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# European public culture and aesthetic cosmopolitanism

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## **Preface**

*Monica Sassatelli*

The sociological study of culture – whatever its definition and delimitation – is enjoying an increased impetus in recent years, expanding its fields of enquiry and methods, and in general being recognised as a key branch within sociology and as a main bridge towards other cognate disciplines. This has opened many new opportunities to study cultural phenomena with a view that their interpretation is relevant both in itself and as an insight into wider issues, especially among those dominating the scene of recent social theory and research. It is one of such opportunities that the partners of the EURO-Festival project meant to grasp in identifying a thus far virtually unexplored area of research that examines the role of festivals as sites of trans-national identification and democratic debate, thereby aspiring to contribute to the comparative cultural sociology of contemporary European society.

Resulting from the combination of the long-standing research interests of the partners, the project has taken shape in response to a call within the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> RTD Framework Programme (7FP) that recognised the need for research investigating the role of creativity and of artistic endeavours for issues of public relevance and for 'democracy' in particular (task 5.2.2 of the Social Sciences and Humanities Programme). This promoted possibilities for research that, especially within a collaborative project allowing for comparative relevance, is still scarce. Taking festivals as a context of research – following related expertise on festivals and cultural events more generally of many of the involved scientists (see for instance Chalcraft, 2007; Magauidda, 2008; Santoro, 2006; Sassatelli, 2008; Segal, 2007) – we reunited the group around a cluster of key research questions that linked festivals to the current debate on the post-national transformations of identities and cultural contexts, a debate that again saw many of the research partners actively engaged in, especially with regard to issues of public sphere, European identity and cosmopolitanism (Giorgi et al. 2006, Delanty, 2005; Delanty and Rumford 2005; Sassatelli, 2002).

The broad leading questions that consolidated as the project took shape addressed the relation between democratic debate and cultural creativity/production, in



particular with regard to how festivals as sites of public culture may give expression to democratic debate and transnational identifications, and, therefore, what they can tell us about European culture and identity. The approach adopted is to develop a cultural sociology of festivals through case studies of selected major European festivals with a view to gaining an understanding of their role in the construction of a new European public sphere, in this case an aesthetic public sphere, related to the trans-national, cosmopolitan character of these festivals. This crystallised in the following research objectives:

- Explore how festivals use aesthetic forms to symbolize, represent and communicate social and political life (European / national / sub-national) from the perspective of different actors, including programme directors, funding promoters, performing artists and the audience.
- Study the way in which festivals frame the discourse of identity in relation to arts with particular attention to the local / European and local / global interfaces as well as the conundrum of difference (diversity) and similarity.
- Analyze how festivals represent sites of competition for access to resources, status and power and how this competition impacts on debates about representation, openness and the public sphere.<sup>1</sup>

We consider examples of contemporary international art festivals in (mainly Western) Europe as relatively autonomous social texts or scenes that need interpretation and contextualisation. Also, given the different expertise of partners, we decided to select specific festival types – urban mixed arts, film, literature and music festivals – and within them designated festivals to be analysed following a case study strategy. This includes first an historical analysis on the socio-cultural origins of these festivals and the traditions they might have consolidated or helped to establish. Given our principal (qualitative) sociological approach, the historical analysis supports the main, multidimensional case study strategy that contains the collection of background information (through a variety of sources), in depth interviews with key informants, fieldwork observation and focus groups during the festivals. Historical analysis and case study research each form a main component (or ‘work package’, WP) of the research. These are

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<sup>1</sup> See project document, Description of Work (DoW), p. 4, 6.



complemented by a preliminary research design and exploratory research phase (WP1) and by comparative analysis at the end (WP4).<sup>2</sup>

Schematically, the festival types and case studies selected are as follows:

### **Urban mixed-art festivals**

Venice Biennale  
Brighton Arts Festival  
Vienna Festwochen

### **Film festivals**

The three main European festivals of Venice, Berlin and Cannes  
The smaller Jewish film festival in Vienna

### **Literature festivals**

The Hay Festival of Literature and the Arts (multi-national sites)  
The European Border Lands Festival  
The Berlin Literature Festival

### **Music festivals**

The UK WOMAD festival of world music  
The Umbria international jazz festival  
The Barcelona Sonar festival of electronic music.

Obviously, we do not claim that the above selection is representative of the contemporary European festival scene, which is characterized by the proliferation of smaller-scale and specialized festivals in different national and local settings. The majority of the festivals we study are established festivals claiming both high prestige in cultural terms and commercial success in economic terms. As such they represent models that other more recent festivals try to emulate or critically counteract. This, in turn, makes them interesting as subjects of study. To this set of known festivals we have added a couple of smaller and/or ‘younger’ festivals (Borderlands, Jewish Film Festival, Sonar).

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<sup>2</sup> The project also includes, along with the research work packages, a WP0 for management and a WP5 for dissemination. Different partners lead different WPs. For these more technical aspects see project documents, and in particular the Dow.



The main components of our research are as follows:<sup>3</sup>

**Research design and exploratory research (WP1).** Illustration of the theoretical approach and elaboration of detailed research design, including the methodological tools to be used. As part of this first theoretical and methodological work package, we also carried out exploratory research in order to collect background information on the selected festivals and (where available) report on research already conducted on them or more generally their type of festivals. This input was instrumental to finalising research design and planning. This WP is fully reported in the present deliverable.

**Historical Analysis (WP2).** The objective of this work package will be to review existing material on each of the festivals under investigation from a historical perspective. The objective of this historical analysis will be to chart the organizational and artistic development of festivals over time in relation to key social events or developments in cultural policy (local, national, European). Section 3.2 elaborates on this component of the research.

**Case Studies (WP3).** The greater part of the empirical work will be concentrated in this work package and involve expert interviews with programme directors, key promoters and participating artists; site visits for fieldwork observation and for discussing with participants, as well as follow-up focus groups with participants to explore instances of experimentation and experience and how these impact on identity strategies. For this, see Section 3.3.

**Analysis and Comparison (WP4).** The last of the thematic work packages will analyze the empirical material against the theoretical framework of the research and compare the research findings across different levels and dimensions.

This first deliverable reports on the first quarter of the research, or Work Package 1. European identity, creativity, cosmopolitanism and the public sphere are for many an object of reflection and research; their connection less so (their incarnation in festivals is basically unexplored territory). So in order to start our

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<sup>3</sup> See DoW, pp.12-13.



research on festivals aimed precisely at that connection, our first task has been to systematise and review a broad spectrum of material dedicated to those issues and that had contributed to bringing us to festivals as a viewpoint and object of research. In synthesis, **Part I** of the report looks ahead and at the project as a whole delineating the theoretical and methodological approach, setting the strategy of the research to come, on the basis of the ‘state of the art’ (and is integrated by Annex A.I containing the actual guidelines for empirical research). **Part II** reports on the literature reviews conducted as background preparation for the research to come (and is equally integrated by Annex A.II containing short reports on the background data collected in parallel for our selected festivals). The reader will find here an overview of the state of the art in festival research, conducted according to the festival genres we chose to focus on, in particular with a view to extrapolate both useful information and methodological instruments. The introductions to the two parts give more indications as to what can be found in the different chapters.

As in any collaborative project, the different voices that contribute to it are still recognizable and distinct. This is particularly relevant for a project that is both multidisciplinary and draws on multiple methodologies within disciplines, especially within the main sociological approach. Still, we feel that the joint work that was put into producing this first report – and that profited amply from the two project meetings held in the meantime, the kick-off meeting in Vienna, and the second meeting in Brighton, in February and July 2008 respectively – has helped in producing a strategy where the different components complement each other.

For providing the conditions to pursue this collaborative endeavour, all partners would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of the FP7. As editor I of this first report I also wish to express gratitude to the other researchers for their energy, generosity and openness in working together, across the physical distance of our different bases and the disciplinary differences and outlooks that each of us brings to this enterprise, making it – so we hope – all the more worthwhile and rewarding.





## **PART I Festivals and European Public Culture: Theory and Research**





## **Introduction to Part I**

*Monica Sassatelli*

The first part of the report illustrates the project's theoretical and methodological approach, setting it against the background of theoretical and research advances in relevant fields and with a view to sharpening our methodological tool-kit and to reach – on the basis of the broad research objectives and the proposed research strategy – a detailed and shared research plan (the latter is reported in the annex to Part I, A.I.1-2).

Given the project's objectives and multidisciplinary approach, this has meant first of all bringing together different theoretical traditions in the social sciences (sociology in particular) and humanities, so as to capture the equally multifaceted nature of festivals. Naturally, the choice of *art* festivals meant that the sociologies of art (literature, music, etc.) have all been relevant, as well as more generally the sociological study of culture as such. To this, our interest in exploring the link of these with a developing European public culture has also meant a consideration of the literature on the public sphere, cosmopolitanism, European identity and society (both in a comparative perspective and as new emerging phenomena on their own). Also urban theory and more generally urban studies had to be included, considering the centrality of urban culture and development both for interpreting the recent impulse of festivals across Europe, and for issues of cosmopolitanism, public sphere, etc. It is both the specification of object of inquiry (festivals) – and thematic target (transnational identities, new cultural dispositions and how they both find expression in and give form to democratic debate) that holds together and helps in finding a transversal reading of such a vast host of sources.

This is what **Chapter 1** in particular aims at showing: meant obviously not as a review of all the bodies of literature just listed, but as an explanatory and contextualising introduction to our specific approach. It contains an overview of the state of the art in research on festivals (in general, specific literature reviews according to the festival genre under focus are the object of Part II), cultural policy and public culture as they intersect with the discussion on cosmopolitanism



and the reshaping of systems of meaning and identities, grounding the theoretical and methodological choices of the project.

The latter are detailed in **Chapter 2**, which shows how our research is inspired by recent perspectives from social and cultural theory, providing the guiding theoretical rationale and its translation into analytical approaches. The chapter also shows how the original contribution the project aims to make is an innovative empirical investigation with regard to advances that have so far remained at a theoretical level of very broad social theory and still need to be connected to middle range sociological investigations of current phenomena. It is how we plan to reach this objective – showing how the theory informs methodological choices – through an interpretive, in-depth approach, combining different but complementary analytical perspectives, that this chapter illustrates.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Part I is completed by **Chapter 3**, which spells out the rationale of preliminary research conducted in parallel, and the operative methodological guidelines elaborated specifically for the project, that we derived from our theoretical approach and analytical outlook. Needless to say, research is never a series of compartmentalised stages as project documents tend to depict it for the sake of clarity. And indeed, in order to elaborate a good research strategy, some background or preliminary research is fundamental, both to be aware of data already available and to be better prepared for the actual encounter with the ‘field’ and what can be expected from it. Chapter 3 thus also links to what the reader can find in greater detail in Part II and in the Annexes, that is the background collection of both secondary data coming from literature reviews and of primary data coming directly from available sources on our selected festivals, as well as the complete methodological guidelines that are summarised here.

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<sup>4</sup> See DoW, pp. 6-7.



## 1. Public Culture, Cosmopolitanism and Festivals

*Monica Sassatelli*

The expression ‘popular culture’, as has been noted, is redundant: all culture is ‘popular’ in some sense, or it would simply fade away if it was meaningful to nobody (Griswold 1997). This is even more the case of public culture, as we can certainly say that all culture is public: meanings are, by definition, shared understandings, that we learn, produce and reproduce in interaction; even sub-cultures are public in this sense, even if their reach may be more limited and self-enclosed. At the same time, the concept of public culture is useful because some cultural forms are clearly more public than other. Public culture can be defined as intended for a public and as part of a debate shaping public representations of a certain issue or phenomenon. Public culture therefore takes mainly the form of discourses (narratives, concepts, ideologies, signifying practices, expressed through several types of cultural objects, texts, or scenes) more or less explicitly addressed to an audience and with an aim. In this sense the notion of public culture is both more specific and more inclusive with respect to the related one, and recently much theorised and studied, of the ‘public sphere’. More specific, because it concentrates on the cultural dimension, whilst the public of sphere contains other ones, with a strong focus on a political dimension in particular. More inclusive, because it is potentially less predicated on the national configuration as term of reference, as studies on the public sphere have been, seeing it as a distinctive feature of modern, national (and mostly western) societies. Not surprisingly, therefore, to transfer the notion of public sphere from the national to European level has proven difficult. Whilst several models of a European public sphere have been put forward – ranging from a supra-national, overarching and EU based public sphere to the idea of Europeanized, but still nationally based, public spheres to inter/cross-connecting public spheres emerging mainly from sharing debates and the cross fertilization of discourses (Delanty and Rumford 2005; Eder 2006; Giorgi et al. 2006) – none seems to have settled the matter. The very notion of sphere, with its implicit suggestion of wholeness and exhaustivity, hardly fits with the ever-changing, unfinished process of Europeanization that, as an increasing amount of research shows, contains both integration and differentiation and can mean different things in different contexts



and for different agencies. For the social sciences, there is a need to find sites where an emergent European public culture can be identified and studied, looking beyond the traditional ones where the national public sphere emerged and has been mainly analysed.

Indeed, within the public sphere, some aspects have been more studied than others, and these have particularly been those related to strong institutions around which they are organised, (such as churches, schools, community centres) and that have always been conceived as primary sources of identity formation and therefore terrains of key debate. However, there are other *milieux* that can be thematised as sites of public culture. Among the most neglected, until recently, were those related to artistic or cultural expressions in the restricted sense of aesthetic artefacts and activities, as these were considered as mere epiphenomena. The ‘cultural turn’ in sociology, whilst it has first of all meant a more central place for culture in its wider sense – often referred to as anthropological – also expanded the study of art and aesthetics from a mere social history seeing them as depictions or reflections of social and cultural structures, to a more mature approach, both theoretically and empirically, that thematises them as relatively autonomous social fields (Heinich 2001). This is both an epistemological turn and an historical one (Nash 2001), in the sense that whilst it is clearly a theoretical shift in the way we conceptualise the same phenomena, it also points to historical transformations in the relationship of culture, social (and territorial) organisation and identity that justify and support the new approach as the empirical scenario is now changed.

In the cultural realm, the problematisation of the distinction between high- and low- culture has certainly been indicative of such historical transformations and has led to a configuration that most observers now agree can be defined as characterised by cultural fragmentation. A common assumption about the consequence of that waning distinction between high and low culture is the loss of the critical edge of high, and especially avant-garde, culture in favour of easier, commercialised forms of art, as in the well-known critique of the cultural industries by Adorno. This is particularly relevant to the debate over the relationship of culture and identity because it takes us to cosmopolitanism, which currently covers a substantial part of that debate. This is because, as David



Chaney has shown in a recent article, it was as ‘cosmopolitanism’ that the challenge of high culture avant-garde art was conceived of (praised or condemned) before it supposedly lost its critical edge to commercialisation; that is a challenge to dominant, (national) middle-class, capitalist values. In other words, the loss of the critical, ‘emancipative’ function of aesthetic (high) culture was considered the price to pay to dispose of high cultural elitism, and thus a condition for the democratisation of culture (Jones 2007: 76). Whether or not that conclusion is accurate, it shows how the changing meaning and status of the cosmopolitan can indeed be thematised through a focus on forms of artistic expressions, and how these are produced, experienced and debated can be an important viewpoint on the new patterns of identity that are available given the condition of contemporary cultural fragmentation. And if it is true, as Chaney goes on, that art under cosmopolitan conditions, due to its own success and to a growing focus on cultural citizenship in public discourse, has become a spectacular tourist attraction, then the growing phenomenon of international post-traditional festivals provides precisely one privileged site to study those transnational identifications and democratic debate.

As we shall see, the (small) social science literature specifically on festivals – when not focused on mere impact evaluation or management issues – also has mainly posited a similar direct proportional relationship between the growing professionalisation, commercialization and basically popular success of festivals and their becoming both less critical and less significant in terms of their role within wider social life. Indeed, most literature on contemporary festivals, or passing remarks on festivals, is very little attuned, or even aware of, the substantial literature on traditional festivals, developed in particular by anthropology and folklore studies. Or when it is, it tends to pose the problem in terms of what the new festivals ‘lack’ in comparison with their traditional forebears. Precisely because it becomes normative, however, this comparison loses much of its analytic potential for the study of contemporary festivals.

‘Traditional feasts and festivals constitute, symbolically, a renewal of the past in the present, a way of recalling the origins – whether mythical or historical – of a community of men [sic]; they are occasions when cultural and national identity can be re-asserted and feelings of self-awareness and participation in common



experiences reaffirmed[...]. Feasts played an important role in the past and nowadays there is a new interest in their socio-cultural function as the quest for self-identity and self-assertion unfolds within modern societies' (Metraux 1976: 7). From the introduction opening a double issue of the Unesco journal *Cultures* dedicated to festivals, although still formulated in a pre-postmodernist language little aware of gender issues and challenges to the nation as taken for granted site of identification, this quote shows how the idea that modern festivals, and not only traditional ones, are important to social and cultural (re)production is deep-seated. Unfortunately, the following observation by the author, that unlike festivals in 'traditional communities', their heirs' significance for contemporary society has not really been investigated by social scientists remains true over thirty years on. The point however is not only to study the 'survival' of traditional festival within contemporary society, as this author recommends, but to study the significance of contemporary, post-traditional festivals as well, still drawing on that socio-anthropological approach so successfully applied to traditional ones.

In what follows we will thus start our analysis from a consideration of how the cultural significance of festivals, in its more far-reaching issues of sites for the re-enactment and reproduction of 'community', has been thematised, from the classic studies by Durkheim on (section 1.1). This will inform our approach on contemporary arts festivals in particular within a Europeanizing context and in relation to issues of transnational identifications and orientations and democratic debate. We consider in particular how cultural policy studies have explained and promoted the increasing success of festivals, in ways that can also be interpreted as creating new forms of (aesthetic) public culture (section 1.2). Finally, this suggests the need for a closer consideration of indicators that come from recent research on how to interpret new cultural orientations, especially in terms of cosmopolitan dispositions (section 1.3).

