Governing the festival city

**Exploring means of citizen participation in mega-event planning
Study case on Edinburgh festivals**

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0. Summary

Mega-events are usually connected with increased tourism. Especially reoccurring events can have a deep impact on the hosting community due to overtourism. Participatory planning is recognised as a method to increase community resilience to overtourism. This qualitative research aims at exploring citizen participation in mega-event planning. It is based on a single case study on Edinburgh Festivals. Firstly, it theoretically explores the concept of mega-events and outlies three categories of negative externalities: disruptions, festivalisation and commodification of public space. Next, it uses *right to the city* framework to predict that increased pressure on the residents can lead to a formation of social movement accommodated by civil society organisations demanding greater citizen power. *The ladder of participation in tourist development* serves as a benchmark to evaluate different levels of engagement. Based on the series of in-depth interviews, academic and non-academic literature, this work presents the evolution of collaborative planning in Edinburgh. First, it identifies key stakeholders, concluding that city cousin holds the most power and the residents the least, mostly due to lack of coherent representation. Next, the effects of negative externalities are confirmed. Civil society organisations are found to be crucial in accommodating the growing grassroots movement. Finally, that movement is found to create enough pressures to influence the council to engage in deeper participatory planning initiative. Confirming existing theory or right to the city, citizen participation deepens with an increase of pressure as a result of grassroots movements. Finally, referring to *The ladder of participation in tourist development,* it identifies the current level of participation as interaction.

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1. Introduction

For decades now the number and scale of mega-events are increasing globally (Batur & Koc, 2017). Events such as Expos, Olympics and festivals attract vast numbers of national and international visitors. Although each event has a distinctive goal, such as knowledge exchange, sport celebration or cultural promotion, it is also a powerful investment tool, especially in tourism (Koens et al., 2018). Notable examples of mega-events that not only boosted tourism during its event but managed to sustain the effect long after including Barcelona Olympic in 1992 (Qu & Spaans, 2009) Sochi Olympics in 2014 (Vetitnev, 2016). Thus, as global tourism flow increases, more regions sees it's an opportunity for economic growth (Batur & Koc, 2017). There is a significant difference between a single event where the visitors rate spike during its duration and then decrease later and reoccurring event which repeatedly attracts high numbers of visitors (Mair et al., 2021).

Tourism is seen as an easy way to surge economic growth, especially as the neoliberal paradigm impacts local politics moving towards *entrepreneur governance* (Brown, 2013) That model advocates for public governance to embrace enterprise practices and prioritise economic growth (Boros, 2018). There is however critique that *entrepreneur governance* can push too far in the chase for profit, compromising the interests of the residents. For example, a rapid increase in visitors traffic can lead to touristification – a type of gentrification combined with a change in the functioning and character of a city, moving towards accommodating victors at the costs of residents (Koens et al., 2018) Similarly commodification of public space increasingly becomes a widely discussed side effect of that policy (Vanolo, 2020).

Planning and tourism scholars argue that genuine community involvement in planning can prevent overtourism and boost community resilience (Lamberti et al., 2011; Hague, 2021). However little literature directly connects mega-events to the effects of overtoursim (Mair et al., 2021). Thus there is research between planning, overtoursim and mega-events literature.

Building on that research gap, this research aims at exploring the relationship between participation in mega-event planning and overtoursim Considering issues such as local democracy and social sustainability it is socially and academically relevant to investigate ways to plan and regulate touristic projects such as mega-events while safeguarding the interests of the local community. This paper builds on the study case of Edinburgh festivals and aims to answer the following question:

How is the local community involved in the planning of the Edinburgh festivals?

To support answering the main question, the following sub-questions are formed:

1. *What stakeholders are involved in the planning process?*

2. *What stimulates citizen participation?*
3. *How are civil society organisation involved in community participation in planning?*
4. *What is the existing institutional process of including the community in planning?*

It is common for a planning issue analysis to start with the identification of the key stakeholders to overview involved sides and existing power structure (De Roo & Voogd, 2019). Next it is relevant to identify factors that motivate community participation. This paper closely looks at the role of civil society organisations in that process. Finally the evaluation of participatory planning institutions is conducted. Combining those findings allows to comprehensibly answer the central question.

This thesis consecutively presents exiting literature and used methods. Next, it presents and discusses interviews finding. In the conclusion, the findings are summarised and linked to theory, after that the limitations and internal and external validity is reviewed.

2. Literature review

Mega-events

Mega-events research is placed on the periphery of geography, planning and tourism studies. Law (1993) defines mega-events as huge events of global importance and high profile that attract international visitors and have a major impact on the hosting place. Faulkner (2003) focuses on the fact the although they are usually centred around non-touristic objectives, such as sport or culture, policy makers often regard them as a tool of tourism development. Ritchie (1988) underlines the temporary character of mega-events, reflecting on the need to accommodate mass tourism for a limited time, while considering the long term legacy. Reoccurring events are a specific type of mega-event, their semi-permanent character requires a deeper connection to the hosting environment, and have often other effects that singular events (Cudny, 2016). Examples of such events include Grand Prix, Music festivals such as Glastonbury Festival, Octoberfest in Bavaria or Edinburgh Festivals. There is an ongoing debate whether singularity is not a necessary characteristic of an mega-event (McCartney, 2005). However, considering the most used definitions (e.g. Law 1993; Faulkner 2003), reoccurring events fits the description

Social effects of mega-events

Most of the literature assessing social impact is based on 3 periods timeline*: before*, *during* and *after* an event (Mair et al., 2021). In the case of reoccurring mega-even, *before* and *after*

overlaps, that leads to the creation of additional distinction: temporary, during the event, and long term impact (McCartney, 2005)

Mair et al., (2021) in their literature review creates an overview of the social impacts of mega-events. While there are multiple positive social impacts such as branding, cohesion, entertainment and education (Mair et al., 2021) this paper focuses on the negative impacts.

