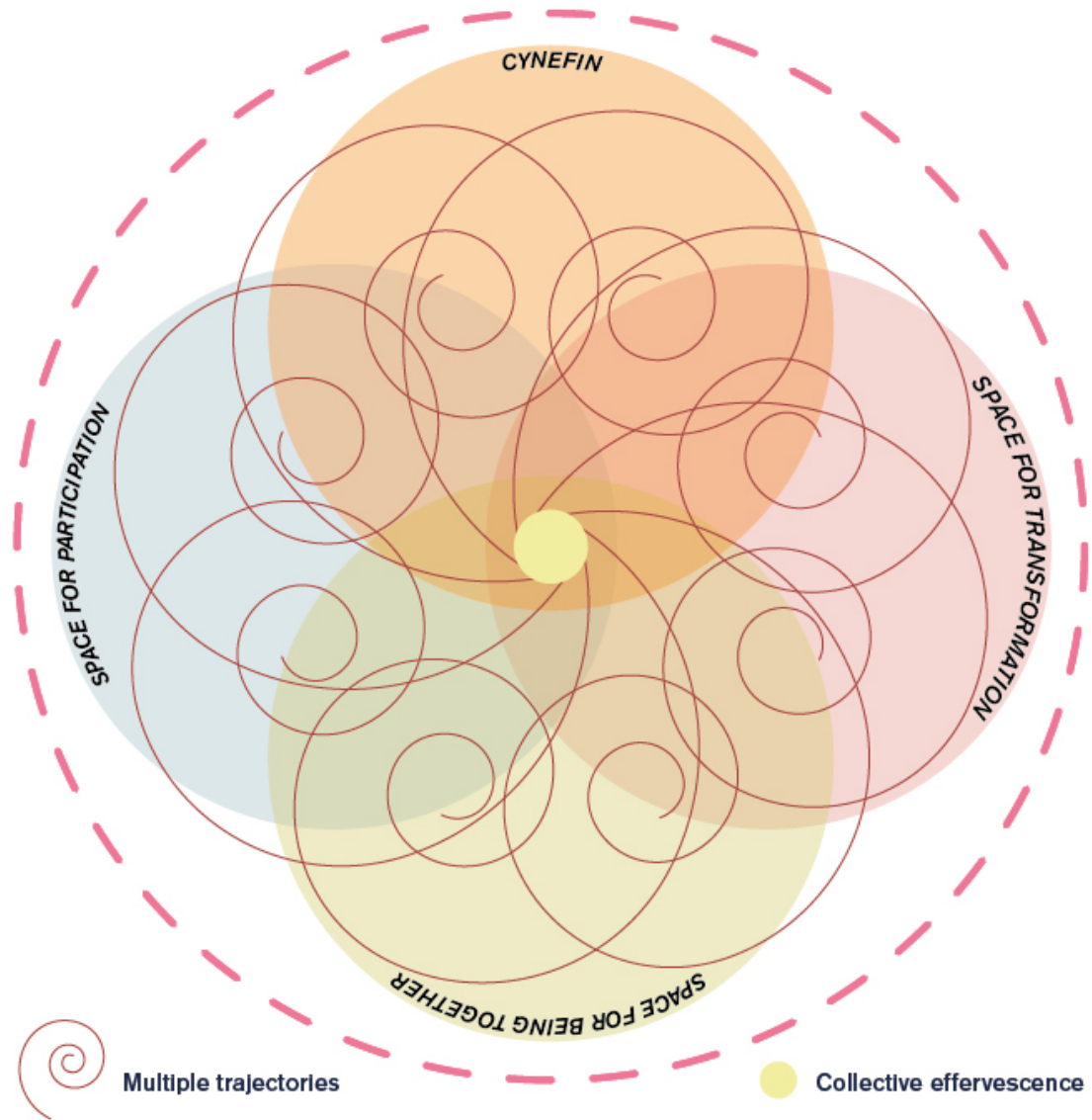
We argue that, as the result of these processes of thinking about the use of space and place in festival design, a festival diffusion effect can be created, whereby prosocial space is transformed and created for the acceptance and welcoming of difference. This acceptance is described by Appiah (2007) as '*habits of co-existence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association*' (2007: xvii).   Our festival diffusion effect shows the theoretical possibilities and opportunities for such community events to cut across divisive boundaries to facilitate a sense of connection and belonging by means