### **1.1 Festivals: place, time and identity**

That contemporary sociology has dismissed the study of festivals is somewhat ironic since all literature on festivals never fails to cite Emile Durkheim's ground setting work on festivals as intensification of the collective being. Indeed, even



today Durkheim's work remains the point of departure. Durkheim saw in festivals a form of 'collective effervescence' where the (mechanical) solidarity of collective consciousness found both expression and consolidation. Developed in his study on *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) this was obviously referred to equally 'primitive' societies held together by mechanical solidarity. This is because festivals can be seen as a space and time separated from the profane dimension of daily life and actualizing the sacred. Durkheim's approach was then taken up and granted long lasting impact through the work of Marcel Mauss and others (see also Caillois 1958). 'For Durkheim, as for Caillois, the festive process ... generates a collective excitement that frees society from its everyday ups and downs, engaging the social substance in its sacred substrate' (Piette 1992: 40). To describe this social effervescence – that Durkheim found in the Australian aboriginal *corroboree* – Durkheim stressed the moments of exaltation, passion and loss of control (however planned) that, transcending daily life and its rules, put in contact with the transcendent in general and with creative moments of rule making. As we can see, in this French school of sociology theories of the festival stem from within the sociology of religion. It is perhaps because contemporary, post-traditional festivals have lost their strict association with religion that they have escaped the sociologist's attention and have been dismissed as not equally revelatory of a society's self-representation as their traditional forebears. Within the sociology of religion, and in Durkheimian fashion, the festival becomes an exclusively serious space-time, and little space is left for ambiguity and alternative voices apart from that of the order reinforced through sanctioned transgression. Based on such rigid dichotomies as that between sacred and profane, this type of approach is likely to interpret divergent forms as non-equally serious and therefore irrelevant. This applies also to other distinctions that have been made within festivals; of particular relevance is that between rural and urban, as the shift from the first to the latter has also been interpreted in terms of loss and corruption of an original 'essence' of the festival: '[This type of research] emphasizes the festival's loss of magnetism in an urban context, as compared with its original rural setting. It views the urban festival as mere entertainment instead of the mythical act accomplished by traditional communities' (Piette 1992: 39). Advancing this critique Piette has proposed instead to apply to festivals a Goffmanian approach aimed at individuating the



different frames<sup>5</sup> and keys that isolate the festival as an interstitial time-space that is not everyday or totally separated from it and that draws on this ambiguity to carry a plurality of meanings. Although a Goffmanian approach is no guarantee against nostalgic views of the distinction between traditional and contemporary festival – indeed, especially in tourism studies Goffman’s approach has been mainly used to argue for a distinction between an authentic ‘back region’ where ‘locals’ get on with their lives and the commercialised, constructed ‘front region’ accessible to tourists<sup>6</sup> – this is only partly attributable to Goffman himself and is certainly not a necessary part of frame analysis. Rather, what frame analysis is precisely useful for – as we are going to see in further detail in section 3 – is to allow an understanding of the plurality of meanings and positions that concur to the definition of a situation. In this, a Goffmanian approach is also more in line with the other main ‘classic’ source in the study of festivals, which is Turner’s study of rituals as polyvocal performances rather than as unified signifiers of a consensual collective conscience (Turner 1982). Within festivals, rituals themselves are of various kinds and can serve different purposes, sometimes also contrasting ones. Alessandro Falassi in particular has tried to develop this into morphology useful for research.<sup>7</sup> Although Falassi too obviously has in mind mainly traditional or community festivals (he refers to the involvement of

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<sup>5</sup> It may be worth briefly recalling Goffman’s own definition of frame: ‘I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them: frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify’ (Goffman 1974: 10-11). Or also: ‘Given their understanding of what it is that is going on, individuals fit their actions to this understanding and ordinarily find that the ongoing world supports this fitting. These organizational premises – sustained both in the mind and in activity – are called the frame of the activity’ (Ibid.: 247).

<sup>6</sup> Goffman’s idea of social life as a stage and his focus on interaction processes remains fundamental, however “significant works on festival tourism influenced by Goffman seem to be kept prisoner of the conceptual dichotomy between front and back stage. For instance, works by MacCannell (1973), Boissevain (1996) and Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1998) often seem to reduce the festival space to a binomial event, with ‘inauthentic’, ‘artificial’ or ‘de-contextualised’ on-stage spectacles performed for touristic audiences and the ‘real’ things happening behind the stage or elsewhere” (Picard and Robinson 2006: 21).

<sup>7</sup> We also owe to Falassi an accurate etymological analysis, often quoted by other scholars: ‘Etymologically the term *festival* derives ultimately from the Latin *festum*. But originally Latin had two terms for festive events: *festum*, for “public joy, merriment, revelry,” and *feria*, meaning “abstinence from work in honor of the gods.” Both terms were used in the plural,  *festa* and *feriae*, which indicates that at that time festivals already lasted many days and included many events. In classical Latin, the two terms tended to become synonyms, as the two types of events tended to merge’ (Falassi 1987:1-2).



‘natives’ for instance), his definition and morphology is widely quoted and provides indeed a useful instrument.

[F]or the social sciences, the definition [of festival] that can be inferred from the works of scholars who have dealt with festival while studying social and ritual events from the viewpoint of various disciplines such as comparative religion, anthropology, social psychology, folklore, and sociology indicates that festival commonly means *a periodically recurrent, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and a series of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to various degrees, all members or a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a worldview*. Both the social function and the symbolic meaning of the festival are closely related to a series of overt values that the community recognizes as essential to its ideology and worldview, to its social identity, its historical continuity, and to its physical survival, which is ultimately what festival celebrates (Falassi 1987: 2).

The modalities through which festivals operate are plural, and Falassi stresses that if some authors stress symbolic inversions (as in Carnivals) and others intensification, these two types are not mutually exclusive, as in festivals all modalities of normal everyday life are there, but modified in a number of ways.

If we consider that the primary and most general function of the festival is to renounce and then to announce culture, to renew periodically the lifestream of a community by creating new energy, and to give sanction to its institutions, the symbolic means to achieve it is to represent the primordial chaos before creation, or a historical disorder before the establishment of the culture, society, or regime where the festival happens to take place [...] In sum, festival presents a complete range of behavioural modalities, each one related to the modalities of normal daily life. At festival times, people do something they normally do not; they abstain from something they normally do; they carry to the extreme behaviors that are usually regulated by



measure; they invert patterns of daily social life. Reversal, intensification, trespassing, and abstinence are the four cardinal points of festive behavior (Ibid.: 3).

Falassi's morphology of festivals is thus mainly based on the ritual dimension of the festival, seen however not as a unified narrative, but rather as characterised by the plurality of types of rituals and their role and significance within the festival time-space. A simple list of the rituals informing the festival would be as follows: rites of valorisation, rites of purification, rites of passage, rites of reversal, rites of conspicuous display, rites of conspicuous consumption, ritual dramas, rites of exchange, rites of competition, rites of revalorization (for details, see Ibid.: 3-6).

A risk that both Durkheimian and Turnerian approaches run, and as the articulated typology of Falassi partly runs into, is that conceiving festivals as containing whole worlds that have their own kind of parallel reality – the famous 'time out of time' of Falassi's definition – they end up actually forgetting their equally relevant contextualisation into the world 'outside'. As a result 'many studies of festivals, in both theoretical and empirical terms, are marked by tightly defined boundaries of their immediate social context, with an emphasis upon closed spaces, fixed times, indigenous social actors, internal regimes and symbolic contexts, and bounded rituals. Fewer studies have sought to position festivals in a context that is fluid, open to different scopes of (transnational) society and cultural vectors, and that resonates with the realities of ongoing change (Picard and Robinson 2006: 4-5). Perhaps useful indications to avoid these shortcomings come from yet another field of studies that can be brought to bear on that of festivals, namely studies of cultural displays, that has been developed mainly with regard to museums and visual arts exhibitions, but that can, and has been, also applied to festival settings. This is well exemplified by a volume edited for the Smithsonian institute on *Exhibiting Cultures* (Karp and Levine 1991). The book considers cultural displays in general as contested arenas for competing meanings, 'settings in which different parties dispute both the control of exhibitions and assertions of identity made in and experienced through visual displays' (Karp 1991: 279). Turning to festivals – which cover a section of the book – these are here defined as inclusive, celebratory events (with little attention to their commercial side), with a view to 'examine how festivals present yet another



public forum in which cultural displays tend to produce disputes over meaning' (Ibid). In his introduction to the section on festivals, Karp does of course recognise the difference between museums, the book's primary target, and festivals, the latter often being explicitly anti-museums in their self-representation. However Karp also notices that the 'curatorial hand' may be, paradoxical, stronger in festivals, because greater cultural distance between performers and audience means greater need for interpretation 'to guide and stimulate the audience to experience a world they know only through the faculty of the imagination. Whether the world to be imagined ever existed is irrelevant to the display devices that are used. The larger metamessages of "authenticity" and "fantasy" are the product of the overall story spun by the exhibition, and not a product of the specific display forms used in exhibitions and festivals' (Ibid.: 280-281). Especially when contrasted with museums, festivals are characterised by their 'living' dimension. Festivals, unlike museums, would be sites of more unrestrained sensory experience, whilst museums rely on distance (they convey an idea of preciousness, rarity, high cultural and financial value, all of which is related to authenticity). Festivals too are about authenticity, but in another way: 'Festivals communicate messages about authenticity while they also invoke pleasurable, sensual experiences that more totally involve the person. [Richard] Bauman described this totalizing participation – which engages acting, tasting, or feeling, in addition to looking – as "blowout". The stance that is stressed in festivals is active rather than passive, encouraging involvement rather than contemplation' (Ibid.: 282). As a result, festivals have a more democratic and non-judgemental participatory and sensory aesthetics than museums, as such the distinction between museums and festivals is seen as basically reproducing that between elite and popular culture. This observation is obviously more relevant with folk festivals in mind; however, its corollary might be worth considering also in the case of our contemporary, international festivals: 'Elite culture tells a story of cultivation that has universal implications. [...] Festivals tell stories that deny or ignore the universalizing themes of elite culture, in that they often entail just those cultural experiences and groups that resist the universal. Universal stories lead to tidy events; particularizing stories do not allow their tellers to wrap them up into neat packages' (Ibid.: 283-4). This is particularly interesting because, as we shall see in the next section, there might be another road to the universal,



rather than generalization through uniformisation, and one that can be found in aesthetic cosmopolitanism.

Both Falassi's indication that dichotomic interpretations should be considered with caution and as analytical rather than as practical distinctions – e.g. transgression vs. intensification, sacred vs. profane – as they are both relevant for the study of concrete festivals, and Karp's questioning analysis of who is really empowered by cultural displays (he notes in particular how an observed positive effect of festivals is raising the status of despised groups of performers, often reaching beyond the event to the context the performers come from) are particularly relevant for the study of contemporary, post-traditional festivals. The latter too has been trapped in dichotomic visions, in particular that between authentic and commercial festivals, and that (related to the previous one) between critical or engaged and 'mere spectacularisation' ones.<sup>8</sup> In a way the fact that a good proportion of the scarce literature on contemporary festival has been driven by economic research focusing exclusively on economic returns, and thus on an instrumental vision of festivals, has contributed to reinforce the idea that contemporary festivals are – from a cultural point of view – of little relevance, as they are dominated by commercial, 'unauthentic' logics. However, as this brief overview of those studies that have taken festival seriously shows, rather than dichotomic vision we need approaches able to trace the complex, polyvocal discursive and relational field that festivals generate, as they are a significant expression of contemporary public culture and thus provide an interpretative key to some key issues within it.

One particularly good example of how binary logic may struggle to interpret them satisfactorily is the peculiar relation of festival with place. Festivals are place specific, as they are performance based (even non-performative arts), a concentrated space-time frame: they create the sense of unique, one-off

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<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note however that Guy Debord, the father of the theory of the 'society of spectacle' drew a distinction between spectacle and festival: 'The "potlatch", "lazy liberty without content" (Debord 1983: thesis 127) and "festivals" that are "the moment of a community's participation in the luxurious expenditure of life" (1983: thesis 154) were associated by Debord with a pre-historical, pre-political era. Yet they are also evoked throughout situationist literature as: (a) images of the kind of society that the situationists wished to create; and (b) the inverse of the spectacle, which is portrayed as a society without real festival, without real life and without real liberty (Bonnett 2006: 30).



experience, for which it is important to say 'I was there' and that therefore carry their own authenticity. An authenticity, though, that is less connected to notions of 'purity' than of hybridity, at least this seems to be the case of contemporary festivals:

Simplistic and dualist classifications of festivals into sacred and secular, rural and urban, people and establishment do not provide enough substance to conceptualize the distinctions among festivals (Duvignaud, 1976; Falassi, 1987: 3). An important facet of most arts festivals is that they are to do with place [...]. They have strong place identification and a festival may help define a place, echoing both Relph's argument that places are culturally defined, so that strict cartographic location is merely an incidental quality, and Zukin's claim that place is a cultural artifact of social conflict and cohesion (Relph, 1975; Zukin, 1991: 12). [...] A festival's designers use it to (re)construct the place at which it is held. In so doing, successful festivals create a powerful but curious sense of place, which is local, as the festival takes place in a locality or region, but which often makes an appeal to a global culture in order to attract both participants and audiences (Waterman 1998: 58).

To sum up, we could say that one possible starting point for research on contemporary post-traditional festival from the point of view of a cultural sociology is the following: participation in traditional festivals defined the community, and we can thus interpret that community, its cultural and territorial boundaries through the study of festivals; in a similar fashion, contemporary international festivals can be thematised to interpret the cosmopolitan community, often invoked, but rarely grounded in empirical evidence, especially beyond the élite level (leaving aside here the issue whether or not 'community' is the best term to describe the current form of social and cultural organisation).



## 1.2 Festivals, cultural policy and public culture: regeneration and aesthetic cosmopolitanism

Since the late 1960s, a steady increase in the number of newly created festivals in all continents has been noted [...] Some with long histories have been ‘rediscovered’, reinvigorated and reinvented while others have been *created*, often as a response to a myriad of social, political, demographic and economic realities. The explanation for the recent proliferation of festivals is complex, but in part relates to a response from communities seeking to re-assert their identities in the face of a feeling of cultural dislocation brought about by rapid structural change, social mobility and globalisation processes’ (Picard and Robinson 2006: 2).

This is probably nowhere as clear as it is for major festivals established in Europe in the aftermath of World War II. The best – and most studied – example is certainly the Edinburgh International festival that was explicitly established in 1947 as a contribution to the reconstruction of European society and culture that had been destroyed by the two wars:

Edinburgh had escaped the devastation of bombs, and unscathed by mortar, it proudly clung to its Enlightenment aspirations of being internationally recognized as the “Athens of the North.” In that year [1947], Edinburgh hosted the first “Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama.” The first program of high cultural performances codified cultural alliances and affinities of taste that symbolically transcended the geographies of war. Post-war, Edinburgh’s first *international* festival re-established communities of high culture and conferred legitimacy to the spatial and temporal structure of arts festivals in the city. [...]. From the outset, the Edinburgh International Festival mapped itself beyond the boundaries of the national image of Scotland’s capital city, situating itself within a shifting geography of European cultural traditions (Jamieson 2004: 66).



As we can see from Edinburgh's example, contemporary festivals may not have originated from the deep, religious, roots of society but, in an increasingly secularised public culture, they are far from being superficial, disposable, merely spectacular and commercially oriented endeavours.<sup>9</sup> According to Boissevain (1992) the recent explosion of festivals in Europe is connected and stimulated by secularisation, migrations, democratisation, or more in general by increased mobility and change. Historical accounts had already stressed the role of festivals as a connecting thread for the social fabric, so their parallel transformation should not come as a surprise. In particular Muir (1997) has analysed in a European context and historically the importance of public festivities across Europe from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that is the period during which 'civic consciousness, or the identification of individuals with their home town, came to be one of the distinguishing characteristics of European civilisation' (Quinn 2005a: 928). Interestingly one of Muir's key examples is Venice's ability to reassert its political dominance on the surrounding cities and regions by imposing its rituals and symbols so as to consolidate civic identity: 'Venice constructed and represented its colonial dominion through ritual, forcing subject cities to celebrate the feast days of St Mark, the patron saint of Venice' (Ibid.), as well as placing statues and reliefs of the symbol in public spaces in Venice's controlled provinces – a symbol that is still today the emblem of the city and, for that matter, of the contemporary city festival, the Venice Biennale. In this vein it is in particular the role of the festival in supporting established power that is highlighted, however that implies the reverse as well: festivals have also been recognized as potential sites for contestation and subversive or alternative forms to find expression. This partly runs counter to interpretations that see the recent, and in particular the very recent (from the 1980s) development of festivals in Europe and elsewhere as linked mainly to economic and 'regeneration' objectives. Indeed, even the Venice Biennale itself, although established in non-suspect times as one of the oldest European festivals, was clearly, and quite openly, an operation to rescue a dying

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<sup>9</sup> For those who like to establish lineages and 'official' origins, here is a common view, clearly putting traditional, religious festivals and contemporary arts festivals on the same line: "As important cultural practices, festivals have a long-established association with cities. It is thought that the first festival took place in Athens as long ago as 534 BD, in honour of the God Dionysos, the patron of wine, feast and dance [...] The forerunners of contemporary urban arts festivals can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Bayreuth Festival in 1876 and Salzburger Festspiele in 1920" (Quinn 2005a: 929).



star in the European cultural firmament, especially when the Cinema section was established in the 1930s to prolong and salvage the seaside holiday season of the Venice Lido. However political or cultural diplomacy objectives were also there. As becomes clearer when considering festivals as part of modern cultural policies, we can distinguish a few approaches, that can be seen both as dominating subsequent 'phases' post WWII and as components variously informing all cultural policies; their articulation accounts both for the evolution of festivals and for the shifting academic attention they received.

Considering in particular the context of Western Europe since the late 1940s, a first approach in European post-war cultural policies has been individuated as covering the period up to the 1960s and aimed at the promotion, allegedly politically neutral, of 'high art', and of access to it. The definition of culture that underlies it is restricted to 'high culture'. Festivals established in this period have high art programmes and aspirations, building on a tradition established by older festivals such as the Bayreuth and Salzburg, but under the new banner of 'reconstruction': 'The post-war period witnessed an upsurge in the number of festivals being established. In an era where the drive towards reconstruction, political stability and the forging of international linkages through trade (including through a fledging tourism industry) set the tenor for economic and social advancement, the emergence of such nationally important festivals as at Avignon (France), Edinburgh (Scotland), Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Wexford (Ireland) and Spoleto (Italy) were important contributions to Europe's cultural infrastructure' (Quinn 2005a: 929). Taking in particular the example of post-war UK it has been noted that 'some of the more prominent festivals were created by arts practitioners who saw the arts as a means of promoting contact between European countries, following the destruction brought about by two world wars. Festivals including Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Swansea, Cheltenham and Bath flourished in this period of optimism and artistic endeavour, although this European dimension varies' (Rolfe 1992: 7-8). A second period in cultural policies, covering basically the 1970s, is connected to a widespread trend of decentralisation of governance in Western Europe and to a new role of local, especially urban, policies: cultural policy becomes an instrument for political and social objectives, in particular in the shape of a wider access to culture for disadvantaged groups, making cultural initiatives a means for obtaining



consensus. Here the definition of culture is wider and challenges in particular the distinction between high and low that formed the basis of the previous phase. Cultural policy becomes cognate to social policy, being aimed at the reconstruction of an active local social fabric. This is when a top-down 'democratization of culture' paradigm gives way to a multidimensional 'cultural democracy', also stimulated by the emerging social movements and their protest agenda against dominant culture. This is when festivals became sites of debate and challenge to established culture: 'The challenge to dominant arts paradigms began to emerge more strongly in the 1960s and 1970s, when international student festivals at places like Zagreb and Nancy started experimenting with new artistic ideas and pushing out the boundaries of what was acceptable in terms of artistic production and performance [...]. Festivals during these decades grappled with definitions of culture, challenging accepted definitions of 'high' and 'low' arts and gradually breaking down distinctions between the two. Festivals like those at Avignon and the Fringe at Edinburgh now operationalised this radical rethinking in their programming, their use of venues and in the ways in which they tried to engage audiences.[...]. [The new approach] signalled a move away from earlier attempts to use the arts festival, and the arts more generally, as a means of defining and maintaining social distinctions (Quinn 2005a: 930). Indeed, all major festivals were hit by the protests and often underwent substantial changes as a result (see below, reviews of cinema and urban festivals in particular). The third approach, which emerged slowly during the 1980s, and still dominates the field today sees cultural policy in the new light of urban regeneration, with various emphases from more exclusively economic (city-marketing) to more encompassing (cultural planning) variants. Whilst allegedly also attempting to combine the previous two, this approach is characterised by a major shift towards objectives of development and requalification of cities in an increasingly post-industrial scenario: gradually the language of subventions and access is substituted by that of investment and place promotion. This implies a concept of culture as wide as possible, often referred to its 'anthropological' connotation, referring not only to the arts, high and low, but also to tradition, customs, values, in short a whole way of life. The focus on economic impacts means that this wide notion of culture can at the same time be reduced to an expanded notion of what constitutes 'cultural consumptions'. Festivals established in this period, when there has been a real festival rush, see an increased involvement of local



authorities and progressively aim at urban regeneration. The idea of boosting tourism and local economic development is one of the major considerations behind local authority support. In the UK, for instance, ‘a number of the festivals which resulted from this shift in policy drew upon a range of artistic forms and traditions and in some cases explicitly recognized and incorporated other, non-European, cultures represented in local communities. Some of these festivals included a processional component or similar outdoor participatory events’ (Rolfe 1992: 9). These local strategies are not insulated from wider developments, and, no matter how instrumentalised for economic ends, cultural specificities and identities have also always been part of both the means and aims played out within festivals: “Festivals have, however, taken on a new significance in the context of globalisation. They are now construed as entrepreneurial displays, as image creators capable of attracting significant flows of increasingly mobile capital, people and services. Major events are seen as being particularly effective in that they ally tourism objectives with urban planning (Roche 1994), while simultaneously providing a means through which political and urban elites can refashion collective feelings of identity, emotion and consciousness ... This civic boosterism line of thinking argues that major events generate in citizens a sense of pride and self-esteem” (Quinn 2005a: 931).