There are serval possible negative externalities of mega-events, for instance: noise pollution, congestion, increase in crime and other anti-social behaviour (Mair et al., 2021). All those can be categorised as a temporal disturbance, defined as an unwanted impact on the everyday life of the residents for a limited time of mega-event duration.

Another broadly discussed aspect connected to mega-events and overtoursim is the commodification of public space. It is a process of transforming a public good into a product (Oldenziel & Bruhèze, 2011). It often results in exclusion from, enclosure or destruction of the public spaces and It is seen as a result of the entrepreneur governance model (Finkel & Platt, 2020)

Addressing the long term effects of the festivals on the hosting environment a specific term was coined – festivalisation (Hague, 2021). Used extensively in the context of Edinburgh it summaries the effects of overtourism resulting from recurring mega-event. This paper defines it as a long-term impact on the social and cultural fabric of the city (Hague, 2021). It consists of two main elements: (i) gentrification connected to short-time rentals resulting in pushing the residents from their neighbourhoods by driving up property prices. (ii) And the impact on the character and the functioning of the city, progression towards a "theme park" at the cost of liveability (Hague, 2021; Cudny, 2016).

Need for participation - Right to the city

Right to the city has become an important concept in the struggle against processes of commodification of urban space and entrepreneur governance in general(Brown, 2013). It based on the discussion regarding whose the city is, advocating that it belongs to its residents (Brown, 2013). It has evolved from the work of French philosopher and sociologist Lefebvre and his analysis of contemporary urban governance (Marcuse, 2012). Right to the city focuses on the idea of citizenship, and advocates for all residents to be recognised as citizens and thus be granted further control over their city. (Brown, 2013). In that theory, citizenship is connected to a deep political involvement and catalysts participation in social movements (Brown, 2013). Those movements are crucial to eventually force the renegotiation of the contract between state and residents, guaranteeing fairer distribution of power (Brown, 2013). Therefore, the residents shall always look closely at the government and when their

rights are threatened, creates pressure, forcing the redistribution of power. In that theory, self-organisation through civil society organisation is a key to citizen empowerment.

Participatory process: planning and tourism perspective

Contemporary urban planning literature recognises the importance of participatory planning as socially, politically and ethically desirable (De Roo & Voogd, 2019). The shift from *goal-oriented* to *process* oriented planning, even if perhaps less effective, can ensure fairer and more socially acceptable results (De Roo & Voogd, 2019). There are serval levels and approaches to that process. Arnstein (1969) created ladder of citizen participation in planning where presents 3 main levels of participation: (i) Citizen power, a genuine community participation with substantial and continuous impact on decision making; (ii) Symbolic participation (Tokenism) where community has a sporadic power on the planning but their impact in not granted; (iii) nonparticipation, a hollow ritual design to educate or manipulate stakeholders. That categorisation of citizen participation become very influential in the broad context of examining and designing participatory planning, also in tourism studies.

Community participation in tourism and mega-event planning is defined as involvement of the residents on multiple stages of the decision process (Aref & Ma'rof, 2008) or as a general multi-stakeholder collaboration in planning to include the interest of wider population (Lamberti et al., 2011). Both definitions stress the importance of active participation of the community in the decision process. Timothy (2012) differentiate participation in two separate levels: involvement in decision making and benefit sharing. The latter addresses the common asymmetry in distribution of benefits and costs identified it as a result of top-down decision system and neoliberal governance Timothy (2012). That can be a result of either: (i) bureaucratic paternalism – a model when the agencies (often wrongly) assume to know what is best for the community or (ii) bias towards the interests of the elites (Lamberti et al., 2011). Those problems in a mega-event organisation can be overcome by directly involving community stakeholders and considering the benefits and costs to all stakeholders (Lamberti et al., 2011). Several authors argue that community participation is not only socially and ethically appropriate, it is also necessary to achieve long term success of a touristic project (Lamberti et al., 2011; Badland et al., 2014; Leksakundilok & Hirsch, 2006)

Lamberti et al. (2011) in a study case of Shanghai Word Expo, finds that broad involvement of community in the event planning and benefits sharing can empower and support development of the civil society, even in authoritarian countries like China and increase social sustainability of the event. They find that the threats to residents wellbeing serves as a strong motivation to demand their involvement in planning process (Lamberti et al., 2011). They conclude that for event to be successful its planning needs to acknowledge the critical role of the consent of the community, and potential pressure on the government in terms of protests and media scrutiny when that consent is withdrawn (Lamberti et al., 2011)

Leksakundilok & Hirsch, (2006) influenced by the work of Arestin, redesigned the participation ladder especially regarding the touristic project development, adding a dimension of benefits and cost distribution. Below, *Table 1* presents that overview of types of community involvement in touristic project based on Leksakundilok & Hirsch, (2006)