of their focus on placemaking. In our theoretical conception, this diffusion effect is dynamic and allows for ideas and experiences to be embraced both within a community and taken outside to the communities beyond.
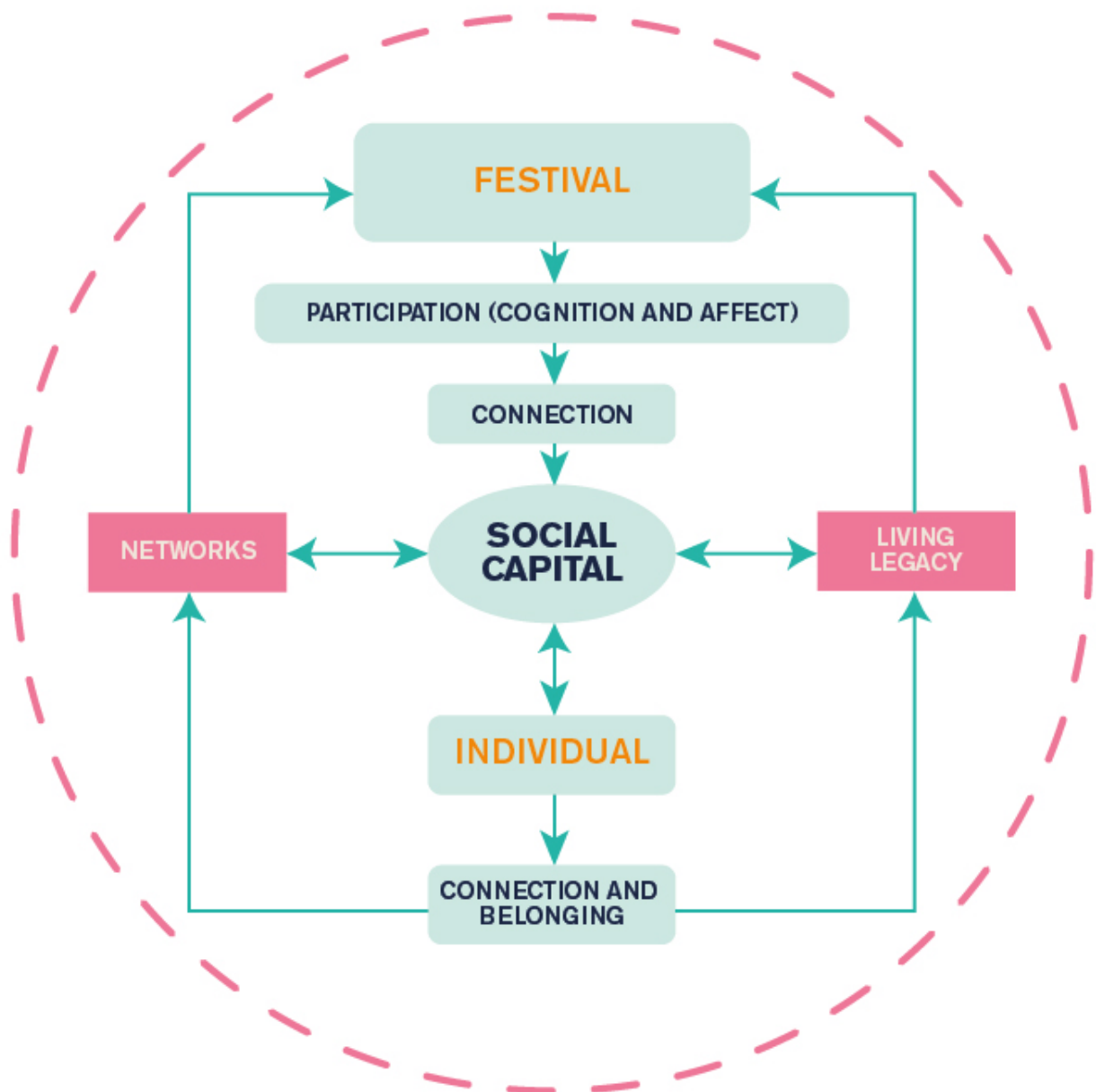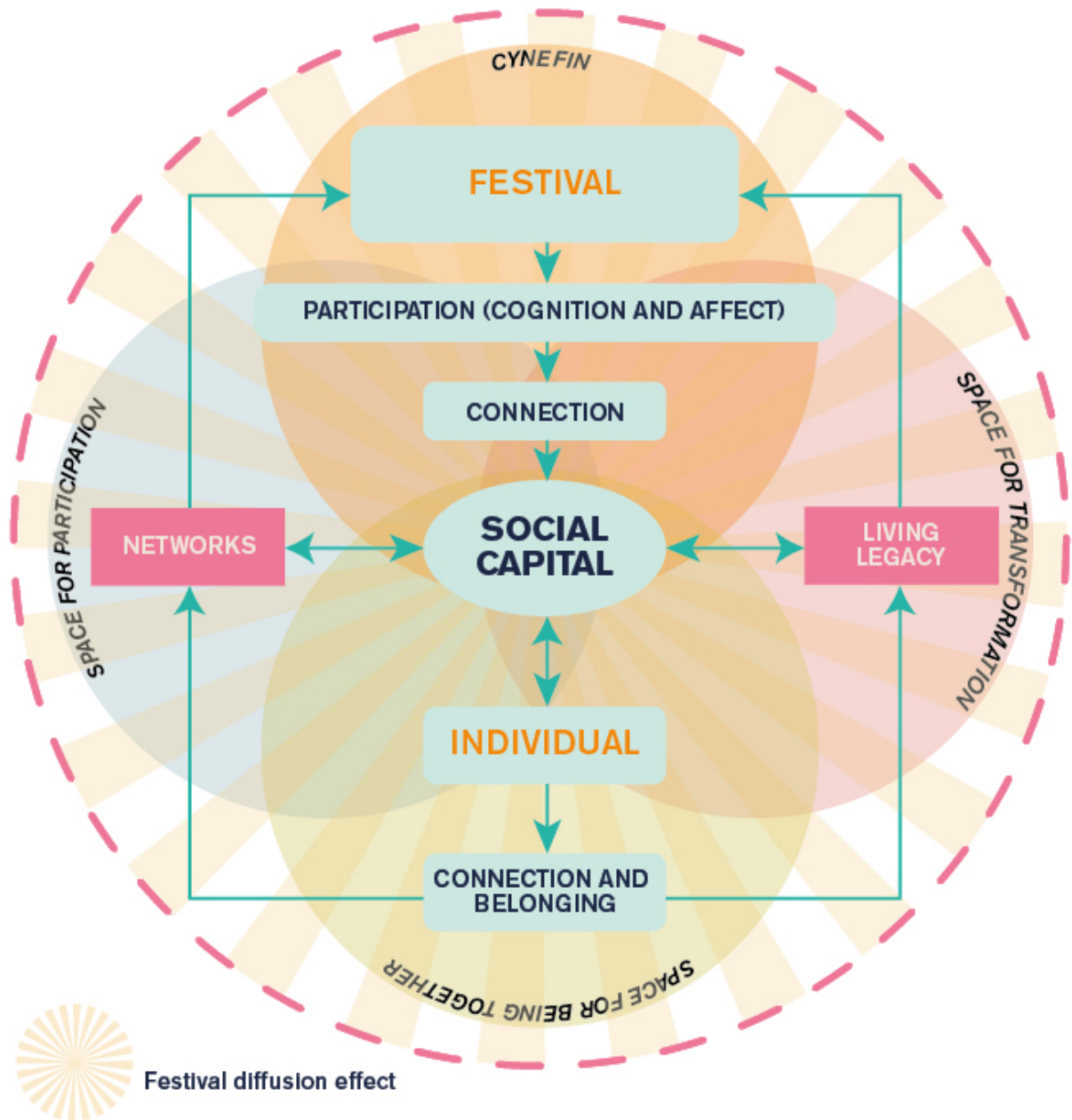