These three phases in local cultural policies have been defined as the *age of reconstruction* (1940s-1960s), the *age of participation* (1970s and early 1980s) and finally the *age of city marketing* (from the mid 1980s to present) (Bianchini 1999). Even though each seems to dominate a specific period, these should not be considered as clear-cut ‘phases’, but rather as alternative approaches that can easily co-exist and overlap, as the ongoing preoccupation for the high/low culture divide clearly demonstrates, or the persisting, if intermittent, claim for the social relevance of cultural policies. The distinction is more easily drawn about policy rationales and objectives than about actual outputs and it is best conceived in terms of different emphases rather than radical shifts. The models combine and sometimes conflict, with the expanding definition of culture being functional to the inclusion of different and increasingly far-reaching and extra-cultural objectives. Within the third approach a further distinction has been recently made between the so-called ‘festival marketplace’ approach and the ‘cultural planning’ approach. The first, pioneered in the United States as early as the 1950s pivots on



consumption, entertainment and spectacularisation to rescue decadent city centres, whilst the second tries to reach the same results but nurturing local cultural industry and specificities. Drawing on Bianchini and Schwengel (1991), Deborah Stevenson has called them respectively Americanization and Europeanization: the first one ‘increasingly being described as a redevelopment cliché’ (Stevenson 2003:100) concentrated on the physical aspects but with little attention for social and cultural specificities, whilst the second ‘is said to draw (albeit in theory) on perceptions of the “form and feeling” of European cities [...]. Central to such strategies is the rhetoric of local difference and diversity’ (Ibid.: 104; see also Chapter 4 below for more on the relevance of the literature on big and mega events).

With the shift from ‘cultural’ to ‘economic’ objectives, authors have also started to be mainly interested in economic evaluation (or, it has been authors interested in economic evaluation that continued to work on cultural policies, see in particular the literature review on music festivals, Chapter 5). However, this not only shows little critical distance from the policy’s own objectives and self-evaluation, but also forgets that, regardless of the main, dominant approach within a policy, the cultural, or even symbolic, dimension and role does not simply fade away: now mainly commercial (but even the most ‘traditional’ festivals had commercial aspects, sometimes quite prominent) festivals are still public cultural events. Their fate in academic literature is in a way similar to what Paul Jones has found for Habermas’s literary public sphere. Jones stresses how Habermas elaborated the concept of public sphere – the mediating instance between the private and public authority, through the vehicle of public opinion as the product of the free debate taking place in the discursive space the public sphere creates – referring to the literary critical discussion of London’s coffee houses (as well as France’s *salons* and Germany’s *Tischgesellschaften*). It is from this initial ‘literary public sphere’ that a public sphere ‘proper’ develops, where the civil society of the rising bourgeoisie allowed the ‘public use of reason’. This literary origin of the public sphere has not been the subject of much critical attention, as other aspects have been (mainly its dimension of exclusion and inequality, see Fraser 1990), and equally unnoticed has been Habermas’s account of the decline of that sphere from the pressure of cultural industry, media development and the shift from a ‘reasoning’ to a ‘consuming’ public. This is however something that may



prove key for research on festivals, that can draw on the literature that stemmed from Horkheimer's and Adorno's original critique of the culture industry<sup>10</sup> (see for instance Hesmondhalgh 2003, Scott 2001, Witkin 2003) and renew the connection with a reflection on the public sphere (such as can be observed in festivals, for instance). Indeed what Jones aims at criticizing in his recent article and that is relevant for our current understanding of contemporary literary, or as Jones proposes, aesthetic, public spheres, is that: "Habermas's account of the decline of the literary public sphere plainly lacks the sophistication of that if its development, even allowing for the influence of the most pessimistic version of Adorno's culture industry thesis. Crudely put, Habermas reverses the flow of cultural production. Not only does the culture-debating public become a culture-consuming one but a much less carefully delineated 'bourgeois subjectivity' becomes entirely framed by the output of the culture industry. There is simply no space so provided for the contradictions in popular cultural production which enable the autonomous production within the culture industries of the kind Adorno later conceded (Adorno 1991)' (Jones 2007: 78). Which might explain why, if Adorno's original thesis has been amply criticised and the study of popular cultural production improved, this has not meant a renewed interest for a cultural or aesthetic public sphere, which is what Jones wants to advance, building also on recent works by Jim McGuigan that criticize instrumental cultural policy studies. Renewing the interest for the link between cultural forms and the public sphere, that according to Jones had been abandoned since Habermas, McGuigan proposes the idea of a more widely conceived cultural public sphere: 'In the late-modern world, the cultural public sphere is not confined to a republic of letters – the 18th century's literary public sphere – and 'serious' art, classical, modern or, for that matter, postmodern. It includes the various channels and circuits of mass-popular culture and entertainment, the routinely mediated aesthetic and emotional reflections on how we live and imagine the good life. The concept of a cultural public sphere refers to the articulation of politics, public and personal, as a contested terrain through affective (aesthetic and emotional) modes of communication' (McGuigan 2005: 435).

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<sup>10</sup> It is of course not the place here to review such literature, as well as the equally relevant sociologies of art (literature, etc.) that inform our theoretical and methodological approach more in general. For some indication see Chapter 2 and the specific literature reviews by genre (Chapters 4-7).



The renewal of this debate is particularly interesting for festivals, and for our proposal to study them as sites of democratic debate and transnational identities, because as we have seen a side-effect of the economic success and attention festivals have received recently is that they have been dismissed as possible sites of critical debate and originality; they too, in short, have been thought of as shifting from culture-debating to culture-consuming, with little or no questioning of this very distinction. As we have seen these are the two poles around which much literature on festivals pivots: mere entertainment to please the masses whilst reaffirming cultural hierarchies vs. critical, countercultural frameworks that challenge taste distinction; commercialisation based on seriality and imitation vs. originality and experimentation, superficial, tourist experience vs. authentic enactment of community. As a result, if they are not considered for their economic returns, festivals are mostly dismissed. If we look, for example, at the case of the European City of Culture festivals (see Chapter 4), most of the literature devoted to it is on its regeneration effect, especially since Glasgow 1990 adopted that as an open strategy. If not in this light the programme is generally overlooked, a very good example being the following passing remarks by Ash Amin, which is also illuminating as it introduces the issue of cosmopolitanism in festivals:

we can compare two very different versions of cultural connectivity circulating in current debates on multiculturalism. One is a ‘consumer’ cosmopolitanism, typified by the EU programme on European Cities of Culture, which celebrates cities and regions as cultural gateways, and plays on the virtues of world music, minority ethnic food and festival, regeneration based on multicultures and multiethnic public spaces, and the exoticism of the stranger. A raft of contemporary urban and regional regeneration strategies play on this aspect of belonging in the world in order to re-boot the local economy through new consumption, as well as to demonstrate an openness to multiculturalism and multiethnicity (Amin 2004: 42).

This is interesting because whilst it establishes a connection with one of the most recently debated topics in social theory, cosmopolitanism, it only does so by qualifying it as ‘consumer’ and distinguishing it from what he sees as a more



‘ethical’ form. The latter refers to a more serious and relevant, we assume, ‘cosmopolitan ethos of solidarity and rights that has been growing in different parts of the world as a form of local response to global poverty, ethnic intolerance and Empire. It is based on combating racism, protecting the rights of displaced people and asylum seekers and fostering inter-cultural dialogue and commitment to distant strangers. It frequently involves local groups developing voice and impact through worldwide solidarity networks and social movements in order to shape and influence cultural politics both ‘at home’ and in other regions’ (ibid.). This is not an infrequent move. The idea of a non-elite, ‘actually existing’ cosmopolitanism is accepted but also dismissed as not quite the real thing. It is precisely the notion of ‘aesthetic cosmopolitanism’, if we go back to its origin, that shows this configuration. A recent addition to the growing family of ‘cosmopolitanism’, aesthetic cosmopolitanism has on a whole a negative reputation, precisely having been dismissed by some as a form of consumer cosmopolitanism. Two more or less simultaneous origins of the expression ‘aesthetic cosmopolitanism’ in recent times are found in the mid 1990s: within a consideration of cultural globalization (indeed it has also been equated to ‘cultural cosmopolitanism’) as the related capacity and desire to experience or consume the cultural products of ‘others’, and, within the sociology of tourism, a similar attitude towards being immersed, through travel, in other cultures. As one can see, the two contexts share much: as tourism is certainly a specific form of consumption and cultural practice – and as post-modern tourism has been characterised, among other things, as happening also without actual physical displacement (through media experience) – these two strands are indeed one and the same. The expression was probably first used by John Urry in his *Consuming Places* (1995: 167), and as such it indicated a sort of extension to the wide, contemporary tourist class of the aesthetic disposition of openness once reserved for the 18<sup>th</sup> century aristocracy (in particular the British aristocracy) undertaking the so-called Grand Tour: ‘a cultural disposition involving an intellectual and aesthetic stance of “openness” towards peoples, places and experiences from different cultures, especially those from different “nations”’ (Szerszynski and Urry 2002: 468). Ulf Hannerz’s idea of cultural diversity being appreciated on aesthetic grounds by cosmopolitans, given their attitude of active engagement with the other is also relevant here. According to Hannerz the cosmopolitan displays ‘readiness, a personal ability to make one’s way into other cultures, through



listening, intuiting and reflecting' (1990: 239). Although Urry is careful to present tourism as a democratization of travel, he is also not totally free from the idea that such democratization involves a measure of corruption, and that an aesthetic cosmopolitanism will never be as deep and engaged as a proper 'ethical' cosmopolitanism. This aspect is probably more evident in Tomlinson's usage of the expression in *Globalization and Culture*. According to Tomlinson, 'The aesthetic is not, of course, to be confused with the ethical and... there is no guarantee that the lifting of general cultural horizons, the honing of semiotic skills and the development of hermeneutic sensibilities will be followed by any necessary sense of responsibility for the global totality' (1999: 202), even if he also leaves some space for a less binary division of aesthetic/ethic cosmopolitanisms: 'it is perhaps more likely that such a sense will develop *obliquely* from these popular cultural practices, than that it will be directly cultivated in some sort of abstract global-civic ethic' (Ibid.: 202). This 'frequent flyers' cosmopolitanism would also be rather soft, in that the conditions of contemporary travel (hotel chains, and frequent flyer airport lounges, the typical non-places similar everywhere) cushion considerably the impact and the otherness itself, of the other (Calhoun 2002). But then again, maybe non-elite cosmopolitans (e.g. migrants) may have much more intense, diverse experiences, requiring more adaptation and openness than those of elites themselves. Recent empirical findings on ordinary (or banal, vernacular, etc.) cosmopolitanism all problematise clear cut distinctions. As these are particularly significant for our research project, I shall briefly review in the last part of this chapter some of the most relevant.

### **1.3 Festivals as sites of cosmopolitan dispositions: indicators from research**

Indeed, in recent years cosmopolitanism has increasingly become the object of empirical research, contributing to the problematisation of too clear cut dichotomies and, importantly, to the operationalisation of an otherwise highly theoretical concept in empirical research. This growing body of literature provides useful insights for the study of festivals as sites of cosmopolitan dispositions, or we may say, the thematisation of cosmopolitan dispositions as connected to transnational identities and democratic debate, as our project aims to. Among these recent empirical investigations on cosmopolitan dispositions we can



schematically single out, on the one hand, those more connected to political notions of cosmopolitanism, generally geared on the macro level and, on the other hand, enquiries into cosmopolitanism as a cultural disposition.

As for the first strand, we can cite Pippa Norris's (2000) attempt at measuring cosmopolitan citizenship as a result of global governance transforming national identities, focusing on whether this favours more continental or global communities or rather more local ones. Norris's strategy is to identify three different dimensions of cosmopolitanism and then measure them on the basis of data collected in the 1990s within the World Values Surveys. Considering cosmopolitanism in terms of people's identification with their continent or with the world and confidence in the institutions of global governance, she identifies the three fundamental dimensions of identification with the global community, confidence in global governance institutions, and approval of the policy mechanisms<sup>11</sup>. Her conclusions are that we still know little about the consequences of global trends and structural changes on public opinion and identities, adding that her evidence does however show that public opinion is moving, in the long-term, in a more 'internationalist direction', especially for younger generations, with one fifth of people born after WWII seeing themselves as cosmopolitan citizens of the globe.

Although these are interesting conclusions, our focus is more on cosmopolitanism as a cultural disposition that we still need to understand in-depth and in relation to specific contexts rather than as a general, constant, aggregate public opinion element, whilst at the same time considering wider dimensions than those directly connected to governance issues. Cultural sociologists have started to carry out

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<sup>11</sup> The questions Norris considered were: for the first dimension, "To which of these geographical groups would you say you belong first of all? And the next? The locality or town where you live/The state or region of the country in which you live/ Your country as a whole/ the continent in which you live/ the world as a whole"; for the second dimension: 'I am going to name a number of organisations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them, is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence, or none at all? The United Nations/The European union (or other regional organisations)'; for the third dimension; '[Free trade] Do you think it is better if: Goods made in other countries can be imported and sold here if people want to buy them or/That there should be stricter limits on selling foreign goods here, to protect the jobs of people in this country. [Migrants] How about people from other countries coming here to work. Which one of the following do you think the government should do? Let anyone come who wants to/let people come as long as there are jobs available/Place strict limits on the number of foreigners who can come here/ Prohibit people coming here from other countries' (Norris 2000).



empirical research in this direction, so also for this even more slippery notion of cosmopolitanism some indicators have been singled out. As Skrbis and Woodward write: ‘Despite diverse understandings of cosmopolitanism, most authors agree that cosmopolitans espouse a broadly defined disposition of “openness” toward others, people, things and experiences whose origin is non-local. It is argued that such an attitude is expressed by an emotional and ethical commitment towards universalism, selflessness, worldliness and communitarianism, and that such values should be identifiable in the practices, attitudes and identifications of individuals’ (Skrbis and Woodward 2007: 730). With this definition in mind, they tested it within qualitative focus group research conducted in Australia, with a ‘middle class’ sample, in order to observe it in commonplace, everyday contexts beyond the more commonly studied extremes that see it as a prerogative of ‘cosmocrats’ (Kanter 1995), or instead look for it among the ‘globally dispossessed’ (Pollock et al. 2000)<sup>12</sup>. Again, three dimensions of the ‘cosmopolitan disposition’ (Hannerz 1990: 238) are singled out: as related to various sorts of mobilities, to various cultural-symbolic competencies – among which in particular code switching (‘an individual’s ability to know, command and enact a variety of cultural knowledges and repertoires’ (Skrbis and Woodward 2007: 732; see also Chaney 2002) – as forms of valuing of and reflexive engagement with otherness and difference.<sup>13</sup> The conclusion they reach is that a positive attitude to cosmopolitanism, especially when seen as opportunity for a wide range of experiences, rather than as a deeper engagement with more difficult aspects triggered by accommodating difference, is indeed widespread but also not always consistent and counterbalanced by anxieties regarding culture loss:

our research participants were drawn selectively to cosmopolitan experiences and ideals. They adopted what could be seen as an

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<sup>12</sup> In their focus on banal cosmopolitanism Skrbis and Woodward draw on earlier work by Lamont and Aksartova (2002) that rather than look for indicators of cosmopolitanism in cultural consumption, focuses on anti-racial attitudes in the definition of self identity and the boundaries of the community of reference of working class men in the US and France.

<sup>13</sup> The authors report how for the focus groups they followed a protocol that included a series of prompts, verbal and visual. They started asking participants about how they understood ‘globalisation’, then discussed themes such as ‘media, travel, food, consumption and consumerist behaviours, the environment, multinational corporations, and immigration’ (Skrbis and Woodward 2007: 736). Visual prompts included images of familiar places and cityscapes, well-known icons and signs.



ambivalent and largely self-centred relationship to cosmopolitan experience that rested upon an individualist embracing of cosmopolitan experience in some realms and a fear or rejection of cosmopolitan ideals within others. [...] In this sense, ordinary cosmopolitanism is not an ideal type but a negotiated frame of reference for dealing with cultural difference. This people become not simply more or less open and cosmopolitan, but they reservedly deployed their cosmopolitanism (Skrbis and Woodward 2007: 745).<sup>14</sup>

This disposition is thus more a set of discursive and practical solutions that are available, but not always used, by an increasingly widespread, but not generalised set of people, in connection to social-structural characteristics. Quoting Chaney (2002) and Peterson and Kern (Peterson 1992, Peterson and Kern 1996) Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward (2004) describe these characteristics as those where cosmopolitanism can become a means of distinction, a learned indifference to the culture one supposedly belongs to. In this respect cosmopolitanism can be seen as a form of what has been called ‘cultural omnivore’: this time not only across genres or ‘levels’ within ‘a’ culture but – as boundaries demarcating a culture from another are increasingly questioned – among different cultures. Not surprisingly cosmopolitans and omnivores trigger the same fears; as the mixing of high and low can be seen as a threat to high culture, so the mixing of cultures is sometimes seen as a threat to cultural distinctiveness as such and to our capacity to deeply engage with it.