Table 1: Ladder of community involvement in tourism planning

Degrees of Citizen power	Empowerment	The local community has full control over all the development. The benefits are fully contained in the community (Dewar, 1999).
	Partnership	The local community is regarded as an equal stakeholder. Planning is done in line with the participatory principle. The distribution of benefits and costs are discussed and divided democratically (Dewar, 199).
Degreases of Tokenism	Interaction	The local community has greater involvement. The rights and interests of the residents are acknowledged. Community organisations are involved in planning and there is wider distribution of benefits (Pretty, 1995).
	Consultation	The community is consulted during the planning process e.g. public hearings. Developers may accept some of the contribution (Pretty, 1995).
	Informing	People are told about the project that has been already decided on. The developers run the project without dialogue with the community. There is some sharing of benefits. (Arnstein, 1969, Leksakundilok & Hirsch, 2006).
Non-participation	Manipulation	Projects are developed by powerful actors or governments without any dialogue with the community. Most of the benefits go to the elites, while the community is exposed to costs. (Arnstein, 1969, Leksakundilok & Hirsch, 2006).

This ladder provides a framework to identify a type of community participation that is useful to assess a level of participatory planning.

Governance Triangle and theoretical model

Abbott and Snidal (2008) create governance triangle - a conceptual tool to identify actors and interventions based on their relation to government, market and civil society. That model is

useful to analyse the position and interdependence between involved stakeholders in a given governance scheme. It serves as a base for a conceptual model (figure 1) for this thesis, as well as a base for the presentation of research findings.

This paper focuses on the interaction between the local community, local governments and the festival industry in the context of festival planning. The bottom of the triangle shows the effects of the festivals on the community, it is based on literature regarding overtoursim and social effects of mega-events, namely Festivalisation, Disturbance and Commodification (Mair et al., 2021; Carlsen et al., 2007). The relation between residents and government is based on Lamberti et al (2011) and *Right to the city* literature. Following Lamberti et al (2011) it assumes that negative externalities stimulate the residents to demand planning involvement. Finally, the local authorities relationship with the festival industry is understood in a frame of Entrepreneur Governance.
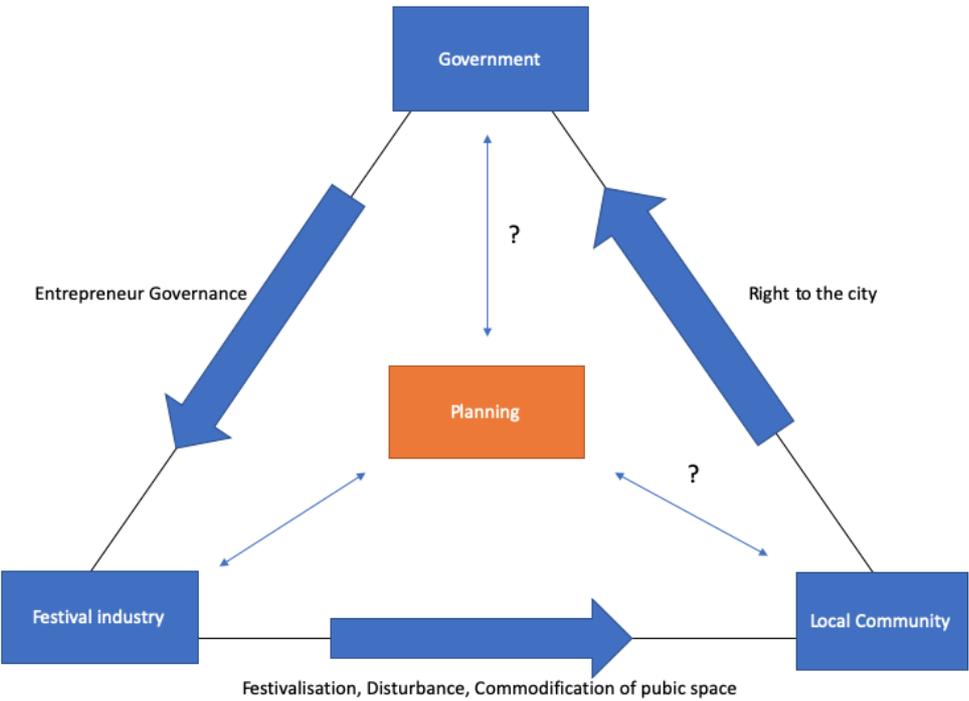

Figure 1 - Conceptual model

This research aims to investigate the relationship between the community and the planning process. To investigate that, it is necessary to understate the relation of governate to planning.

Based on the literature it is expected that the level of involvement of the community in event planning is low, but it growing as the residents are becoming more motivated and pressure the government due to the negative externalities such a commodification of public space, festivalisation and disturbance.

3. Methods

The use of study case is widespread in mega-event literature, especially concerning a complex phenomenon such as planning (Lamberti et al., 2011). To explore an complex and contentious topic of participation in mega-event planning it is necessary to examine deeply a specific study case through a qualitative research. Due to the social nature and the complexity of the topic the qualitative study is the most suitable as it allows to build a coherent image, as seen through the lens of people involved (Clifford et al., 2016). This paper investigates a real life situation through the prism of academic literature to establish how knowledge produced in spatial planning and tourism studies is applicable in in context of mega-event planning.