MAP 1. THE PSYCHOSOCIAL PROCESSES OF ARTS FESTIVAL LINKING THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE COMMUNITY

Model: The Festival Space

CYNEFIN

SPACE FOR TRANSFORMATION

SPACE FOR PARTICIPATION

SPACE FOR BEING TOGETHER

Multiple trajectories

Collective effervescence

MAP 2. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF FESTIVAL SPATIAL THEMES

MAP 3. THE OVERLAP BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY THEORY, FESTIVAL PROCESSES AND THE IN-TERRELATED THEMES OF FESTIVAL SPACE FINDINGS.

Limitations

The sampling method used for this study meant that the research was confined to a small geographical region. Within this region there are a number of arts regeneration areas which might influence how festivals operate within the place and how audiences engage with the festival. This means that it is difficult to argue for the transferability of findings. The data collected was indirect, in that the organizers' perspective was sought rather than their audience, which again could influence our interpretation of the festival space. However, our study is a new enquiry in this field, drawing on the spatial theories of Foucault and Massey in order to posit why the community festival space might succeed in supporting well-being in the ways the APPGAHW report intimates arts and cultural engagement can (2017). Future research to collect data from festival participants will now be required to test fully both our findings and the models we propose.

Conclusion

Community arts festivals have real potential to make a contribution to the placemaking agenda. Though this article describes a relatively small study, it argues that through careful use of space, festivals can and do contribute to sense of place and belonging. Furthermore, these spaces potentially allow for wider, and perhaps more equitable, participation, for being together and the facilitation of collective transformation within multiple communities. These findings should be considered important characteristics in how community festivals should, be conceived, designed and curated in order to contribute to placemaking and the unlocking of community assets for wider social well-being.

The article has also proposed theoretical arguments and models to conceptualize the complex interrelationships of spatial theories applied to the ways in which arts and cultural festival organizers have conceived and designed their events, to use accessible public spaces to support placemaking and the generation of well-being. These arguments and the three models help to explain the creation of, what we propose to call, a festival diffusion effect,

which is the positive creation or transformation of prosocial spaces that could support community acceptance and well-being, the ability to live together and cohesively and accepting difference. Working in this way, using shared community space, festivals could support participants to find common ground in a variety of ways through cultural engagement and participation, all of which would support the generation and maintenance of well-being. These findings will only perhaps be relevant to festivals that are created by the community for the community rather than field festivals or ticketed events.

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Data

Need to put information in here about the data set and accessibility – if it is accepted.

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