A similar open-ended conclusion is reached by Szerszynski and Urry (2002, 2006) in their account of banal cosmopolitanism and of its precondition, ‘banal globalism’. Their dimensions of cosmopolitanism are connections (and their transformations due to new socio-technical relations), de-severance (the opening up and intersection of life worlds, also connected to new technological

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<sup>14</sup> The same authors, with Clive Bean, have also carried out a quantitative survey among Australians on similar research questions and definition of cosmopolitanism, considering as dimensions national economy, personal consumption and choice, and culture, diversity and global rights. This can be useful to consider another operationalisation of the concept adapted to a different research design (Woodward, Skrbis and Bean 2008). A work by a group of German authors that investigated the correlation of cosmopolitan attitudes with transnational experiences among German citizens (Mau, Mewes and Zimmermann 2008) is also based on a representative survey.



possibilities) and spectacle ('nature itself gets transformed into a cosmopolitan *spectacle* comprised of images of trees and meadows and mountains to be known about, compared, evaluated, possessed' (Szerszynski and Urry 2002: 463).<sup>15</sup> Although the authors find the emergence of a culture of cosmopolitanism based on the new availability of global symbols and narratives due to the media and popular culture, as well as physical and virtual travel, they also warn against the possibility that an element of detachment and disengaged distance may be a corollary of cosmopolitanism as such: 'we do not want to appear to suggest that there is an *inevitable* irreconcilability between cosmopolitan openness on the one hand and dwelling in place on the other. Rather, it may simply be the case that we need to explore, both conceptually and practically, alternative kinds of cosmopolitanism in which this tension is avoided or overcome. [...] Perhaps we need to fashion such a form of "cosmopolitics" if we are not all to be fated to become mere visitors in our own worlds' (Szerszynski and Urry 200: 126-7; see also Latour 2004).

This is interesting because it takes us back to the open dilemma, that the recent literature on 'really existing' cosmopolitanism here rapidly reviewed has maybe displaced but not solved. The dilemma between an 'ordinary' (thus superficial or 'easy', aesthetic, non-reflexive, and unengaged) cosmopolitanism and a 'proper' one ('difficult', ethical, reflexive, engaged) remains open, and probably pray of similar assumption to those that have affected earlier attempts to interpret cultural production and consumption and their link with discourses and practices expressing self-identity and sense of belonging. Further research on this, as it is today seen through the link between transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, locality and globality, and the possibility and characters of a 'cosmopolitan

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<sup>15</sup> Here are the indicators used in this work: 'extensive mobility, in which people have the right to "travel" corporeally, imaginatively and virtually, and for significant numbers also the means to so travel; the capacity to consume many places and environments en route; a curiosity about many places, peoples and cultures, and at least a rudimentary ability to locate such places and cultures historically, geographically and anthropologically; a willingness to take risks by virtue of encountering the "other"; an ability to "map" one's own society and its culture in terms of a historical and geographical knowledge, to have some ability to reflect upon and judge aesthetically between different natures, places and societies; the semiotic skill to be able to interpret images of various others, to see what they are meant to represent, and to know when they are ironic; and an openness to other peoples and cultures and a willingness/ability to appreciate some elements of the language or culture of the "other"' (Szerszynski and Urry 2002: 470).



democracy', is what almost all these recent attempts at operationalise cosmopolitanism still call for.



## 2. Conceptual tools and analytical approaches for the study of festivals

*Gerard Delanty and Marco Santoro*<sup>16</sup>

Our aim to study art festivals in relation to transnational identities and democratic debate, within European public culture, guided our theoretical and methodological choices. Festivals provide privileged sites to analyse and problematise such relevant distinctions within the current debate on cosmopolitanism such as elite vs. ordinary cosmopolitanism, consumer/aesthetic vs. ethical cosmopolitanism. But we can also go beyond such normative distinctions and examine festivals in cosmopolitan terms as a hybrid cultural location based on cross-fertilization, borrowing, translation. Post-traditional festivals are important sites of the interface of the local/global and in a certain sense are often translocal and with no particular national ties. The vast proliferation of festivals since the 1970s can in part be explained by the re-assertion of local identities in a global as opposed to a national frame of reference.

It is in this respect that the question of identity/identification can be considered with respect to cosmopolitanism. Identity – whether personal or collective identities - is based on particular forms of experience (interests, emotions, memories for instance), interpretation (narratives) and action (performance, goals). Festivals give expression to collective identities of their own. In some cases – Jewish festivals, for instance – this will be more explicit than in others. Other festivals have more explicitly open and more cosmopolitan identities that are often associated with specific cities, for instance the Brighton festival. Other festivals of which WOMAD is a relevant example are explicitly cosmopolitan in embracing, in this case, world music. However it is important to bear in mind that the majority of visitors to many festivals are local (Rolfe 1992). It is in this sense that we can speak of cosmopolitanism as a relevant dimension of the collective identity of post-traditional festivals. Cosmopolitan properly speaking is a critical or reflexive condition in which a certain self-transformation in light of the encounter with the other occurs; it is not simply the appropriation of culture but a

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<sup>16</sup> Sections 2.1 and 2.2 are by Gerard Delanty, Section 2.3 by Marco Santoro.



certain attitude of world openness, which may involve deliberation and accepting the perspective of the other.

## **2.1 Theoretical concepts**

Our aim is to explore post-traditional festivals as examples or manifestations of European public culture. So festivals tell us something about the nature of (aesthetic) culture in European societies today. Our main research questions are: what is the relation between democratic debate and cultural production? In what ways are festivals examples of debate? What do festivals tell us about European public culture. We are concerned too with identifications and have as a research question festivals as sites of transnational/cosmopolitan identity.

This requires a theory of culture. Against representational notions of culture and substantive notions of culture, we see culture as situated, relational and discursive. An important dimension of the discursive aspect of culture is its argumentative nature. An additional aspect of culture is creativity: culture involves the articulation of ways of seeing the world. This conception of culture allows two connections to be made and which are particularly relevant to the study of festivals: (1) a link between culture and democracy and (2) a link between culture and performativity. The first stresses debate and the second emphasizes action and social relations.

As illustrated earlier, the sphere of culture we are especially concerned with is public culture. Public culture draws attention to culture that is intended for the public, as opposed to specific group or community. As such it is more inclusive than exclusive. It is mostly expressed in debates, discourses and unlike political culture more generally or other expressions of culture, it has a specific concern with aesthetic issues, but in ways that includes a political dimension. The focus on public culture has the additional advantage of avoiding the traditional concern with national or with ethnic conceptions of culture and also avoid the dichotomy of popular versus high culture.



Public culture does not refer to purely professional or expert cultural criticism, but extends to include the participation of the public and thus suggests a notion of cultural citizenship. The notion of public culture is enacted in communicative sites. The focus on the arts/festivals allows a more direct exploration of culture as creative and performative than of ascribed characteristics. Moreover, it suggests a communicative understanding of culture as enacted in public contexts. (Some festivals – e.g. literary festivals – are by their nature more debate oriented than others). In any case the relation to the public is crucial to the idea of public culture and to festivals in particular.

What is the space of public culture? Relevant here is the notion of the public sphere. Public spheres are sites of democratic debate and are based on the various parts of civil society interacting to produce communicative spaces. The public sphere can be local, national, transnational. The aspect of the public sphere we are especially interested in is the aesthetic public sphere, a concept that has not received much attention (Jones 2007). Festivals provide examples of debate on issues of representativity, inclusion, access to resources, ownership, citizenship. They are sites of cultural contestation and can be analysed in terms of group interests and thus of conflict. The various groups within the cultural/aesthetic field are differently located with respect to power.

## **2.2 Methodological approaches: analysis of discourse, frames and repertoires**

Festivals are cultural sites in which meaning is produced. Historical context is important, since they are product of particular traditions. As such they have histories and identities. As ‘social texts’, they require interpretation, not just description. We want to examine the festival as a social field of competing discourses and cultural contestation. To pursue this we adopt two broadly conceived methodological approaches: discourse theory and neo-institutional analysis.

Discourses are social texts, in which meaning is produced and as such they require interpretation. Discourse analysis/theory is very broad, ranging from ethnomethodology to socio-linguistics to Foucault’s genealogical approach.



Discourse theory can be related more broadly to social constructionism as in the work of Douglas, Berger and Luckmann and many others (Eder 1996, Gergin 2001). Of these approaches critical discourse analysis is one of the more commonly used approaches (Wodak and Chilton 2005, van Dijk 1985) but has its limits when it comes to social scientific inquiry in that it is confined to the analysis of language use and does not adequately penetrate to the level of social relations and institutional arrangements.

The particular line of approach to discourse analysis adopted in the project will be frame analysis, as developed in its most refined form in new social movement research and in studies on risk (Benford and Snow 2000, Gamson 1992, Hajer 1995, Strydom 2002) but originally derives from Goffman (1974). The aim is to identify frames in the discourses under investigation. The discourse analysis adopted will be complemented with insights drawn from the 'repertoire' methodology developed by Boltanski and Thevenot (e.g. Lamont and Thevenot 2000) where the emphasis is on argumentative situations and the use of moral criteria of evaluation (also Billig 1987). Thus what might be relevant here are competing notions of rights and ownership.

These approaches, which are less theories than analytical methodologies, are very useful to ground theory in social research and have been widely applied. The idea behind this methodology is that the views of social actors as expressed in interviews or in media communication constitute social texts requiring interpretation. It is not a question of looking for objective truths in the sense of looking for an objectively existing cosmopolitan group, but of identifying the extent to which cosmopolitan trends are in evidence. Indicators need to be defined, i.e. codified, as frames, which will be empirically researched by examining the coded qualitative data, which will constitute specific discourses.

The emphasis on discourse as a social text in which reality is constituted allows for a more nuanced and robust understanding of the social world, which is not reducible to mere attitudes. Rather, attitudes are in need of interpretation because they are constructed and, moreover, do not relate to a predefined problem, but are often shaped in contexts in which there are competing definitions and struggles over the meaning of the problem.



This is where a frame approach comes in. Frames refer to the symbolic and cognitive structuring and coding of meaning in discursive contexts. Frames are semi-structured orders of discourse; they refer to the cognitive schemata or frameworks with which people interpret the social world. As such they are neither beliefs nor values, but modes of communication and of interpretation. Frames are symbolically and cognitively generated frameworks for making sense of the social world through the organization of discourse. Often they are akin to metaphors. The object of analysis is neither information nor beliefs but a discourse in which reality is socially constructed often in contentious situations. Frame analysis is the heuristic means to unpack meaning in a discourse. So, for example, cosmopolitanism can be understood, in the terms of frame theory, as a global interpretative frame with which people make sense of issues that have a global dimension. In this case the framing process can be extended into various interpretative categories – such as cultural, moral and political frames – and collective action frames, such as those that are related directly to political action. As a frame, it extends beyond specific cultural boundaries and belief systems.

In the approach to be adopted, there is an emphasis on what Lamont and Thevenot (2000) have called ‘repertoires of justification,’ namely the discursive means by which social actors seek to justify the views, beliefs, and attitudes they have about specific issues while appealing to common interests. This is important because views are generally held or articulated in argumentative situations where there are differing points of view and, moreover, the social and the cultural context is one that is relational as opposed to being fixed (DiMaggio 1987, Embeymer 1997). This is also true of the wider public sphere. The dimension of justification corrects one short-coming of frame analysis namely in accounting for the identification of frames in discourses. By examining the argumentative strategies of social actors, the dominant frames can be identified with the aid of the broad indicators of cosmopolitanism. The argumentative approach sees discourses as constituted in competing conceptions of problem definition. This, too, has implications for questions of identity, which can be seen in terms of ‘social positioning’ whereby social actors construct their identity in positioning processes in which deeper cultural and political divisions are played out. (Davies and Harre 1990, Harre and van Langenhove 1991). One of the advantages of this



methodology is that it is very effective in showing how divergent and competing orientations develop around particular issues while at the same time new patterns emerge and give shape to new ways of thinking.

Discourses are not disembodied, but are embodied in particular kinds of social practices. The notion of practice is useful in conceptualizing discourses as produced in social interaction. Culture is always based on social relations. In the case of festivals the social dynamics are crucial, since festivals are social organizations and can be examined in terms of networks of social actors. This is where a neo-institutionalist perspective complements a discourse methodological approach.

### **2.3 Methodological approaches: art festivals as organisations and as fields**

Certainly, a focus on the organizational level is not an optional strategy for research like this, but an integral part in as much as it consents to empirically anchoring the study of discourses and frames in concrete systems of social relationships, more or less institutionalized, i.e. stable and normatively grounded. Even if it is at the level of discourse that a specific *cosmopolitan* public sphere linked to, and generated by, art festivals can emerge and become visible, it is only through institutional practices and structures – that is if and when embedded and expressed in ways of doing and decisional procedures – that a discursive formation makes itself socially relevant, durable and consequential.

In order to be sites of discursive production and innovation, festivals have to exist as social entities, and this means to exist as *organizations*. For a festival to exist as a site of public discussion and of discursive enactment, it is necessary that it has a name, a place (even in the case of itinerant festivals, it should be not only a nominal place which can act as the legal seat but an effective place where the festival's board or staff usually meet, discuss the programme and take decisions), a statute or charter, more or less clear boundaries with respect to other social entities, a budget and some funding (which means an administration), and that it is acknowledged as such (i.e. as a festival and not as a recording label or a



publishing house or a political club, to name just some other organizational forms which could be adjacent to a festival and confounded with it) by both insiders – managers, staff, employed, volunteers etc. – and outsiders, like possible funding bodies and the audience.

‘Organisation’ is a central concept of sociological theory: according to Randall Collins (1988), it is impossible to do sociology without some theory of organisation. Everywhere we find coordination among people, collective action and shared understandings – that is a *social* life – we are in the presence of some kind or form of organization. In the field of cultural research, the importance of organization as an analytical level depends also on the fact that much of the activities which bring culture to us increasingly take place nowadays in the context of complex, even formally established, organizations, both for-profit or nonprofit (see e.g. Becker 1982; White 1997; Alexander V.D. 2003; DiMaggio 2006). It is not accidental therefore that sociologists have often focused on organizations in order to study cultural life in contemporary societies, and have applied tools and insights drawn from the sociology of organization in order to understand and explain sociologically the contents and uses of culture.

There many ways of studying sociologically cultural activities – i.e. festivals – as organization. One of the more convenient is to use a ‘production of culture perspective’ (POC). Indeed, we owe to Richard A. Peterson, the founder of the perspective and the scholar who is usually associated with it, what is also arguably the first sociological study of festivals (Peterson 1973): a further clue to the relevance of this perspective for a research on festivals like ours.<sup>17</sup> This perspective or approach or model has had an enormous impact on the development of the sociology of culture in the eighties and nineties as a coherent, legitimate and identifiable research area (DiMaggio 2000; Santoro 2008), and it is in dialectical relationship with it that the proposal of a ‘cultural sociology’ – as a strong program in the sociological study of culture, in which this latter is not only a ‘dependent variable’ but is the same environment, and deep structure, of every social fact – has been made and is still justified (Alexander J. 2003). Indeed, the

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<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Peterson (1973) is focused on (music) festivals not as production organizations but as “media facilitators”, that is, as support organizations for other media organizations (i.e. the recording industry).



contrast between the two camps is somewhat exaggerated and could be overcome in this context.

Generally speaking, the POC perspective moves from the assumption that the content of culture – conceived in terms of expressive symbols (e.g., art, literature, music, video) – is shaped by the context in which it is created, manufactured, disseminated, stored, transmitted, and evaluated. The perspective focuses therefore on the ways in which human beings *organize* the production, and how that *organization* of production effects the nature and content of what is produced (Peterson 1976; 1994; Peterson and Anand 2004; Ryan 2007; see also DiMaggio 2000, Dowd 2007). To be sure, POC is not the only approach available for studying cultural production in a sociological and empirical way (see Santoro 2008). But it is the most flexible and catholic of all, and it will be easy to incorporate into its frame concepts or insights taken from other approaches (i.e. Bourdieu's field theory or the art world approach of Howard Becker).

The term 'production' clearly has to be read in this perspective in a loose manner, for referring to all these factors which in some way come before the act of consumption and reception and contribute to its very existence and form and shape. In order to be consumed/received, any cultural time has to be first conceived, then realized (manufactured or performed, according to the medium) but also distributed, that is get to a public (see also Becker 1982, White 1997). It is apparent that, while studying festivals, we are moving in the area of *distribution* more than creation and realization – even if we may of course conceive festivals as organization of creation or production of cultural *events*, cultural *performances* or even of cultural *discourses*. The distinction between creation, realization and distribution is indeed a relative one, and each passage could be read as a production moment; this is the reason for the use of 'production' as a general label in the 'production of culture'; also consumption can be conceived and analysed as an act of production, of meaning-making for example (on consumption as 'autoproduction' see Peterson 2000). Indeed, the reason behind this text is the understanding that festivals can be profitably studied as production systems even when the focus of investigation are discourses: because in order to understand and explain these discourses and their variations it is useful – if not necessary – to



know (also) how the organizations which produce those discourses are shaped, how they work, and how both shapes and workings vary.

The main thrust of the POC approach is that, for studying sociologically any cultural object or event, we need to understand the causal links among the cultural object/event and the factors which have contributed to its production. According to Peterson, there are four areas in the production of culture which should be examined by scholars: 1) gatekeeping (i.e. the processes and mechanisms of selection/filtering of personnel and of items); 2) reward systems (i.e. the manner in which rewards and their forms affect the motivation of artists/distributors/managers); 3) market and industry structures (i.e. the number and size of firms/organizations operating in certain sector of field of cultural production, as well as the types of administration adopted by those organizations); 4) career structures (i.e. the way occupations which comprise an art world or a cultural field are organised, according to norms, roles and technical requirements).

Certainly, the production of culture approach has specialized in the study of mass culture and therefore on profit-making organizations (i.e. cultural industries) devoted to the production of cultural items intended for being sold in a market. This maybe could explain why festivals – after being the subject of an early article by Peterson – have substantially disappeared from the lens of sociologists of culture strictly devoted to the study of cultural production (but see Bennett and Peterson 2004). Even if they presume and circulate large amount of money, festivals are in fact usually non-profit enterprises, sponsored by foundations or public bodies, and this requires an approach which is less focused on economic factors and more on symbolic and normative, or institutional ones (e.g. DiMaggio 2006). Besides, as even a general glance makes clear, organisations never exist alone, but are often in complex networks of organizations, i.e. in an environment with plenty of other organizations, and which exist in turn in more complex social and political environments (as states).

This institutional character of festivals and their embeddedness in larger organizational ambiances could well be approached through the lens of a sociological perspective which has developed in some way in parallel with the production of culture approach, i.e. the neoinstitutionalist analysis (DiMaggio and



Powell 1991, Scott 1995, Scheinberg and Clemens, 2006). Simply put, neoinstitutionalists examine the ways in which macro-sociological environments shape particular organizational forms. Organizations are seen as responding to their ‘institutional environments’, which are characterized by ‘rules and requirements to which individual organizations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy’ (Scott and Meyer 1991: 123) in terms of both financial and symbolic resources. Neo-institutionalism is an holistic approach to the study of organizations, which consider these as always embedded in wider environments (called ‘sectors’ or ‘fields’), and it is the institutional environment which explains what happens at the level of the single organization. Indeed, there are strong links between POC and NI, both genealogically and intellectually (see Anand 2000, DiMaggio 2000, Santoro 2008), and we will consider them in our research as two versions of a unitary approach.