Three types of data are analysed: Academic literature, In-depth interviews and other sources including official documents and online conference. Triangulation is a methodical approach based on combining and comparand data from different sources (Barnum, 2011). That method was chosen to ensure validity of the results (Clifford et al. 2016)

Case description

Edinburgh Festivals is a famous example of reoccurring mega-event. Happening in the same city each year since 1950s It has evolved from a small-scale exclusive event into the biggest cultural festival in Europe (Hague, 2021). Every year August and December Edinburgh embraces its tiles as the "festival city", a total of 8 cultural festivals are organized, those are: *The Edinburgh International Festival The Edinburgh Festival Fringe, The Edinburgh International Film Festival, The Edinburgh International Book Festival, The Edinburgh Tattoo, The Guardian Edinburgh International Television Festival, The Edinburgh International Jazz and Blues Festival, and The Edinburgh Winter festival.*

It is broadly recognised that the festivals provide great access to culture, entertainment and economic boost (Jamieson, 2004). However, as well as benefits have significant downsides. Many events are held in public space and, usually, the streets and squares are overrun with performers and tourists, parks closed for venues, and municipal services failing (Mcgillivray et al., 2020). Those are symptoms of progressing overtourism. Figure 2 below illustrates the scale of disruption showing main public parks and streets used as event venues.

Figure 2: Public space used as venues in the city centre of Edinburgh

This case is right to study that research problem for a number of reasons. It is placed in a context of full democracy with the tradition of civil society, its reoccurring character boosts overtoursim, and it is hosted predominantly in the public space (Hague, 2021). It can be seen as a magnified version of a usual mega-event. Studying the participatory event planning based on this example can provide a general overview of the motivations of the community, the functioning of participatory intuitions, and the position of various stakeholders.

Academic literature and other sources

As this study aims at describing and explaining the case based on the theory, the literature review is crucial to provide a framework for deductive analysis. It serves as a as frame and to match the vison of reality that was constructed through by the interviews and supporting sources. Those other sources include official documents published by local and Scottish authority and an online conference organised by Cockburn association called "Whose Festival is it Anyway?" broadcasted on YouTube.

Interviews

The main source of data for this research comes from a series of in-depth interviews with professionals involved in Edinburgh planning and one non-expert resident (interview guide is included in appendix).

Table 2 present's overview of research participants. They represent different sides of the discussion, and their positionally is reflected on. Each person was chosen purposefully due to their expertise and experience in that particular planning process. The recruitment was based on finding an anchor person and later inquiring connection to other relevant people using the snowball recruitment method. The interview analysis was done using coding in ATLAS.ti

Table 2: Overview of research participants

Participant	Position	Interview time
Prof Cliff Hauge	Chairman of Cockburn association	62min
Jenny Bruce	Planner for the world heritage site. Edinburgh Council	43 min
Prof *David Mcgillivray*	Scholar, member of advocacy group concerned with commodification of pubic space.	55 min
Ian Buchanan	Planner organising consultation regarding the use of public space for City of Edinburgh Council	48min
Non-expert resident	Student and a worker at the hospitality sector	20 min

The participants were chosen purposefully because of their expertise and experience. important characteristic of the participations is their position at different ends of governance triangle on which the theoretical model was build (figure 1). The original aim was to examine the subject from three perspective (government, civil society and market), unfortunately finding a relevant participant form the festival industry in order to represent the market side was unsuccessful. The government perspective is represented by experts working for the council: Jenny Bruce – planner for the word heritage site, and Ian Buchman – planner tasked with organisation of consultations regarding new *Strategy for Use of Public Space for Events and Filming.* The perspective of the civil society is represented by Cliff Hague - a chairman of the Cockburn association, an outspoken advocacy for preserving liveability and the heritage of the city and by non-expert resident. Non-professional view was important to gain a perspectives of people who are not involved but are affected. Due to difference in the aim of that interview it was done differently than others. It was an open, unstructured conversation about: *How does the presence of the festivals impact your life?* David McGillivray was chosen to give academic and relatively an outsider perspective as he is the only participant who is not a current resident of the city.

Ethics

Researching people always demands a careful assessment of one's ethics. The participatory planning process can be a contentious and politically controversial matter. Thus this research takes care of the most truthful and respectful representation of the perspectives shared by participants. Before each interview participants were provided with an informed consent form (included in appendix) which provide an overview of this research, informs about participants rights and allows them to choose level of anonymity. All expert interviewees decided to be addressed by their actual name and position. It provided transparency to openly reflect on their positionality but creates additional limitations connected to fair representation.

The researcher's positionality is additionally important to reflect on. I approach this study case as an outsider, unfamiliar with the local context and without any invested interests. There is clear power relation between me and the interviewees, exerts in the field. This research was constructed to be as objective as it is possible.

4. Results

Stakeholders

Following structure of sub-questions, this analysis starts with the identification of the key stakeholders and their interconnections. Collected data specify following composition of the most relevant stakeholders:

- Edinburgh Council
- Scottish Government
- Festival industry
- Business and property owners
- Local residents
    - Community Councils
    - Civil society organisations

Conducted interviews allowed to following power relations and interconnection between those stakeholders.

The Council is considered the strongest side. It is main local authority and holds multiple tools such as: regulations, planning, licencing, and financing. It consists of civil servants and members chosen in local elections. In 2016 is has defined its goas regarding festivals as: ensuring access to events to broader community, support events business also outside of the

festival periods, develop infrastructure that will allow to sustain Edinburgh's lead in cultural section and create a powerful promotional network (Edinburgh Council, 2016). That plan was described as consulted with the event sector.