The concept of ‘organizational field’ instead of ‘industry’ could be more apt while studying organizations like festivals, which usually are non-profit oriented and function according to logics which are not reducible to that of the market (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). An organizational field is defined as ‘those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products’ (1991: 64). Indeed, we can say that festivals both constitute an organizational field, and are part of larger fields – be they local, national, or genre-specific. What this concept helps us to understand is the strong similarity existing among so many organizations, that is their *isomorphism*, which could be explained according to DiMaggio and Powell as the effect of normative pressures, of coercion, and of mimicry. This isomorphism is clearly visible also in the field of festivals, where a pool of features are common across genres and countries – including the use of the name “festival” to identify a certain kind of organizational form. But there are also cultural, organizational and institutional differences and these will be investigated and analysed in our research following the insights and using the tools of both neoinstitutionalism (see Scheinberg and Clemens 2006 for an up-to-date review) and Bourdieu’s theory of cultural fields, which is one of the main sources of the same neoinstitutionalist thinking (see DiMaggio and Powell 1991, Bourdieu 1993).



Focused on issues of legitimation and regulation, institutional approaches are indeed very sensitive to culture and its analysis. Discourse and frame analysis figure prominently in institutional research as means to empirically capture those shared cultural systems or cultural repertoires (Swidler 2001; Lamont and Thevenot 2000) from which actors (both individual and collective) derive rules, scripts or schemata for their actions. A common research strategy has been to use actors' discursive outputs as resources of analysis. In this case, researchers treat actors' reports and discourses as first-hand descriptions of institutional forms and mechanisms, considering these descriptions as discursive constructions which incorporate cultural models. But it is also possible, and frequently done, to use discourse outputs as topics of analysis (see Scheinberg and Clemens 2006). In this second case, actors' discourses are treated as documents of cognitive frames and institutional logics. Through them it would be possible to reconstruct the repertoires of alternative models (of action and/or justification) invoked in a particular organization (e.g. a certain festival) or organizational field (e.g. the set of festivals which is possible to find in a certain genre, like music or cinema) over time and space, as well as to assess the role of institutional entrepreneurs in elaborating from existing cultural materials new frames for institutional building or transformation (e.g. Fligstein 2001).





### 3. The case studies: background information and research design

*Liana Giorgi, Monica Sassatelli, and Jérôme Segal*<sup>18</sup>

#### 3.1 Background information

Festivals are complex organisations displaying multiple dimensions, therefore there are several ways to look at them. The social scientific literature on festivals is, however, comparatively limited in scope and displays recurrent themes. Festival-specific publicity, such as that included in programmes, annual reports, and related publications (online and on paper), also tends to cover similar items and displays similar formats. In this preliminary phase we aimed at charting this available information; that is, what is already in the public domain but has not been collected and systematised for research purposes (the collection of such background information, beyond what was readily available and could be collected as a preliminary step, will also continue during our main empirical work, see Annex A.I.2). The main dimensions we decided to explore, also on the basis of what previous research on festivals had shown to be relevant and available, were the following:

- Inception and history
- Events and thematic structure
- Funding and organization
- Urban context and impact
- Competitors, partners and networks
- Archive

Evidently, part of this information comprised the collection of straightforward, quantifiable, data (e.g. inception), while for others it was more a matter of gathering and selecting more qualitative information or information not always seen as such by festival organisers (e.g. competitors). The preliminary research made evident how, often, apparently simple information – such as number of ‘events’ – has to be handled carefully as festival organisers and other actors

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<sup>18</sup> Section 3.1 is by Monica Sassatelli, Section 3.2 by Jérôme Segal, Section 3.3 by Liana Giorgi.



(through printed programmes or during interview) may have different definitions of events among themselves and than those used in research. For instance, a festival organizer may consider each performance as an event rather than the show as such; in the visual arts, ‘one exhibition’ may be defined in terms of the commissioner, the curator, the site, etc. (the Venice Biennale, with its national ‘pavilions’, each with a different curator but sharing a common site and overall theme illustrates this well). At this stage we report information as it is ‘advertised’ by organisers, acknowledging that this will need to be accompanied by explanatory notes. This is also true of festivals ‘components’, which can be variously defined according to genres, themes, locations. This often creates a Russian-doll like image of overlapping sections that can, according to the perspective, be considered as events, parts or even sub-festivals on their own (e.g. fringe festivals, collateral events in different locations or periods). This first exercise in preliminary research was also important in order to get a better sense of the scope of the subsequent in-depth research and analysis. Table 3.1 displays a schematic presentation of the information gathered in WP1 for each festival. The full reports can be read in Annex A.II.1-4, whereas guidelines for the full set of background information to be collected during empirical research is included in Annex A.I.2.



<b>Festival Type</b>	<b>Festival</b>	<b>First edition</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Duration and period</b>	<b>Thematic/Genre structure</b>	<b>Prizes awarded</b>	<b>Organization type</b>	<b>Archive<sup>19</sup></b>
Cinema Festivals	Berlin	1951	Once a year	February, 10 days	In competition, Retrospective, <i>Perspektive Deutsches Kino</i> , Generation	Yes	Company	Yes
	Cannes	1946	Once a year	May, 12 days	Official selection, critics week, <i>Un certain regard</i> , Cannes Classics	Yes	Association	Yes
	Venice	1932	Once a year	August-September, 10 days	In Competition, out of competition, <i>Orizzonti</i> , Corto cortissimo, Retrospective	Yes	Foundation	Yes
	Vienna	1991	Once a year	November, 3 weeks	Different themes each year	No	Association	Yes
Literature Festivals	Berlin	2001	Once a year	September, 2 weeks	Literatures of the world, <i>Scritture giovani</i> ; Memory, speak; International Children and Youth Literature; National literatures, Reflections	No	Foundation	Yes
	Hay on Wye	1988	Once a year	May	Different themes each year	No	Company (Ltd)	Restricted access
	Borderlands	2006	Once a year	Variable	No specific thematic structure	No	Foundation	As project database

<sup>19</sup> ‘Archive’ covers a variety of material available, from ‘informal’, ‘working’ material collected by default by festival organisers to proper, professional archive. Availability as well may be possible in principle but de facto limited by time constraints (on the part of organisers) or due to the location of the archive within the festival’s premises.



<b>Festival Type</b>	<b>Festival</b>	<b>First edition</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Duration and period</b>	<b>Thematic/Genre structure</b>	<b>Prizes awarded</b>	<b>Organization type</b>	<b>Archive</b>
Music Festivals	Sonar	1994	Once a year	June, 3 days	Sonar by day, Sonar by night, off program	No	Non profit association	Yes
	Umbria jazz	1973	Once a year	July, 10 days	Evening Concerts in Arena, (ticketed), Afternoon and night concerts in various theatres, (ticketed), Anytime downtown concerts(free)	No	Non profit association/ Foundation	Yes
	Womad	1982	Once a year	July, 3 days	The main structure is given by the different stages	No	Foundation	Yes
Mixed Arts Urban Festivals	Brighton festival	1967	Once a year	May, 3 weeks	Official (performance, theatre, dance, music, lunchtimes, classical, books & debate, 26 letters, family, outdoor); Fringe (incl. Artist Open Houses).	Yes	Non profit organisation	Yes
	Venice Biennale	1895	Biennial (Visual arts) Once a year (performing arts)	Summer/ Autumn (Visual arts) Variable performing arts	Art, Architecture, Dance, Music, Theatre, Cinema. Each has a theme and related structure that varies every edition; visual arts always include a section with national exhibitions ('pavilions').	Yes	Foundation	Yes
	Wiener Festwochen	1951	Once a year	May-June, 5 weeks	Music programme, Performing art programme, Forum Festwochen, Into the city, Concerts	No	Company	Not public or as such organized



### 3.2 Historical analysis

The overall aim of historical analysis within our project is to provide an insight into the evolution of artistic festival culture in Europe throughout the 20th century and, especially, since WWII and to illustrate this through case studies of specific festivals (representing different artistic genres)<sup>20</sup>. Historical research complements that of WP3 ‘Case studies’, which looks at a greater number of festivals and focuses on their present development and dynamics. Given the close link between WP2 and WP3, it is important to ensure methodological consistency between the two work packages in addition to maximizing on synergies, for instance, through the timing of specific tasks. In what follows, the meaning of historical analysis for the study of festivals and with reference to the core themes of our project will be specified. The detailed methodological guidelines can be read in Annex A.I.1.

History is the study of the past and, by extension, about how the past informs the present or, indeed, the future. Applied to social scientific inquiry, historical analysis is meant to provide insight into the reasons or causes for the emergence of specific trends, social or institutional practices. Therefore, when considering history in relation to arts festivals, it is equally important:

- to trace how specific festivals developed over time, as it is
- to explore how and why arts have come to be associated with festivals in the first place – for what purpose, in what context, and with what aim.

The former is a question of systematic research using specific indicators and applied to a research object with clear boundaries (i.e. a specific festival) (see Annex A.I.1).<sup>21</sup> The latter demands an analytical (explanatory) approach that builds on exploratory research festivals (via aggregation) in addition to using additional sources<sup>22</sup>.

The historical analysis of festivals has furthermore to take into account the distinctive character of the cultural field with regard to its power of symbolic representation. Festivals are themselves means of constructing a history (of a specific field or school of arts or, indeed, of a certain collective identity).

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<sup>20</sup> This constitutes WP2 of the Euro-Festival Project. The main output of the WP2 research will be a report (D2.1) on ‘European Arts Festivals from a Historical Perspective’.

<sup>21</sup> This is the part to be implemented by all project partners.

<sup>22</sup> This is the task of the work package leader, with input, based on their reports of the other partners for the different artistic genres.

A history of festivals must, therefore, bear in mind the ways festivals themselves were used in history. The literature reviews conducted in the framework of WP1 ('research design') about festivals and specific artistic fields (literature, music, film), as well as the preliminary information collected on the project's case studies have shown how arts festivals, beginning with film, emerged as an instrument of 'cultural policy for peace' following the end of WWII, to grow gradually into prestige projects for consecrating (artistic) value but also as means for (urban and cultural) public relations.

The original link of festivals to the peace project has specific connotations in the European context. Europeanization is often associated with cultural events or institutions such as the Eurovision song contest, the Champions league for football, the French-German television station "arte" but also the film festival (Borneman and Fowler 1997:487). The link within policy between culture and European identity dates back to 1975 when the Tindeman 'Report on the European Union' recommended the forging of a 'peoples' Europe' through the promotion of "concrete manifestations of European solidarity in everyday life" (Fontaine 1991: 6). The 1983 so-called 'Solemn Declaration on the European Union' explicitly linked such manifestations of European solidarity to culture and the arts by calling for "joint action in various cultural areas – notably information, education, audio-visual policy and the arts" (Bulletin of the European Communities 1983(6): 24). Arts festivals are today among the regular recipients of European funding through the Culture 2000 programme and related budget lines.

The first part of the WP2 report 'European Arts Festivals from a Historical Perspective' will address these links in more detail. Against this background, Europeanization will not be the focus of the analysis but rather one entry point for exploring the historical development of arts festivals on the European continent.

Equally important dimensions for the 'social' history of arts festivals in the European context is how they have come to appropriate generic festival characteristics (Falassi 1987) or those linked to educational objectives (Mutti 1991). However, besides considering the 'festival' component of 'arts festivals' we must also consider their 'arts' component. Since most of the festivals we are interested in are linked to an artistic genre, they must be studied, from a historical perspective, within that genre. Festivals might for instance play a role as precursors. In film, this is well illustrated by the close association – timely and otherwise – of the "Nouvelle vague" and the Cannes Festival. The expression itself "Nouvelle vague" was invented in Cannes when in 1959 it was used to describe the films selected for that year's festival edition. Truffaut's film "The 400 blows (Les 400 coups)" had a huge impact on the international press, the festival organizers, the film critics and the festival participants.

Moreover, this influence was not only felt in France but across Europe. In other words, it would not be possible to address the history of the impact of culture on Europeanization without commenting on the history of the Nouvelle vague. This also holds for the Sonar festival in Barcelona, which cannot be studied without recourse to the development of electronic music, its main trends, its progressive acceptance, and its relation to societal issues.

In a similar manner, festivals may pave the way for promoting a specific genre or a trend within a genre. For instance, the Annecy animation film festival, which was launched in 1960, was key for the promotion of the animation film. Cinemas only began to integrate animation films in their regular programmes after the onset of the animation award instituted at Annecy. More generally, it will be important to establish how festivals were instrumental for the recognition of genres.

### **3.3 Case study research**

Festivals represent specific cultural institutions linked to the idea of celebration. Their proliferation today is fuelled by spatial economic considerations (mainly at the urban level) as much as the increased competition within the cultural field. For cities festivals represent opportunities for increasing their visibility as attractive tourist destinations and for engaging in innovative cultural policy. Within the cultural field proper, on the other hand, two partly competing trends are evident: while commercialization aggravates the already existing tendency of the cultural industry to think in terms of standard products (and production lines and processes), internationalization supports experimentation through trans-national or ‘translational’ activities and networking.

Against this background, the project’s case studies are planned as sociological inquiries into the institutional and social processes underpinning festival organization, reception and representation while, in parallel, paying attention to the role of festivals for creating and transmitting particular aesthetics, politics and ideas through the ‘texts’ and actors they give rise to.

The project borrows ideas and methodologies from cultural studies, the sociology of culture and cultural sociology (for a good overview and comparison of the different approaches and their receptions in Europe, and especially the UK, and the United States, see Wolff 1999). Further to this, the literature surveys done by the project partners (on urban, music, literature and film festivals, see Chapters 4-7) were used to identify the key issues.

The following are relevant research dimensions to be addressed to the study of festivals:

- **The spatial / temporal dimension.** How are festivals structured through and by references to their local or urban environment and how do they use these to establish and justify their mission over time?<sup>23</sup>
- **The economic / organizational dimension.** How do festivals function as economic organizations and operate as commercial enterprises? (the economics of festival celebration)<sup>24</sup>
- **The cultural policy dimension.** How are festivals directly or indirectly influenced by cultural policy and funding for cultural activities?
- **The social actors' and network dimension.** What groups are impacting on the festivals' organization and thematic orientation? What is the role of social differentiation axes such as class, gender, race, status, ethnicity?<sup>25</sup>
- **The representation dimension.** What identities and ideas are constructed and transmitted? How is content selected and value consecrated?<sup>26</sup> What are the semiotics of festivals?

In each of the above five dimensions, the EURO-FESTIVAL study is especially interested in the following themes:

- Internationalization vs. globalization vs. commercialization
- Cosmopolitanism and trans-national identities

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<sup>23</sup> The literature on urban festivals has looked at festivals as means to support tourism and urban regeneration as well as on the short-term economic impacts vs. longer-term cultural or urban-regeneration impacts.

<sup>24</sup> Previous research on the economic / organizational dimension of festivals has looked into the following factors: Economic organization and funding. Motivations for festivals on demand side (cost of attendance, transaction costs, sponsoring, increasing popularity of politicians). Motivations for festivals on supply side (costs of hiring, venue, avoiding restrictions of government or trade unions, overcoming artistic ossification). Career enhancement (of programme managers, artists). Format issues: budget, price, location, maximum visitor capacity; role of marketing and newsworthiness. Derivative products and merchandising. Role of internet.

<sup>25</sup> Issues addressed by previous research include: Internationalization vs. Globalization. Links to specific aesthetic schools. Role of intermediaries. Role of cultural industry (publishers, film production companies, distributors etc.). Art as a commodity. Role of commercialization. Links to environmental green movements.

<sup>26</sup> Content issues addressed in the literature include: scope of audience, line up, age, themes / messages. Festivals as negotiation sites of values and aesthetics. Festivals as instances of hybridity – transnational identities, cosmopolitanism. Festivals as sites for political activism or the expression of alternative social identities. Festivals as sites of discussion / debate. Festivals as constructs of situated experience. Issues of appropriation and consecration diffusing information / assigning value). Festivals as sites of consecration competing with other cultural activities. Role of language and translation. Role of prizes.

- European identity and citizenship
- Politics, democracy and the public sphere

For instance, when looking at ‘Europe’ we are interested to find out both how this is transmitted as an identity or as an idea through the festival’s thematic programming or participating artists, and also how it comes to play at the level of funding, in terms of cultural policy or as a geographically-delineated networking platform. Similarly, the study of the impact of commercialization on festivals will have to consider how commercial interests come to play in terms of the organization of festivals but also with respect to thematic programming and cultural policy.

In brief, our research project is about the economics, politics and semiotics of European arts festivals. The project does not concentrate on one dimension alone but considers all and, especially, their interfaces. This line of inquiry is expected to enable a better understanding of the contemporary dynamics of cultural production and consumption. At the same time, the project is about the way in which more general political, societal and economic developments – and especially those concerning the European integration project – play out in the cultural field.

Annex A.I.2 presents in detail the research design and methodology, including guidelines for the main components of case study research: Background information/indicators, in-depth expert interviews, fieldwork observation/site visits, and focus groups.



## **PART II European Festivals: Literature Reviews by Genre**



## **Introduction to Part II**

*Monica Sassatelli*

As we have seen, research on festival is relatively scarce, especially from the comparative cultural sociological perspective adopted by our project and its substantive focus on Europeanization, democratic debate and cosmopolitanism. Contemporary, post-traditional festivals have mainly been addressed from a cultural economic perspective, focusing on their impact either in strictly economic terms, or more generally for economic, social and cultural ‘regeneration’. Still, whilst our specific approach and research objectives target what we identified as a gap in the research, festivals as such are certainly not a new, unexplored subject. To review the ‘state of the art’ in festival research, regardless of the theoretical approach and methodological apparatus, was as usual a necessary first step, as part of the necessary background information. This is what Part II of the present document reports on, also in connection with the preliminary research we carried out for our selected festivals (see the Annex to Part II).

Literature reviews can hardly claim to produce original material, as they are, by definition, preliminary to that and should instead be used to chart both what is available and, more importantly, what is missing, what theoretical lenses and analytical strategies have still not been used to look at a certain topic. Indeed, a danger of literature reviews is that they may even hinder original research, when they are used to trace the outlines of what is possible to investigate and when the theoretical premises that emerge from them are also taken as a measure for one own’s approach. To derive theory from a literature review (or to merge them) is a logical confusion which the fact that they are often given most attention in the same, early stages of a research makes more likely. We have been careful to avoid this pitfall, and have been helped in this by the fact that research on festivals is actually less copious than one might expect (for some genres more than for others). Also, the fact that each festival genre we considered stimulated different amounts and types of research was a useful reminder, pointing in a variety of directions – that we had to face both singularly and as we attempted to progress jointly in the shaping of the research outline – that a study on a single genre might have missed. Of course, this means also that the following chapters are quite different, as they report encounters with very different situations; however, this has been useful both as a source of inspiration and as a reminder of our specific approach, which we still found to be largely missing from the available material across our spectrum of analysis.