The Scottish government is the highest public authority involved. This political body plans economic development strategy, have legislative power, and provides funding. It is however less directly involved to the planning itself as limited by the principle of subsidiarity.

There are 8 festivals organised regularly in the city, each with its own separate administration and goals. Their common interest is represented by a powerful sector network called Festivals Edinburgh. Event often leases venues from the city, such event space such as concert halls or public spaces. The festivals frame their collective goals as providing entertainment, culture and business opportunities to the city (Festivals Edinburgh, 2020).

The festivals sector, private business, and property owners are directly involved both in planning and in collecting benefits, with significant financial power. Especially, Airbnb is blamed for inflating property prices.

The residents are a unique stakeholder, as diverse and a numerous group they have no single representation. There are local and national politicians chosen in elections to represent the interests of the community, however, that representation is often seen as distant. Next there are community Councils, local institutions designed to represent the interests of particular districts before the council. While they have a good overview of the local issues, they are considered to work slowly and suffer from a democratic deficit due to low engagement and power. Another way of representation is through civil society organisations and grassroots initiatives aimed at concentrating public attention and lobbying on behalf of residents. Significant organizations active in Edinburgh are Cockburn Association and Citizen Network. In this paper, those institutions are regarded as separate stakeholders, but closely linked to the residents

Those finding are placed on the framework of the governance triangle in the figure 3.
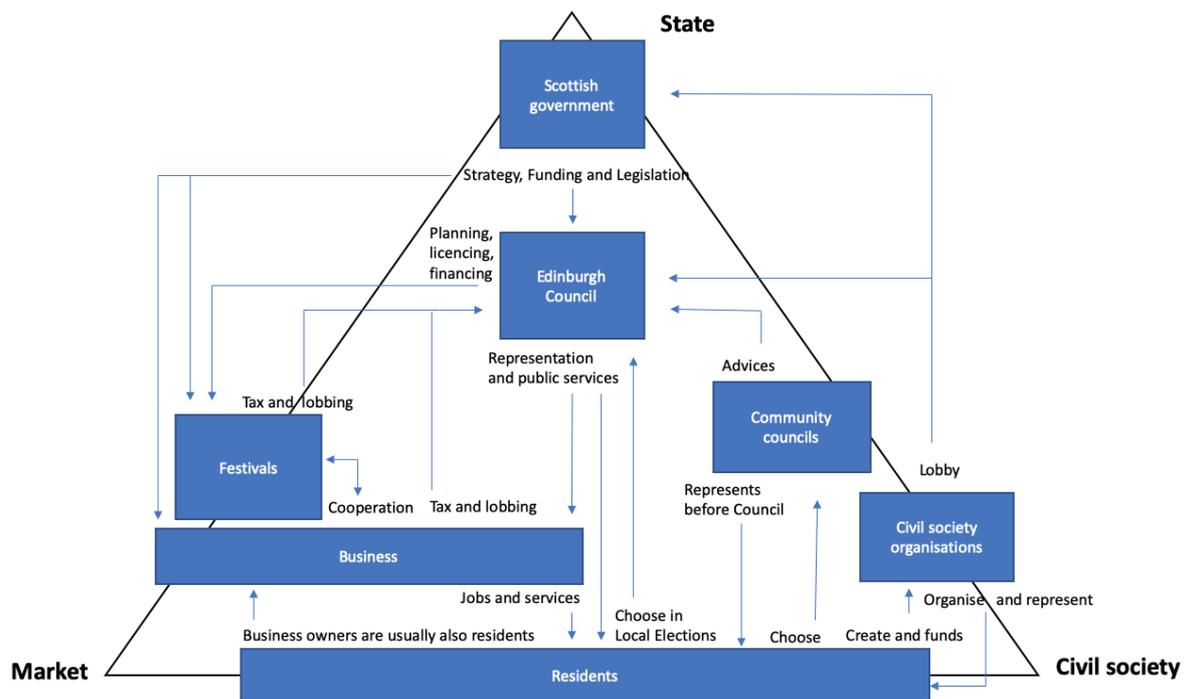
Figure 3: Placement of stakeholders on the governance triangle

Growing concern

In the last decade the scale of the festivals grew rapidly, transitioning it into a major cultural mega-event (Carlsen et al., 2007). *Table 3* illustrates that on the example of the Fringe Festival. The growth of visitors has led to overtourism. By 2019 there were over 12,000 Airbnb listings in Edinburgh, it is a significantly higher ratio in relation to the size of the city that in London (Cockburn Association, 2020).

Table 3: Attendance at The Edinburgh Festival Fringe (Festival Fringe Annual Reports)

Year	Performances	Shows	Venues	Tickets
2010	40,254	2,453	259	1,829,931
2011	41,689	2,542	258	1,877,119
2012	42,096	2,695	279	1,857,202
2013	45,464	2,871	273	'Almost 2 million'.
2014	49,497	3,193	299	2,183,591
2015	50,459	3,314	313	2,298,090
2016	50,266	3,269	294	2,475,143
2017	Not provided	3,398	Not provided	'2.7 million'
2018	Not provided	3,547	317	'Over 2.8 million'
2019	59,600	3,841	323	Not provided

Progressing gentrification pushes people out of their neighbourhood and alters the character of the city centre. The commodification of the public space and disturbance are increasingly problematic for the residents. During the interview Cliff Hauge describes it in a following way:

> Our (Cockburn) concern, has been with the commodification of public space and with the displacement of a living mixed population in the city centre and increasingly in other parts of the city as a consequence of the significant role assigned to tourism. (...) Edinburgh had a living city centre with a mixed population in it, that is now being eroded as a consequence of the capacity of the market for tourist accommodation, outbidding traditional renting or even traditional owner occupation. It shifts the city to become more of a theme park. And what we've seen quite drastically during the lockdown, it actually makes the city centre quite dark because there's not that many people living there anymore or shopping there anymore.

That quote summarises widespread concern of residents. With increasing festivalisation the commodification also progresses. David McGillivray during the interviews gives following example:

> What has caused, I think in Edinburgh in particular, some recent controversy was the kind of enclosure of space and eventually the public space becoming private space and commodified in the sense that you have to pay to enter. We don't have to pay at the moment in the most parts of the UK to enter public parks, you know, maybe in other parts of the world...

The burden of disturbance is another source of common critique. During the events, the residents often experience sound pollution, congestion and failure of communal services. During the interview Jenny Bruce describes it in following words:

> *The population of the city swells significantly but we don't have any more revenues and collectors to empty the bins, but they're five times as many people putting rubbish in the bins. So there's litter everywhere. Oh, and for security reasons, when the military tattoo is on the castle, the closest bins and post-boxes are boarded shut. So for over a month of the year, local residents can't post a letter. And so there are these sorts of really micro impacts that year upon year upon year people get annoyed about.*

Collected interviews confirm the theoretical list of negative externalities. Table 4 illustrates the number of times each interviewee mention or refer to one of those effects during the interview.

Table 4: Overview of negative externalities mentioned in interviews

Participant	Position	Number of mentions		
		Festivalisation	Commodification of public space	Disruption
Prof Cliff Hauge	Chairman of Cockburn association	10	5	6
Jenny Bruce	Planner for world heritage site. council	5	4	7
Prof David Mcgillivray	Scholar, member of advocacy group concerned with commodification of pubic space.	5	3	8
Ian Buchanan	Planner organising consultation for "Public space management plan"	5	3	3
Non-expert resident	Student and a worker at the hospitality sector	2	1	5

That descriptive table shows that those concepts are acknowledged by all interviewed sides. It is however out of the scope of this research to try to quantify strength of each of those effects on increased participation. However participant acknowledge that all of them contribute to increase resistance towards how the festivals are organised. That feeling become wide spread during situation that was described as a peak point.

Peak Point

In the winter 2019-2020 the concern about the negative effects of the festivals reached a peak-point, after a damage was done to public gardens during the Edinburgh Winter Festival. A part of that event was a Christmas market build in the Princes Street Gardens, one of the most treasured public park in the city. During the construction and deconstruction, from November until march, that part of the public park was closed to the residents. The market was a private commercial enterprise, build on the public land leased by the council. That event was a particularly clear example of the commodification of the public space.

The outrage was additionally triggered by the damage to the Princes Street Gardens . Figure 4 and 5 visualise the gardens in the summer 2019 and in march 2020. The damage to the park include a loss of over 50 years old tree and the repair was estimated to cost £150,000 resulting in prolonged closure of the park (Edinburgh News, 2020).

Figure 4: Princes Street Gardens in summer 2019

Figure 5: Princes Street Gardens in March 2020

It was especially controversial because the use of public space not consulted with the local residents, it was clear commodification of the public good and it even did not have a required planning permission. David McGillivray during the interview describes that situation it in the following words:

> *Some of the normal planning processes seem to be completely overlooked in the context of building a massive infrastructures within essentially, a public park, the Princes Street gardens. (…) This is growing year on year and, it's a massive infrastructure and of course, the planning regulations about the temporary infrastructures are quite clear when planning permission needed to be made (…) And then it's shining a light on the relationship between a commercial operator and a local authority. And almost a kind of compliancy about it. They needed to host the event. But we perhaps they didn't thought about the processes of democracy that are in place to protect it, to ensure that development doesn't happen that's inappropriate, that it's against the long term vision of the city and the strategy of the city centre. This is about just making sure that can generate money. And they have just completely avoided thinking about planning, certainly in Edinburgh they did in late 2019. That did lead to a kind of movement that was forming.*

In that quote, David additionally reflects on the relationship between the council and the festival industry, calling it *compliancy*. That was also expressed by the civil society, pointing

that entreprenerd governance parading has gone too far. All expert participants indicated this situation as a turning point. Especially Cliff Hauge describes that movement as gathering all existing concerns about disruption, festivalisation and commodification. For the first time the outrage was wide spread also among previously uninvolved residents. Important finding of the interviews is that the civil society organisations, and local media are seen to be crucial in facilitating that movement. Discussion has sparked online, and residents and in hand with activists started documenting the damage and actively advocating for change but the most significant moment was a conference organised by Cockburn Association called "City for sale". It was very successful as 850 people attended and it received extensive media coverage. It became clear that the way the events were organised is no longer acceptable. In the words of Lamberti et al. (2011) the community consent has been withdrawn. That summit created substantial pressure on the council. while was a result of anger over the park damage, it also included the cumulated frustration with ongoing festivalisation, commodification and disturbance. While it is difficult to determine which of those effects were more influential in the stimulation of the citizen involvement, all participants of this paper agree that those 3 effects had inflammatory effects. That example is in line with the role of civil society organisations as fundamental for empowering citizens, described in the *Right to the city.* Especially the Cockburn association has managed to coordinate and empower the citizens in their resistance.