With regard to the latter, some words may also be spent on our festival genres. The first one, mixed arts urban festivals, is particularly interesting and relevant given our research questions

because these festivals often draw their specificity from the city that hosts them, on its 'identity' or 'sense of place', rather than from single artistic genres. At the same time, within these international festivals, that identity is also connected with the encounter with outside artists, cultures and even publics. This is perceived as enlarging the city's identity itself and is often explicitly connected to an official discourse of cosmopolitanism and transcultural exchange. The choice of music festival is perhaps even more obvious, since music is among the most enduring and influential of performing arts, and music festivals are certainly among the most popular and widespread. Music's centrality for public culture in its relevance for processes of persona and collective identity formation has been recognised and studied: music festivals as venues in which this performative and public dimension of music is made particularly visible and prominent thus constitute a privileged site of research. However, as **Chapter 4 and 5** show respectively, whilst music festivals are those that stimulated the wider literature so far, closely followed by studies focusing on mixed arts urban festivals, little of this directly thematises the issues that are at the core of our project. Instead, as **Chapter 6 and 7** point out, film and literature festivals revealed a surprisingly scant body of sociological research. This we found striking, first of all because film festivals are among the most established ones, and literature festivals a particularly interesting type emerging more recently. This scarce attention is also surprising given these festivals potential for research in the social sciences considering their embeddedness in recent processes of commercialisation and internationalisation, that affect all festival types but are clearly more evident when the link with a specific, strong and relatively closed industry (such as film and literature, increasingly dominated by major agencies) is so strong. More specifically still, when looked at from our particular viewpoint thematising transnational identities and democratic debate, their relevance and potential for empirical research is even more evident: both in terms of their organisation and of the discursive fields that they generate, they often quite explicitly address issues of internationalisation and identity formation and transformation.

The different situations we found and the fact that we had to adopt somewhat different strategies, especially in terms of presenting the results for this report, emerges in the different format of the chapters. Still, we all draw both useful factual information and methodological inspirations from the literature reviews, as the conclusions of each of the following chapters spell out in particular; these should be read as incremental and complementary, rather than as alternative approaches.

## **4. Mixed Arts Urban Festivals: festival cities, urban cultures and global aspirations**

*Monica Sassatelli*

### **4.1 Festival cities**

Festivals devoted to more than one discipline or art are the relative majority over each type of single genre festivals (PAYE 2008; Allen and Shaw 2000; Rolfe 1992), however their multidisciplinary is connected to a lack of definition, evident in the very terms used to refer to them. The most common expressions are: combined arts, general arts, multidisciplinary, multi art and mixed arts festivals, the term adopted here. They all point to the fact that these festivals draw their specificity precisely from the more or less balanced combination of several artistic forms of arts and types of events, usually reflected in an equally multifaceted mix of venues, audiences and aims (from 'pure' artistic to social activities) that also contributes to putting this type of contemporary artistic festival on a continuum with earlier community based festivals. So, whereas most festivals, even single art ones, often actually stage events of more than one discipline (e.g. literature festivals often have a cinema section, music festivals include visual arts exhibitions, etc.), in mixed arts festivals no single genre dominates and defines the festival. As a result, many of these define themselves by referring to the location that hosts them. The urban dimension can therefore be considered a defining feature of most mixed arts festivals, in particular among the more established, international, ones. Given its relevance for the wider issues addressed by the overall Euro-Festival project, the 'urban' character (and related issues it carries) has here been made part of the definition: the following review focuses on the main themes that emerge from studies, both theoretical and empirical, on mixed arts urban festivals. Given that mixed arts urban festival draw their specificity from the combination of several genres and disciplines as well as from the urban milieu, both specialised sociological literatures on artistic forms and the sociology of the city are relevant, although it is certainly not this the place for a general review of each of them. Indications on single disciplines (and in particular literature, music and cinema) as object of social science reflection, are provided in the dedicated literature reviews on festivals by genre (Chapters 4-7). As for urban sociology a useful summary of theories and themes, classic and recent, is found in Parker (2004). Recent works, particularly useful given our focus on Europeanization, cosmopolitanism, creativity and democracy are those in Beauregard and Body-

Gendrot (1999) and Binnie and colleagues (2006), as well as De Frantz (2008), Milner (2007).<sup>27</sup>

As is the case with festivals in general, there is not much sociological research on mixed arts urban festivals. On the one hand, this is even more so given the ‘residual’ nature of mixed arts festivals, which means that they are not linked to any specific sectorial body of literature (e.g. music studies, film studies, art history, etc.) or genre development. On the other, given that some of the major festivals in Europe and beyond are of this kind, empirical research has often concentrated on this type, either focusing on single festivals<sup>28</sup> or comparing a few of them. There is also a growing amount of ‘grey literature’ (reports commissioned by national or international festival associations, by national bodies in charge of cultural policies or by single festivals), that varies very much in quality as well as in availability and from one country to another; this is normally devoted to festivals in general, but given their prominence among major international festivals, mixed arts urban festivals are usually a focal point.<sup>29</sup>

Scholarly research on mixed arts urban festivals has drawn mainly from one of two bodies of literature, or, more rarely and mainly in overview articles rather than new empirical investigations, a combination of both (as in Quinn 2005a, discussed below). As for the first approach, some have seen in these festivals the heirs of more ‘traditional’ community festivals, therefore reflecting on the possible relevance for the study of contemporary, European or more generally ‘Western’ mixed arts festival of the extensive anthropological literature on traditional, community festivals, going back to socio-anthropological classics such as Durkheim (1912) and Turner (1982). In his now classic definition Falassi has noted that alongwith the major distinction between sacred and profane, “another basic typological distinction that is often made draws upon the setting of the festival, opposing rural to urban festivals. Rural festivals are supposedly older, agrarian, centered on fertility rites and cosmogony myths, while the more recent, urban festivals celebrate prosperity in less archaic forms and may be tied to foundation legends and historical events and feats (Falassi, 1987: 3). However, this seems to have given more legitimacy to the study of rural festivals, allegedly more ancient and rooted to community identity; Falassi’s own account is mainly geared towards such ‘traditional’ festivals, which are indeed the focus of most anthropological

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<sup>27</sup> The most relevant field not covered by the other sections of our project, and thus, partly, by the literature reviews, is that of the visual arts, that will however be covered during empirical research on mixed arts festivals (in both the festival of Brighton and in the Venice Biennale, where they are, in different ways, very prominent), considering recent advances in the sociology of (visual) arts.

<sup>28</sup> Edinburgh’s festival is probably the most researched, due to the extent of its history and scale, attracting particular attention in the late 1970s (see in particular Bruce 1975, Moffat 1978). For a recent commentary see Jamieson (2004).

<sup>29</sup> To my knowledge, the UK is where this literature has been mostly developed and made available, as well as within networks and European associations. Key examples are: Rolfe (1992), Allen and Shaw (2000, contains a 2002 update), Maughan and Bianchini (2003), Klaić et al. (n.d.), Silvantu (2007), Ilkzuk (2007). See also the European Festival Research Project ([efa-aef.org/efahome/efrp.cfm](http://efa-aef.org/efahome/efrp.cfm)).

research (for more detail see Chapter 1, Section 1.1).<sup>30</sup> Often, when studying contemporary arts festivals, only passing remarks are made to this literature, before turning to a quite distinct approach represented in particular by the now dominant approach focusing on so-called culture-led urban regeneration, which constitutes the second, and dominant, approach followed.

Aimed at defining and assessing the impact of these festivals, the latter feeds a quite rich and developing literature, especially when considering a wider range of scholarship (including leisure and tourism studies, geography and planning, economy of culture). This field provides the bulk of the existing literature on mixed arts festivals, and further confirms the centrality of the urban context. The growing number of festivals in cities across Europe, and the growing importance of festivals and more generally of big events (or even ‘mega’, such as World Expos and the Olympic Games, see Roche 1994, 2000; Gold and Gold 2004) within urban strategies, suggests that we need to include in the review these urban studies’ recent literature on the subject and pay special attention to it.

## 4.2 Festivals and urbanity

If Stanley Waterman’s *Carnivals for elites?* (1998) remains to date the best introductory overview on festivals and their cultural politics, the more recent *Art Festival and the City* by Bernadette Quinn (2005a) constitutes a welcome update, particularly relevant here as it narrows the scope by focusing on the relationship of festivals with their urban settings. Quinn provides both a review of the literature and some insights from her previous empirical research on specific urban festivals (Quinn 2003, 2004, 2005b), to argue that we need more, and more multidimensional, research on festivals to assess whether they meet ‘their undoubted potential in animating communities, celebrating diversity and improving quality of life’ (Quinn 2005a: 927). The article opens stating that in the past 15 years there has been a remarkable rise in the numbers of art festivals in cities throughout Europe, and elsewhere, and noting that as important cultural practices, festivals have a long-established association with cities. The forerunners of contemporary urban arts festivals are traceable as far back as Dionysian festivals in Classical Athens, or more recently in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when among the

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<sup>30</sup> Authors following this approach have thus tended to look for traditional festivals also in urban, contemporary contexts, as a result revolving around issues of loss of authenticity and invented traditions. Good examples that question the received clear cut dichotomy between traditional (authentic) and contemporary (inauthentic) are Piette’s (1992) study of a Belgian carnival in the city of Binche, Azara and Crouch’s (2006) work on the ‘Cavalcata sarda’ in Sassari in Italy and Costa’s (2002) study of the ‘Fallas’ festival in Valencia in Spain.

first festivals we find the Bayreuth Festival founded in 1876 and the Salzburger Festspiele in 1920. The current success of urban festivals, and in particular their great increase since the late 1970s and 1980s is related to the industrial to post-industrial shift of many big European cities, and their search for ways to ‘regenerate’ themselves. The actual capacity of festivals to meet regeneration objectives remains an open issue, with quite a few researchers arguing that using festivals for city marketing and place distinctiveness may be counter productive, as they run the risk of becoming formulaic and standardised, a form of ‘serial reproduction’ (Richards and Wilson 2004; Evans 2001). Others have noted that this perverse effect is not unavoidable; it is instead linked to “urban management approaches that fail to understand how local particularities could be cultivated to counter the globalising influences of cultural production in city arenas [...]. Currently, the literature is very uncertain about their [the festivals’] contribution. While there has been a lot of hype about the theoretically catalytic effect that festivals can have in terms of attracting visitors, spearheading the regeneration of derelict city districts and reclaiming public time and space for communal celebrations, hard evidence is in short supply” (Quinn 2005a: 928, referring also to Bailey et al. 2004, Evans 2001). Available evidence concentrates on the economic impact, whereas ‘the long-term social impact of culture-led urban regeneration remains something of a mystery’ (Quinn 2005a: 931), and this is even more so for cultural impact, in particular in terms of ‘[w]hat roles has the arts festival played in advancing urban policy, contributing to urban life and facilitating the expression of cultural identities’ (Ibid.). Lacking research to provide evidence, this literature is basically made up of commentaries around a set of common distinctions. In particular it contrasts commodification and globalization with the production of spaces for creativity and difference; tourist orientation with authenticity; reproduction of consolidated social distinctions with countercultural expression within the festivals.<sup>31</sup>

An example of such commentaries is Kirstie Jamieson’s (2004) article on Edinburgh as ‘festival city’. Without giving clear detail of her empirical sources, Jamieson builds around what can be considered the common stance taken by critical social scientists vis-a-vis the often too enthusiastic and uncritical ideas of festivals as sources of regeneration and ‘freedom of expression’. The target of the critique is that contemporary arts festivals do not lead to an actual challenge (a carnivalesque subversion) of the everyday and established differentials of access to cultural production and consumption, because they only provide a tourist,

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<sup>31</sup> As already mentioned in Chapter 1, within culture-led regeneration, some authors have distinguished two approaches, one defined ‘festival marketplace’ and the other ‘cultural planning’ (Rowe and Stevenson 1994). Given their primary context of origin, these two have also been defined Americanization and Europeanization: ‘Americanization ... pivots on the construction of spectacular spaces, frequently located on the waterfront...Europeanization ...focuses on local cultural industry development and it frequently undertaken under the banner of cultural planning (Stevenson 2003: 100), further elaborating that ‘cultural planning based on the European model of city life is conceptualized as the means by which “the walls” which separate urban dwellers can be removed’ (Ibid.:110), asking for a reconsideration of the public sphere. This distinction and related issues have not been developed further however, nor linked to the Europeanization literature.

commodified ‘encounter with the unexpected’, a pseudo-transgression, that celebrates difference but actually aestheticizes it and glosses over – thus de facto excluding – actual social differences within the city. This critique also commonly highlights a romantic ‘nostalgia for a more sociable and public mode of urban living’ (Ibid.: 73), found in audiences and organisers alike. However, the critique itself seems equally gripped by nostalgia for ‘traditional’ or ‘authentic’ festivals, rather than questioning the dichotomy, and by a romantic view of community vs. society. Similar, in both style of argumentation and conclusion, even if more nuanced, is Sibel Yardimci’s analysis of Istanbul’s festivals, arguing that ‘it is also possible to talk of the specificity (and the hybridity) of the festival experience, which remains embedded in the social-historical context of Istanbul. This specificity/hybridity stems from the fact that festivals do not only entail the staging of a foreign artwork in Istanbul, but, interestingly, represent a mixing of near and far in time (contemporary artworks in a centuries old cistern), in space (e.g. Japanese artworks in Istanbul), and in perception (everyday life versus festival time and/or reality versus representation). [...] Thus, against the move towards similarity among cities competing on the global stage, festivals also create a unique/local dimension, materialised at the moment where the actual happening takes place. This uniqueness originates in the ‘concrete embodied spectatorship and participation’ (Roche, 2000:10) (Yardimci 2004: n.n).

Finkel (2004) well represents this common critique. Drawing also on empirical research, she concludes that ‘a new “type” of combined arts festival is emerging that is more standardised and commercialised. This “type” is partially a result of entrepreneurial local authorities attempting to capitalise on culture and broaden audience inclusion, and partly due to combined arts festivals having to conform to consumer demands or funding body regulations to secure capital. These sanitised, more homogenised versions could be detrimental to traditional local festivals as more contenders vie for a decreasing pool of resources, potentially leading to a loss of place-based individuality for combined arts festivals and uniformity of cultural forms presented” (Ibid.: 1). In her title, Finkel calls this process ‘McFestivalisation’ and, based from evidence from both quantitative (a postal survey with festivals organisers across the UK) and qualitative (interviews with policy makers and selected festival organisers, case studies of four festivals) concludes that ‘indeed, the reputation of arts festivals to help the reputation of cities may be at the crux of their upsurge’ (Ibid.: 3). Which is why they seem trapped in a vicious circle of imitation, risking failure in what Finkel sees as ‘the role of the arts to resist this very kind of conformity’ (Ibid.: 6). So, if festivals seem to owe their recent proliferation to a self-fulfilling prophecy, not surprisingly, social scientists have made it their mission to break the spell. However, this has led to a rather dichotomised, or simplified debate, revolving around whether or not festivals have regeneration effects, whether or not they are sites of more open cultural politics, whether or not their association

with tourism, commodification and globalisation necessarily implies a loss of authenticity, specificity, and identity, these latter always remaining the domain of ‘traditional’ festivals. In this black and white picture – enhanced by the almost exclusive methodological reliance on mainly quantitative, economic indicators (even when ‘cultural impact’ is supposedly targeted) – there is usually little space for nuanced analysis.

### **4.3 Festivals’ topographies and fringes**

Other authors have pointed to the possibilities of reappropriation that even commodified, invented (traditional) festivals can have for different audiences (de Bres and Davis 2001: Monserrat-Crespi Valbona and Richards, 2007); however the opposition between traditional, local, identity-laden on the one side and change, globalization and extra-cultural instrumentality (tourist and regeneration objectives) is never really challenged. As one can see, a mainstream view of globalisation (and related phenomena) and identity as ‘conflicting trends’ in themselves (Castells 1997: 1) is the unchallenged common basis, so rooted at the basis of implicit theoretical positions that no one seems to have ventured to explore the role of urban mixed arts festivals for transnational identities, cosmopolitanism and Europeanization.

A particularly neat and revealing exemplification of this is the small body of research on the European City of Culture (ECOC) festival, initiated by the EU (then EC) in 1985 and now become a clear ‘brand’ in the cultural calendar of Europe, often cited as paradigmatic example of the culture-led urban regeneration approach. Ignored in its first years of existence, the ECOCs have attracted growing attention since the nomination of Glasgow in 1990, the first city to adopt an urban regeneration approach within this programme, and to commission proper impact studies (Myerscough, 1991). Subsequent ECOCs have attracted increasing scholarly attention, that has followed the path opened by those first studies and has looked mainly for evidence of economic impact, neglecting other forms of impact as well as its long term effects. These remain open to debate today. An exception is found in a study of Glasgow 1990 carried out over a decade after the events, and trying to assess the cultural impact by means of ‘soft indicators’ such as those emerging from media analysis and interviews with people in the local cultural sector, concluding that indeed the effect on local identities and city image is the strongest and more long lasting legacy of the event (Garcia 2005). However also this study shares with the rest of the literature on the subject a neglect for the programme’s European dimension and for identities beyond a local, static understanding of them. Apart from some passing remarks, the role of the ECOC within the process of Europeanisation and

as a viewpoint to explore trans-national, European identities has been left unexplored (but see also Keoane 1999; Sassatelli 2002, 2008).

However, even if they rarely score at the centre of analysis, some useful hints for the study of transnational identities, cosmopolitanism and European public culture, which the Euro-festival project set as its mission, can be derived from existing works. This is because the line between ‘image boosting’ and deeper issues of identity, place specificity and representivity is not so clear cut, and as we have seen within the cultural planning approach (Quinn 2005a), some have started to call for a more multidimensional, nuanced approach, increasingly drawing a parallel with wider social theory issues.<sup>32</sup> For instance, drawing on Sarah Bonnemaïson’s account of how Rome successfully used festivals in the 1970s to dispel the climate of fear created by Red Brigades terrorist attacks (Bonnemaïson 1990), Mark Schuster, concludes his article on *Two Urban Festivals* (1995) by offering that ‘to be successful festivals must be part of the shared life or a community, participation must be encouraged if not expected, and citizens must be actively involved in creating, conducting and maintaining the festival. If those who attend are primarily observers or consumers, a golden opportunity will have been missed. For those wishing to redevelop, or indeed establish, the “civil society” that can be fostered in the best of our cities, they must pay attention to the rise of the new urban festival’ (Ibid.: 185-186). There is little more than a hint to ‘civil society’, but a link has been established.