Consultation on public space management plan

The summit organised by the Cockburn association forced the council to respond. Mirroring the *right the city* theory it allowed them to (partially) *renegotiate the contract between the state and the citizens*. The decision was made to organise a broad consultation with multiple stakeholders in order to negotiate a comprehensive "Public space management plan". City planner Ian Buchanan was tasked with organising that consultation process. This consultation is currently ongoing and includes over 60 different stakeholders. The goal is to create a comprehensive plan for management of public open spaces in the city for events, especially festivals. When asked about the response to the consultation is, Ian Bachman, who facilitates it, says:

> *The involvement has been good, I think, because there's a lot of interest there. But also, I've heard a few people coming back and saying that this is a very different way of the council engaging with people. And they see it as really being genuine, which it is (…) This process is being very much about: This is what's happening in Edinburgh. We know we need to change things, we need to get a balance. And we need your help to get that balance right, and one thing I've said a few times, is no one's going to get everything they want, but hopefully everyone will understand why things have been done in a certain way and can accept that.*

Based on the interviews and policy documents the current process seems to be a sincere interaction with the community (Edinburgh Council, 2021). The residents are represented in the negotiations by community councils and multiple civil society organisation that now have a direct way to express their concerns and are granted more power. The transparency and communication between the stakeholders have improved significantly. Additionally to that a direct online polls and focus group with residents are organised using a tool called *ConsultationHub*[1].

What is crucial for the assessment of that tool, is that other respondents such as Cliff Hauge and David McGillivray, who were active in criticising council have expressed careful appreciation for that process. Cockburn association is now actively participating in that consultation.

Increased level of inclusion in participation gives residents more power and their interests are acknowledged. A new institution in created resulted in a new layer of interaction between stakeholders, it is visualised in the figure 6.
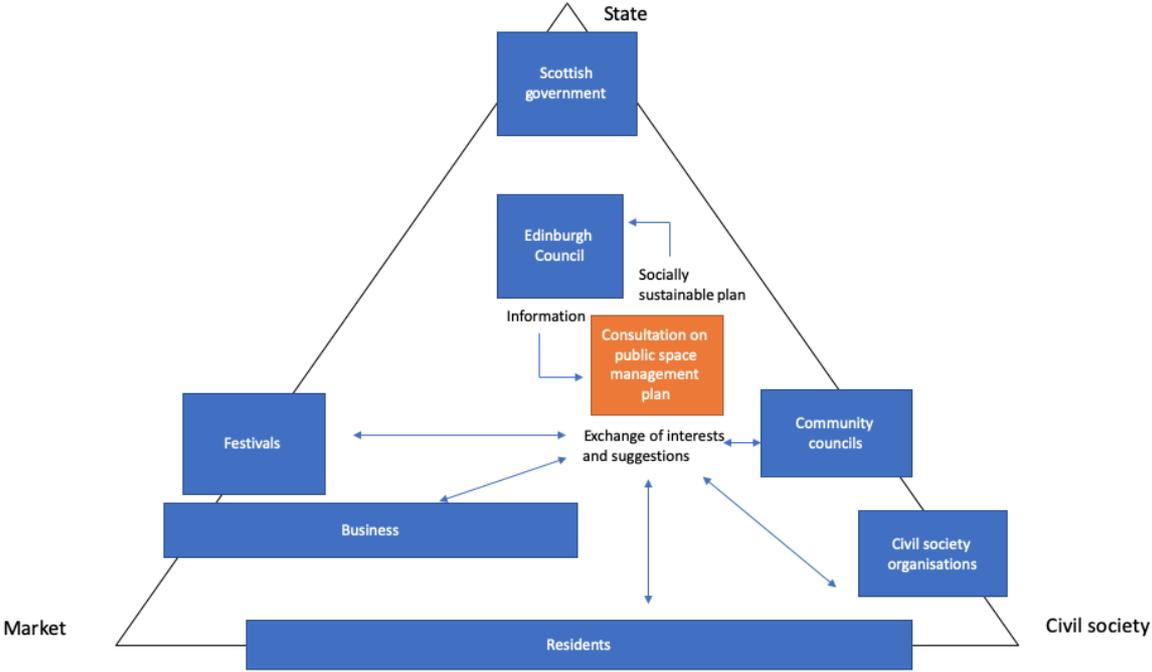

Figure 6: New consultation plan and its connextion to stakeholders

While it is only early days it seems that that process is improvement in engaging the community in planning. Relating back to the *leader of participation in tourism development* before the winter 2019-2020 the level of participation was at level of informing and has

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[1] consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk

progress to interaction. While both of those levels are regarded as tokenism, interaction gives the residents far more power, and gives opportunity to progress toward citizen power.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This paper aimed at exploring local community participation in a mega-event planning based on a case of Edinburgh festivals. Rest on series of interviews with experts it first identifies key stakeholders and their interconnection. Finding that the city council is the most influential side, that holds multiple tools to influence the festival planning. On the other end of power axis are the residents, short of a clear representation, they rely on either community councils and civil society organisations. The relation between the council and the festival industry fits in the frame of entrepreneur governance. Next this research identifies stimuli of participation, confirming significance of festivalisation, commodification and disturbance. It recognises them all as stimuli for community involvement. The turning point happed in winter 2019/2020 when a commodification and destruction of public gardens sparked a popular outrage. In line with the right to the city theory, the civil society organisations are a catalysts for community pressure on local government. That has led to broad consultation regarding public space management plan. During that timeline the level of community involvement progressed significantly. Based on the framework of the *Ladder of community involvement in tourism planning* the participation increased from *informing* to *interaction,* causing greater possibility for the community to be involved in the participatory process.