The participatory nature of festivals in general has been long established as one of their defining characteristics, as a distinguishing element from other forms of cultural events, such as concerts, exhibitions, etc. However, once again, it is traditional festivals that have been mostly studied in this respect, that remains an exception in the study of contemporary festivals. A useful, well argued, exception is Bruce Willems-Braun’s (1994) article on fringe festivals, based both on a solid theoretical background – drawing mainly on Bourdieu for the cultural analysis but also on Laclau and Mouffe for issues of democratic imaginary and Nancy Fraser for the public sphere – and on his own participant observation of two fringe festivals in Canada. Willems-Braun aims at problematising the assumed role of fringe festivals as inherently ‘countercultural’ sites of a radical cultural politics, without falling into the opposite of dismissing their potential to open up spaces for debate and contestation. He does so by considering them not as mere, abstracted, performances but focusing on how they ‘reorganize urban spaces into festival spaces, constructing informal discursive arenas within which the interaction of patrons, artists, and organizers is encouraged’ (Ibid.: 75). When considered

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<sup>32</sup> The more informed studies within this urban regeneration approach include, among their theoretical underpinnings, recent literature on the shifting relationship between place, identity and the very definition of the social in the contemporary, post industrial or post modern condition, recurrent references are works by Castells, Harvey, Giddens, Urry, Urry and Lash; some go back to Lefebvre and De Certeau.

within the social and spatial organization of the city they both draw on and affect, instead of as abstract art objects, it becomes possible to appreciate as fringe festivals are also marked by certain exclusions and inclusions. Focusing on how difference is articulated and organized, it is shown how ‘fringing’ becomes itself a form of distinction, here through the consumption of events and through displaying symbols of having ‘been there’. Audiences, and public spheres or public discursive arenas, are always selective and exclusionary, contrary to much rhetoric on festivals, especially ‘fringe’ ones. However, after showing statistics that prove how even these open, ‘alternative’ festivals are constructed for and attract middle-to-upper class, educated, white, audiences, Willems-Braun nuances this vision of a clear cultural politics in festivals by stressing the ambivalence of cultural events. At the same time he points to the limits of quantitative analysis alone: ‘the danger of any sociology or cultural events is that it dismisses events as either hopelessly elitist or mundanely middle-class. Statistical profiles situate the audience as a definable empirical group with a common essence and identity. This is too simple an analysis. Statistical profiles do not show that identity is relational and always in process – contested, overdetermined, contradictory, and unstable (Ibid.: 98-99).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

As the last quote indicates, in order to study mixed arts urban festivals and their cultural politics what we need, more than fixed, stable dichotomies, are analytical concepts that can account for the complex, relational and processual nature of festivals, both as organizations and as experiences. On the one hand, a small but growing literature on mixed arts urban festivals is developing, following both the quantitative and qualitative growth in importance of these festivals and of their relevance within the current intellectual climate. This is, on the one hand, still fragmented and lacking such clear theoretical basis. On the other it is providing both an increasing set of data that are helping question previously assumed correlations (in terms of festival impacts, audience characteristics and motivations, role within the art worlds) and, therefore, also progressively refining the methodological apparatus in order to fill the gaps that so emerge, and that are in particular relative to the proper cultural significance of festivals, that is their being sites where available structures of meanings informing people’s dispositions are represented and (re)produced in both discourses and practices.

In order to address these gaps, according to our project’s stated mission, and in addition to the methodological armoury more generally adopted by our research project as a whole (see Chapter 2), what emerges from the literature on mixed arts urban festivals is a special attention for the urban dimension. In more general terms (potentially relevant also for

festivals occurring in other settings) this refers to festivals' reorganization of space (and time) and its meanings. As the literature review has shown, this means an attention to the situatedness of the festivals as cultural artifacts and organizations, linked therefore not only to a specific genre or art world, but to the social and spatial organization – and therefore the related cultural politics – of the place that hosts them. In short, we could say with Willems-Braun (1994), that this means to focus on the festivals 'topography' as a key to enquire into how cultural practice, social identities and place relate. Moreover, the proliferation, and transformation, of festivals' fringes, particularly pronounced in urban festivals but not exclusive to them, also provides a key perspective to study the cultural politics of festivals as arenas where claims for allegedly countercultural, alternative (but increasingly equally institutionalized) access to cultural consumption and production are displayed and are thus also revelatory of the current debates and available repertoires within public culture.

Another suggestion, more specific to our thematic focus on identities, transnational conditions and cosmopolitan dispositions but relevant for all festival genres, concerns how to consider, and thus look for, Europeanization and cosmopolitanism within festivals. The indication is here found in the literature on mega events and trends in cultural policy. Within the latter, the expert of mega events, Maurice Roche, has noted how Europeanization was originally envisaged as a top-down policy process, that was therefore criticised for elitism and ineffectiveness. According to Roche to look for Europeanization in those terms misses the transformations taking place, as these contain polyvocal, bottom-up, unofficial, processes. From the cognate field of sport as a key element of popular culture (and thus its organisation and regulation forming a key part of cultural policies), Maurice Roche has put this in terms of an easily missed 'creeping Europeanization': 'partial and practical forms of "cultural Europeanization"... can be said to be occurring. [...] EU policy and European social scientific research needs to be more aware of what can be called the "creeping Europeanization", "bottom-up" and "unofficial" processes that are involved in the development of consumer culture across Europe's societies' (Roche 2007: 138). This creeping, practical Europeanization often goes unnoticed, especially with regard to its relevance for how contexts become meaningful for identities, because it takes more subtle forms than those expected. In sports events and particularly in football – Roche's focus of research – it is not that we necessarily have to look for a European football team, but we should take note of the European (or global) market of players, the fact that these are not nationals any more (with national teams increasingly recurring to a flexible interpretation of the national eligibility criteria), and the growing importance of European championships possibly presaging a 'European Superleague'. Crises too, financial in particular, are increasingly European-wide. It is the football industry that is *de facto* Europeanized. This can have interesting parallels with the way we may thematize Europeanization within urban,

major mixed arts festivals. In general, signs may be much more mundane or ‘structural’ than what we expected: ‘when we consider the theme of “cultural Europeanization” and people’s potential collective identity as “European”, it would make sense to lower our sights from grandiose and elite-driven ideals and dreams relating to the potential for sharing “European values” through sport or for the development of EU teams competing in international sport. Perhaps a better approach would be to look for less direct and more practical, albeit more complex and ambiguous, forms of popular “European awareness” and Euro-cosmopolitanism, such as those which have been loosed in the field of sports culture and sport-related media across Europe’s societies’ (Ibid.:135). Rather than simply existing or not as a cultural monolith, Europeanization has the potential for both positive and negative aspects; whilst it opens opportunities for communication and exchange, it can also provide rationales for new forms of racism and violence; both of course need to be given specific attention, able to connect them to contemporary dynamics.

## 5. Music Festivals: An Interdisciplinary Literature Review

*Marco Santoro, Jasper Chalcraft and Paolo Magaudda*

Festivals are a growing industry, and music festivals are probably growing more than others. Virtually every city or at least region in Europe now has its own music festival, and some of them have deep historical roots – like the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, dating back to 1724, or the Handel Festival in Westminster Abbey, founded in that same century. Among the most acclaimed European music festivals are such well known institutions of cultural life as the Bayreuth Festspiele (dating back to 1876), the Salzburg Festspiele and the Spoleto Festival of the Two Worlds. But many others could be mentioned – from Verona to Avignon, from Edinburgh to Lucerne and so on.

Most of these festivals – and certainly the most ancient ones – are devoted to so-called classical music and opera, that is, highly legitimized forms of art sponsored by social elites and often funded by public institutions. But the field of music festivals – like the music field in general – is much greater and expanding to other music genres too, from jazz to rock, from blues to electronic music, from folk to more idiosyncratic and locally-based genres like tango, samba or so-called *canzone d'autore*.<sup>33</sup>

While it is little surprise that research on music festivals is a growing industry, it is somewhat surprising to discover that research on festivals, including music festivals, is relatively new, mainly in the last twenty years or so. Nevertheless, this is a sufficient time period to have produced a relevant body of literature, and this is our focus in these pages.

One possible way of organizing a literature review on music festivals is of course by looking at genres. Research on classic music festivals is well developed, and is growing also for rock, i.e. popular music, festivals. But genres are many and usually ill-defined, and they do not seem to be good starting points. In this preliminary review we therefore have chosen to present and discuss works according to another criteria, that is by discipline, in order to capture and understand differences mainly in the kinds of knowledge and not in objects of inquiry. We will present works from four macro research fields: cultural economics, sociology and cultural studies, anthropology and ethnomusicology, and geography. They are

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<sup>33</sup> The fact that these local forms are often experienced – and still before sold – now as ‘world music’ is something which has to do, of course, not only with cultural globalization and increasing cosmopolitanism but also with the hierarchical nature of world-economy, which for instance labels the American genre rock as “rock” but the Italian genre ‘canzone d'autore’ as one of the many ‘world musics’ – together with very different musical expressions like samba, Cajun and rai music.

not only the most relevant disciplinary-based literatures currently available, but also the four areas of social inquiry from which our research on European music festivals could most benefit.

As we will show, there are some interesting overlaps between disciplines and genres – i.e. classical music is favoured by economists, rock and other popular music mass-mediated genres by sociologists and cultural studies scholars, and world music by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, and often also geographers. This is explained in part by understandable patterns of research interest linked to the traditional core of each discipline (e.g. anthropologists study world music festivals as a locus of ethnic identity dynamics, while sociologists study rock music festivals because of their historical links with modern cultural industries and deviant or youth subcultures), in part by contingent reasons (e.g. the strong interest in classical music festivals, that is the more institutionalised type of music festivals, from economists seems to depend upon their traditional role as consultants or advisers for institutional actors).

We will begin with the economic literature, which is in many ways also the earliest.

### **5.1 Music festivals in cultural economics (and related disciplines)**

Nowadays, music festivals are very important for generating revenue streams in the music industry and this is one major source of interest for economists. But much of the literature on music festivals in cultural economics has been devoted to studying and measuring the “impact factor”, that is the multiplier effects generated by music festivals – like other kinds of festivals – on regional economic activity (e.g. Vaughan 1980; O’Hagan 1992; Frey 1994; Thrane 2002), or alternatively on welfare implications of public funding and subsidizing (O’Hagan and Duffy 1987; Pommerehne 1992). Much work is focused on specific music festivals, usually devoted to classical and operatic music (e.g. Salzburg, or Spoleto, or the Wexford Opera Festival<sup>34</sup>, studied by Frey 1986, Galeotti 1992 and O’Hagan 1992), and only rarely on other music genres or on the institution of the music festival as such. But something is changing, it seems.

For example, recently there has been some interest in popular music festivals from an economic-organizational point of view much influenced by sociological research on innovation in the culture industries (e.g. Orosa Paleo and Wijnberg 2006, 2008). Differently from classical and opera music festivals, popular music festivals are often for-profit

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<sup>34</sup> This festival has been studied also from an anthropological point of view: see Quinn (2005a) and *infra*.

organizations, and this raises a completely different set of questions for scholars. This line of work is very promising for its focus on the festival as concrete organization within broader organizational fields (Powell and DiMaggio 1991) and for its attention to the issue of definition and classification (see table 5.1 for an example).

Table 5.1. A taxonomy of popular music festivals

character	competitive	Non competitive
purpose	For profit	Non-profit
range	wide	focused
format	One track Non-ranking Only aural goods	Multivenue Ranking multidisciplinary
Degree of institutionalisation	high	low
innovativeness	high	low
scope	national	international

Source: Orosa Paleo and Wijnberg (2006)

While still at its beginning this line of research has much to recommend it, and also has to be considered carefully by social researchers interested in the material and institutional bases of cultural life. However, it is clear that festivals are more case studies for organizational analysis than research objects *per se*, and that there is little interest for the wider political and cultural implications of their working.

While cultural economics has usually focused on classical and opera music, tourism management studies have also noticed other more grassroots or communal genres of music festival, like folk, blues and jazz (Getz and Frisby 1988; Saleh and Ryan 1993; Chaco and Schaffer 1993; Formica and Uysal 1996).<sup>35</sup> Growing research is devoted to the audience side of the festival economy, looking at festivals as sites of consumption. This is a line of empirical work still more developed in marketing and applied economic research than in cultural economics *stricto sensu*, however, and this may also explain the strong overlap with sociology and social research (see Thrane 2002; Oakes 2003; Larsen and O’Reilly 2005). The results are though at present too sparse and too much inclined toward very practical matters (e.g. the profitability of particular marketing strategies) to be of much interest for a

<sup>35</sup> Research on tourism is an interdisciplinary one: for an interesting case study on blues tourism see King (2004).

sociological research on music festivals and the public sphere attentive to the cultural and symbolic dimensions of social and economic life.

According to Bruno Frey, one of the leading scholars of music festivals from an economic point of view, it is however important to look at the festival itself as an economic institution, distinguishing the various factors on the demand side from those on the supply side in order to account for the development and success of the music festival industry itself in the face of its turbulent environment. On the demand side, five variables seem relevant: general growth of income, lower cost of attendance, lower transaction costs (i.e the costs of getting tickets and transport), groups deriving monitoring advantages (e.g. corporate sponsors, recording industry, etc.) and the search for popularity by politicians. On the supply side, there are four incentives for organizing festivals: lower costs of hiring, lower costs of venues, avoiding restrictions imposed by governments or by trade unions, and overcoming artistic ossification (Frey 2003).

As should appear evident from this brief literature review, from an economic point of view festivals may be interpreted as an effort to overcome the well-known “cost disease” identified four decades ago by Baumol and Bowen (1966), according to which live cultural performances face increasing deficits because their wage costs rise constantly, while there is little scope for increase in productivity. As put by Frey (2003, 235):

Switching to festivals with lower wage and capital costs and higher income from recording firms and corporate sponsors constitutes a discontinuous shift towards live performances with better chances of survival. The steadily increasing number of festivals suggest that they are alive and well.

Indeed, the boom in music festivals is in contrast to the financial depression in which orchestras and opera houses find themselves all over the world. But there are major differences between established music institutions and festivals which may account for the expansion and spread of the latter. Among them we can list the following (see Frey 2000), which add to the already mentioned features: attracting new groups of visitors, focusing attention on creating an extraordinary experience, newsworthiness, low costs to visitors (e.g. festivals are held in the summer, when people may already be away for tourism), the monetary profitability of cultural events linked to festivals (a fact on which there is much documentation in the economic literature), and finally career enhancement for art managers and music directors.

In this line of work, it is worth remembering at least Leenders *et al.* (2005) who have developed a conceptual model to explain the success of music festivals, an urgent endeavour now that competition in the music festival industry is increasing. The conceptual model includes variables that are under the control of music festival organizers, namely format and content characteristics. The content features include scope of the audience, line up, age, and having a theme or message. Budget, ticket price, location, and having a maximum visitor capacity make up the format features. The model is tested with data from 47 music festivals in the Netherlands. The results have showed that relatively newer festivals can achieve good growth in terms of visitor attendance, especially if they have a narrow scope (niche). Interestingly, this is true for both large and small festivals. These findings are important with respect to music festival diversity and choice for audiences, which may be at risk due to increasing competition. The fact that several festivals have a capacity constraint seems to be beneficial for diversity as well. Interestingly, budgets (and star lineup and ticket price), theme, and location seem to be largely insignificant predictors of success.

The economic literature on music festivals is huge, and also offers many suggestions for a more sociological research on music festivals and the public sphere. For example, it offers insights about both the constraining and enhancing role that cost considerations and profit-seeking decisions may also play in promoting a cosmopolitan discourse by festival managers and sponsors, while warning about the relevance of more formally institutionalised features of festivals as organizations which have to survive in a difficult environment.

But in order to enter more directly inside the workings of festivals as institutions, sets of practices, and meaning-making machines, we need other insights from other disciplines.

## **5.2 Music festivals in sociology and cultural studies**

Studies concerning music festivals in the fields of sociology and cultural studies are relatively few and fragmented, even if we can notice a growing trend here also. This notwithstanding that interest in music festivals began early in sociology too, thanks to Richard A. Peterson – one of the pioneers in music sociology and in general the sociology of culture (Peterson 1973; see also Santoro 2008) – and the fact that music festivals are an important and historical feature of mass mediated music, that is, the kind of art sociologists have favoured in their research. It is also true that in popular music studies, that is the transdisciplinary field devoted to the study of popular music, attention for festivals has traditionally been very small. Among others, Roy Shuker (1998: 209) noted a decade ago that ‘festivals have received only limited

attention within popular music studies' (Ibid.: 122), also highlighting the importance of music festivals for their economic and symbolic significance.

However, during the last few years, musical festivals received some degree of attention from both sociology and popular music studies (and cultural studies more generally), even though not a systematic one, as we can see in the following review of the most relevant contributions in this field.

Of course, the economic and symbolic dimensions can be considered as two of the main relevant dimensions in the study of music festivals. From a symbolic point of view, for example, music festivals are deeply intertwined with the process of construction of musical myths throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century culture, such is the case with the Woodstock Festival, Monterey Pop Festival, and Alamont Festival (Bennett 2004). It has also been shown that musical events connected with festivals can acquire a strong symbolic power in redefining legitimacy in cultural and musical fields, for example in the legitimating of musical genres (Santoro 2006). For instance, the 1965 Newport Festival was the site of one of rock music's formative moments, when Bob Dylan's appearance with an electric guitar was contested by the audience, in so doing highlighting and marking the boundary between 'authentic' folk music and 'false' electronically produced music (Frith 1986). Among organizers and musical entrepreneurs, music festivals constitute a field of negotiation of values and aesthetics and a terrain for processes of cultural distinction, for example concerning the inclusion or exclusion of acceptable participants at festivals (Santoro 2002). Therefore, festivals are a space of «boundary work», where cultural, aesthetic and political values are constantly created, stabilized and redefined (Dowd et al. 2005).

The role music festivals and big live music events play in shaping and defining political identities and in providing possibilities for political activism has also been recognised. Indeed, music festivals are the main venues in which the performative and public dimension of music is made visible and put into use, often in a frame of explicit social, civic, and political engagement (Mattern 1998, Eyerman and Jamison 2001; Randall 2004). Concerts and music festivals are the scene's primary face-to-face opportunities for participants to experience a level of camaraderie and fellowship that virtual participation alone cannot provide. For example, in the case of the *White Power Movement* (WPM) it has been shown that activists use music to produce collective occasions and experiences at the juncture between music scene and political involvement (Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk 2006).

From another point of view, Connell and Gibson (2006) stated the relevant relation between music festivals and tourism, showing that festivals 'provide places with "spectacle" and a

sense of “uniqueness”. Indeed, “festivals function to create networks for performers, generate tourist income, help regenerate urban areas, or to enhance the cultural awareness and experiences of local populations” (Connell and Gibson 2006: 245).

Concerning audience, it is easy to understand how music festivals and events represent key elements in the construction of the situated experience. There is a sense in which the festival acts as experiential resource, with the aid of which festival-goers can find new musical and social experiences, make new friends, perhaps experiment with different ways of being (Larsen and O’Reilly 2005). The role of music festivals for audience experience is even more relevant for those kinds of music where dancing plays a key role, such as dance music genres like house, techno and trance music. This is clearly due to the fact that, in these musical genres, the main form of music consumption happens through body movement together with other people (Brady 1993). For instance, in the ‘rave scene’ even more than in the ‘club scene’ (Thornton 1995) music festivals represent one of the main forms of consumption of music and of shaping the musical experience. In these contexts, enjoying music together during festivals also acquires a religious and spiritual dimension (Partridge 2006; St Johns 2006). Participants in these alternative music festivals have also been considered as ‘neo-tribes’ (Maffesoli 1988; Bennett 2000), where the sense of community is built around an opposition to mainstream culture, and in so doing stressing once again the role of performative festivals as ‘boundary devices’ for cultural fields and identities (Dowd et al. 2004).

The rave movement is only one case in which music festivals play a role in shaping alternative social identities. A further example comes from music festivals in lesbian communities. In these contexts it has been shown that festivals constitute a safe place where the display of alternative identities and sexual display, becomes a relevant space for expressing their identity (Morris 2005). However, it is also to be noted that music festivals for lesbian communities also represent a place of conflict, as shown by Edere et al. (1995) whose ethnographic research during the *National Women's Music Festival* showed that some kind of social alterities, such as racial ones, are not really accepted.