As a descriptive study, this paper deductively explored a study case using academic theories. Addressing the research question it determines that the local community in Edinburgh is involved in planning by the means of consultation plan organed by council. That involvement gives a greater control over the usage of public space. That community involvement still relays on community councils, local politicians and civil society organisations. It concludes that civil society organisations are imperative to assure social resilience against threats of overtoursim. Moreover, It advices local governments to involve in participatory planning especially in the context of usage of public space. Involvement of community provide a socially suitable results and increase in public support. Due to early stages of new consultation methods, there are not yet results of how successful the outcomes are, however so far there is a consensus that simply involvement in that process is beneficial for both the community and the council.

Findings of this study fits with given expectation and with breather literature. Therefore the generalisation of those findings seems to be possible. On the other hand however, this study case due to its history and reoccurrence is very specific. There need to more in depth research to establish to what extent is the way the development in participatory planning in event development is typical. There is some arguments e.g. Lamberti (2011) that it is, however it remines an understudied aspect in mega-event literature. An extensive research in that

process can establish how typical and it is. That would support further understanding of the relation between community involvement and event planning.

Reflection

This research was written during covid-19 pandemic, meaning that field research was impossible. All information in that paper are therefore based on observation made by others, and is immune to bias. Moreover, it suffers from lack of perspective from a festival industry. Finally it is a descriptive study due to limited possibilities, it manages to give mostly superficial view of the happening process through academic theory. Unfamiliarly with the context as well as lack of other tools and data, restricts it from caring a deep analysis. Nonetheless it success at reporting a story of changing in citizen involvement while reflecting on the underlying causes using academic theories, what was the initial aim.

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7. Appendix

Interview guide

Intro

My name is Albert Kolodziejczyk, I am a final year student of Human Geography and Urban & Regional Planning at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. For my thesis, I am researching the process of planning mega-events. I am especially interested in the interaction between stakeholders and the local community. The Edinburgh Festival is a fascinating example, due to its scale and history. This Is Why I have decided to carry out interviews with experts and stakeholders included in that specific planning process.

Again thank you for participating in the interview.

- Do you have any questions about my project?

- Do you have any questions about the informed consent?

Warm up

- What is your connection to Edinburgh?
  - What do you do?
- What is your connection to the festival?
  - What do you do during the festival?

Body

- How is the festival planning currently organized?
  - What are the institutional (legal) guidelines
  - Who is the target audience?

- Who are the current stakeholders involved?
  - Who are the most important stakeholders (max 10)
  - What are their roles in the planning of the festival?
  - Who makes the final decision?

- How are the *citizens/local communities* involved in the festival planning?
  - At what stages?
  - Do you think that they should? At what stages and how?

  - *What about the Consultations Hub or informal involvement such as protests? (only if not addressed before)*

  - Is more community involvement in needed? Why and how?

- What is the role of community *organisations/associations* in festival planning?
  - What community organisations are involved?
  - Do you think that they are a legitimate voice of the residents?
  - How much impact do they have?

- To what extend it that the current planning process is sufficient?
  - Would you like to see it changed and how?
  - Is there a need for more community involvement?

Ending

- Is there anything else you think I should know?

Informed Consent Form

This is an informed consent form regarding participation in Bachelor thesis research conducted by Albert Kolodziejczyk in May 2021, authorised by the Faculty of Spatial Science at the University of Groningen. The first page contains general information about the study and the data protection, the second page contains form be fullfed by participants.

Purpose

This study aims at researching the process of planning mega-events on a case study of Edinburgh Festivals. I am especially interested in the interaction between stakeholders and the local community. The research is conducting through a series of in-depth interviews with professionals that are involved or knowable about the process.

Collection and protection of data

This research is based on semi-structured interviews, conducted online, recorded and subsequently transcribed and analysed. The interviews are held on the platform Google Meet, the recording is stored safely on the hard drive and protected by a password.

Rights of the participants

Every participant has the following rights, and all of them can be claimed at any time during the study without giving a reason.

- Indicate desired level of identity protection (either fully pseudonymized, with all identifying elements erased or being referred to by a name/position or a mix of both)
- Completely withdraw from the study

End of the project

The data of the participants will be stored for a maximum of three months after the completion of the study. No data will be used for subsequent study.

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The participant declares that:

- ✓ They have read and understood the information about the research project and the purpose of the data processing.
- ✓ They had the opportunity to ask questions;
- ✓ They voluntarily agree to participate;
- ✓ They have been informed of their rights;
- ✓ They understand that they can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Please select desired level of identity protection. (It can be changed after the interview)

- ▪ I wish to remain anonymous

- ▪ I wish to be referred to by my name/position

- ▪ Other:

Signature of the participant and date:

Thank you for your participation!
Albert Kolodziejczyk, May 2021