Music festivals have to be considered as a part of the age of digital media and virtual communication. Contrary to the more obvious understandings of the virtual gaining the upperhand, in this context music festivals became even more relevant thanks to the performativity of their logic. Indeed, a focus on both the virtual, local, and translocal dimensions of music scenes (Bennett and Peterson 2004), helps to produce a more complete and nuanced understanding of the effects of music in social movements, cultural industry processes, and the generation of aesthetic values. If musical scenes (Straw 1991) are today

strongly connected with the production of representation, imaginaries, and ‘myths’ through digital media (Bennett 2002), then the role of live performances plays an even more crucial role in defining musical affection and audience identity. This is due, as is recognized by Dowd et. al. (2004), to the high degree of «intensity» of the experience, both for performers and audience, during live musical events and festivals.

However, music festivals also represent one of today’s more relevant forms of commoditisation of music (Hutnyk 2000). Indeed, concerts and festivals represent, similarly to phonographic media, one of the main cultural objects produced by the national and multinational musical industry. In a period when the traditional music industry faces a crisis and deep change due to technological changes (Hesmondalgh 2006; Williamson and Cloonan 2007), it could be argued that music festivals and live events are acquiring an even more important role for the music industry and for the commercial promotion of the cultural industry’s products.

Even if sociologists and cultural studies scholars have focused attention on popular music festivals (and sometimes jazz festivals: see Brennan [2007] for a recent example), some work has also been done on festivals devoted to more traditional classical music. This is the case of Julien Besancon’s book on the Festival de la Chaise-Dieu in France, created by the Hungarian pianist George Cziffra and his son, orchestra director George Jr. (cfr. Besancon 2000). At the heart of the book is the analysis of the dialectic between organization – understood as an element of a more general musical field conceived in terms of Bourdieu’s sociological theory (e.g. Bourdieu 1993) – and musical programming. While focused on a single and particular case, this study offers some useful suggestions about the kind of evidence to collect in order to understand a festival organization’s working, to reconstruct its web of relations with other organizations and actors, and to analyze the kinds of social, political and also economic constraints which influence its more specifically cultural and artistic activities.

### **5.3 Music festivals in anthropology and ethnomusicology**

‘At festive times, people do something they normally do not; they abstain from something they normally do; they carry to extremes behaviors that are usually regulated by measure; they invert patterns of daily social life’ (Falassi 1987: 3). This definition of festival offered by Alessandro Falassi in his introduction to the edited volume *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival* provides a characterisation of anthropological approaches to festivals. That not discussed here is the established anthropological literature on folk festivals, carnivals, and

popular celebrations.<sup>36</sup> The examination therefore focuses on music festivals, and within this on literature covering anthropology's normal stamping-ground of alterity.

However, whilst 'World Music' festivals would appear to be an obvious focus for anthropology, and the genre itself has produced a fair amount of literature in the social sciences and the humanities, world music *festivals* have largely been discussed not as phenomena themselves, but within broader debates about the music industry, and theoretical perspectives on globalization. Anthropological investigations of the other genres this festival covers are also fairly thin on the ground, and generally provide the ethnographic detail expected of the discipline, but without providing much broad theorisation on contemporary arts festivals themselves. Meanwhile, the literature from geography sits firmly within human geography and tourism studies, providing a not unexpected different focus from anthropology. Therefore, this review covers the broader literature in order to situate music festivals within these discussions, whilst also hoping to indicate where our specific research might be able to break what have become established dichotomies in most discussions of world music.<sup>37</sup> A useful headstart on anthropological views on cultural production is provided by Maureen Mahon's review of 2000, which (unsurprisingly perhaps) reveals the many contradictions in the practices of cultural producers.

Rarely has anyone actually studied music festivals as specific sites of the production of new aesthetic public spheres. The exceptions, such as Peter Jowers' chapter "Beating new tracks: WOMAD and the British world music movement" gives a good description of the politics involved in the early years of the festival (which in his analysis is more of a social movement than a 'festival' *per se*, thus throwing this project's definitional demon into centre stage), but it is written by a practitioner, a music producer so close to the musicians that his defence of the industry against the most pessimistic claims of its critics (cultural imperialism and the like) are to be expected. This is not to claim that he is wrong in defending the cosmopolitan ideals espoused by much of the world music community, or in seeing hybridity as ambiguous: he shares this with many of globalization's scholars. Indeed, much of the 1990s literature on world music, up to Steven Feld's article of 2000, choose to see world music as both

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<sup>36</sup> However, a number of useful articles dealing with 'folkloric' festivals may be worth referring to. For example, in Rockefeller's 1998 discussion of a Bolivian folkloric festival where there is no separation between performers and audiences, we might gain a stealth definition for our use of the term, namely, despite the ideal of participation that audiences claim makes festivals special, in our case-studies the performers and audience are indeed separate groups, with distinct agendas and possibly world-views.

<sup>37</sup> Of clear relevance to understanding music festivals is the non-academic material, not just burgeoning niche magazines, but also music guides aimed squarely at listeners; whilst jazz guides are well-established, those dedicated to 'world music' reflect the enormous growth in output of this category of music over the last 30 years (guides include Howard Blumenthal's (1988) *The World Music CD Listener's Guide*, Spencer's 1992 *World Beat: a listener's guide to contemporary world music on CD*, Sweeney's 1991 *The Virgin Directory of World Music*; and Simon Broughton *et al.* with their 1994 *World Music: the rough guide*, which almost immediately required division into volumes in its second edition). Broadly speaking, these do not vary from the utopian ideals with which the world music industry promotes itself, an espoused multiculturalism.

emblematic and symptomatic of the broader ambivalences and challenges of globalization. Feld's analysis is perhaps the most cogently expressed, for he uncovers the twin tropes of celebration and anxiety that underly views of world music from both those within the industry, and its academic commentators.

Others, like Haynes (2005), tackle world music's claim to cosmopolitanism, for debates over world music 'have been fuelled by competing perspectives that portray world music as either an exemplar of progressive cosmopolitan politics that foster cultural hybridity or as reinforcing fixed and unitary conceptions of difference through an essentializing representation of cultures' (2005: 365; see also her unpublished PhD Thesis). This hybridity/essentialism contradiction has been noted in the figure of one of WOMAD's chief architects, Peter Gabriel. In her original volume *Infectious Rhythm: metaphors of contagion and the spread of African culture* Barbara Browning argues that Gabriel best represents the world music industry's twin ideals of the global and the local, of technology and tradition (Browning 1998: 42-44). She examines this not only in his rhetoric, but also in his cultural products, including his pioneering CD-ROM from 1994 called *Xplora 1: Peter Gabriel's Secret World*, where traditional instruments recorded on his Real World label are literally mapped into an interactive image of Gabriel's own ear. Browning's cutting examination alerts us to the power and partiality of the tastemakers/cultural-intermediaries who help shape the cosmopolitanism espoused within, and imagined through, 'world music'. Her analysis shows up the naivete and/or idealism in the lyrics of Youssou N'Dour's song *The Same*:

Sound is the same for all the world [...]  
Rock, reggae, jazz, mbalax  
All around the world, the same  
Pachanga, soul music, rhythm and blues, the same  
La samba, la rumba, cha-cha-cha, the same  
Sound is the same for all the world ...  
Mbaqanga, ziglibiti, high life music, the same  
Merenque, funk, Chinese music, the same  
Bossa nova, soul makossa, rap music the same  
Come on people, dance" (N'Dour cited by Browning 1998: 48-9)

Such dichotomies appear to create firm and efficient theoretical perspectives on world music as a social phenomenon, yet world music (particularly when performed and experienced through the festival format) is often more slippery. Jocelyne Guilbaut's (1993: 39) perspective on this expanding global market shows that world music,

can no longer be conceived of in terms of the center/periphery theory, based on the principle of bilateral market. World musics are an ideal illustration of how they are connected to polyilateral markets. From another perspective ... the musicians of world musics also show that they are cosmopolitans who function in and out, at will, of what has been traditionally perceived as the totalizing 'system'. (Cited also by Browning 1998: 39-40)

However, whilst the shadow of cultural imperialism cages the agency of the musicians in creating new audiences and sometimes new musics, Veit Erlmann (1996: 468) sees 'world music' as a more totalising phenomenon: 'World music is a new aesthetic form of the global imagination, an emergent way of capturing the present historical moment and the total reconfiguration of space and cultural identity characterizing societies around the globe'. He believes other scholars have paid too much attention to the idea of world music and difference, simply a means of making identity. Instead, 'world music offers the panoramic specter of a global ecumene' whilst – as part of Western consumer culture, and taking issue with the idea that local cultures might be able to subvert global capitalism – it can never actually subvert global capitalism because it is part of Western consumer culture. Erlmann's interest is in trying to delineate how social differences might be produced through the audiences built around particular musics (1996: 470).

At the same time that investigating aesthetic cosmopolis might then bear fruit, we need to constantly bear in mind Haynes' caution that (following Calhoun 2002: 105) music is, like food, tourism, literature, and clothing – one of the 'easy faces of cosmopolitanism'. The conclusion to her article, that the problematic relational and situational aspects of identity-making remain unresolved, is something the examination of music festivals must relate to the easy faces and hard realities of cosmopolitanism.

The literature leaves us though with a problem, one that we may be able to address through methodology. This is the anthropologically obvious point that 'traditionally' the musics we are talking about are flexible creatures, not only because they might (and often do) involve improvisation, but because they may not be separable from other cultural forms like poetry, dance, or religious ritual (Tenzer 2006: introduction), despite the potential simplifications of the commodity form. This applies to all of the genres under consideration here, especially given jazz's long synonymy with improvisation, and electronica's links to contemporary art practice. It should also be clear that here we are dealing with different kinds of musicianship, as Feld's groundbreaking work on the musical world of the Kaluli in Papua New Guinea demonstrated (1982, 1988). Whilst these are important reminders of our own situatedness, the fine-grained examination of the *music* itself is of most interest to ethnomusicologists and

scholars of ‘comparative music’ (best represented perhaps by Michael Tenzer’s excellent but rather specialist edited volume *Analytical Studies in World Music*). Methodologically, we need to fall back on the spatial and temporal conjuncture that festivals represent. Falassi’s idea that we should seek to understand the *morphology* of festivals through their constituent parts (1987: 3-6), might indeed provide us with a comparative tool capable of revealing the structures and processes of world music’s aesthetic public sphere.

There is another side of the literature which will not be entered into here, but which might prove important if one wished to explore the links between world music, environmentalism, and the new cultural politics of indigeneity (much of which can be usefully followed through anthropological debates over indigenous intellectual property debates, for example in Michael Brown’s book *Who Owns Native Culture?*); these are articles exploring the legal aspects of the appropriation and use of indigenous musics, and include: Mills (1996) ‘Indigenous music and the law: an analysis of national and international legislation’, Seeger (1992) ‘Ethnomusicology and music law’ and (1996) ‘Ethnomusicologists, archives, professional organizations, and the shifting ethics of intellectual property’. Whilst I have yet to locate articles discussing this specifically in relation to jazz and electronica, issues of appropriation are no less relevant to these genres: for example, the jazz musician Jan Garbarek has been involved in a long-running legal case over his song ‘Pygmy Lullaby’ which sampled a mis-attributed anthropological field-recording initially appropriated by the new-age ambient group Deep Forest. Feld (2000: 160) describes this as second generation schizophrenic mimesis, and the study of music festivals as aesthetic public spheres cannot ignore issues of the commodification of culture, especially where they bear on the producers of those aesthetics themselves.

#### **5.4 Music festivals in geography**

Geographers too have tackled the emergence of the category of world music; much of this is concerned with music as emblematic of, and testament to, the social dynamics resulting from the post-colonial era’s rampant deterritorialisation (for example, Carney 1978; Carney 1998; Chude-Sokei 1997; Cohen 1995; Kong 1995; Ley & Olds 1988; Smith 1997; and finally Stanley Waterman’s work, in particular his 1998 ‘Carnivals for élites? The cultural politics of arts festivals’). In other words, and more generally, ‘In the revival of cultural geography, much of what has been produced on music has dealt with the significance of music in social life and its (re)construction in place’ (Ibid.: 257). Dealing specifically with world music, recent works identify two major forces as crucial to the world music phenomenon:

international migration and its diasporic communities along with the predatory expansion of the commodity form.

One of the most useful of these ‘geographical’ articles, John Connell and Chris Gibson’s 2004 ‘World music: deterritorializing place and identity’, gives a thorough review of much of the theorising concerning world music and globalization (from across the social sciences and humanities). Whilst they do give some space in their discussion to the understandings of musicians themselves – that world music is for artists an expressive category, something the authors explore by looking at the literature on ‘hybrid’ musics like ‘Bhangra’ (and citing authors such as Banerjea 2000, Maira 1999, as well as the British-based artist Nitin Sawhney, and see Hutnyk 2000 for a broad critique) – their emphasis on world music as a commodity form distracts us from the socio-cultural imaginaries that world (and other) music in its festival incarnation conjures up. This is, of course, our dilemma: how far to withdraw into the temporal boundaries of the festival itself (as experienced by a festival-goer, organiser, artist or volunteer), or how much of the related activities to explore and include. Nevertheless, their last sentence indicates to us quite clearly the processes bubbling away beneath the easy ideology of the melting-pot with which world music festivals, indeed the industry, promote themselves; processes that many of the aforementioned analyses fit – too neatly in this reviewer’s opinion – into a series of dichotomies reflective of the broader discourse on globalization (e.g. celebration/anxiety).

Thus, while Connell and Gibson’s (2004: 359) observation that “the existence of world music as a distinct category attests to the commercial necessity to retain and selectively promote ethnic and geographical differences, strategically imbue them with authenticity and market the outcome” highlights the processes involved in the making of ‘world music’, it also hides how this marketing category is lived and experienced, masking its broader effects on society.

Meanwhile, geographer Bernadette Quinn’s 2003 article on the Wexford opera festival unveils the broader effects of the festival over time on the local community and provides a useful historicization of local (and élite) attitudes to this event. Tellingly, perhaps, she finds social differences end up mapping/replicating élite and popular arts distinctions, something on which we need to remain vigilant when examining the espoused cosmopolitan ideals of some of our festivals.

Let us return briefly to the role of place in festivals and music which the geography literature has foregrounded, and see whether there are pointers for how we might carry out our own research. One of the most useful concepts for us may in fact emerge from a detailed ethnography of the Japanese hip-hop scene by Ian Condry (2006). In *Hip-Hop Japan: rap and*

*the paths of cultural globalization* we learn that one of the key elements in the genre's diffusion and success is *genba*, the locales through which upcoming and established rap artists both perform and network. They represent a nexus of fans, the music industry itself, the media: in short, the locus of transnational identification and production is here. The literal translation of this Japanese term of *genba*, meaning 'actual site', might then be something we can appropriate and apply to our empirical study of music festivals. Beyond these kinds of sites, we surely need to also develop acute awareness of the 'original' sites of production and performance for the musics we are investigating, as Potuoglu-Cook's article on belly-dance and gentrification in Istanbul demonstrates through an (embodied) ethnography spanning sites as different as concert halls, restaurants, dance classes, nightclubs, and retail outlets. Still more methodological clues emerge from an anthropological investigation of Indian musics, Amanda Weidman's *Singing the Classical, voicing the modern: the postcolonial politics of music in South India*. We might draw on her analysis of the reproduction of aesthetic values, and break our empirical research down into investigating the social, cultural and technological agents responsible for the cultural reproduction of the music festivals we are looking at. Borrowing further, where Weidman (2006: 9) sees claims to modernity as claims to power, we might substitute modernity with 'cosmopolitan', for this credo of the cultural omnivore surely underlies the moral claim implicit in the presentation and curation of displaying other musics.

Whilst Erlmann (1996) drew us away from dichotomies and towards the social ramifications of a new aesthetic imaginary (albeit one based on historical prejudices and tropes), a brief survey of the lyrics of some 'world music' demonstrates that historical consciousness and unities imagined beyond the boundaries of ethnicity and nation are not only in the minds of white middle-class festival-goers but on the tongues of musicians. For example, Caetano Veloso's 1995 samba-reggae song 'Haiti' covers the 1993 massacre of prisoners in São Paulo by situating it within transatlantic histories of slavery, contemporary geopolitics, Paul Simon's 1990 foray/appropriation into/of samba, sex tourism, and more:

And when you go on a little trip to the Caribbean,  
And when you screw without a rubber,  
And participate knowingly in the blockade of Cuba,  
Think about Haiti, pray for Haiti.  
Haiti is here – Haiti is not here. (Translation by Browning 1998: 3-4)

Finally, what a geographical perspective on (world) music festivals may contribute is a better link between political economy sensitivity and cultural identity politics. A promising research direction on this front has been suggested by the political geographer Darel E. Paul (2004) in

his article on the Montreal city project, which focuses empirically on the Montreal International Jazz Festival.<sup>38</sup> First held in 1980, the festival has become the largest tourist event in Canada, spanning 11 days and with an attendance of 1.7 million. The Festival is financially well supported by transnational capital (e.g. General Motors) and all levels of government.

What makes this case study relevant for us – beyond the evident fact that it is about a jazz and international festival – is its focus on a city which has a big political and economic project to become a ‘world city’ or a ‘global city’ – terms which enjoy increasing currency in both urban politics and academic study, despite the fact that there is no consensus about their meaning. Paul is able to show how cosmopolitans’ mores and attitudes like the ones promoted by the jazz international festival – which also features numerous forms of world music including cajun, ska, reggae, klezmer and beyond – are deeply embedded in capitalist class politics and capital strategies, and functional to their spread and reproduction, also against the city’s small business and working classes, which suffer increased air and noise pollution and declining public services, while failing to benefit from the developing global connectivity.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Even if relatively recent, the literature on music festivals is growing fast and is becoming rather rich. As we have seen, economics – or better, cultural economics – has been and still is a relevant disciplinary source of analytical reflections and even empirical research, interesting also from a sociological point of view especially when the economic perspective is merged or in dialogue with the organizational one (i.e. neoinstitutionalist theory) and empirical cases are not limited to the field of serious music. Useful data on festival publics – both highbrow and lowbrow – are available thanks to management studies and marketing research. The focus on market constraints (budgets, tickets, audience size and quality etc.) helps us not to lose sight of the more material dimension of festival life. The problem with this kind of literature, from the point of view of our research, is that no effort is really made for discovering and elucidating systems of meaning in both cultural production and consumption, neither at the level of discourse nor at the level of practices and social relations. For this we need to look at other literatures, mainly sociological and anthropological, but also, increasingly, geographical.

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<sup>38</sup> Interestingly enough, this festival has some institutional links also with “Umbria Jazz”, one of the music festivals selected for our research.

From a sociological point of view, music festivals can be primarily seen as cultural places which make possible ‘intense’ and concentrated interaction for people involved in specific subcultures and other kinds of mainly identity-based groups of people. In pointing out this key dimension in music festivals, the sociological literature can aid our understanding of how these events became occasions during which people spatially dispersed in a global world are able to establish specific relations on the basis of the common sharing of aesthetics and cultural objects. For this reason, one of the most useful concepts proposed by this kind of literature is that of ‘translocal musical scenes’, which helps us understand how music festivals can play a crucial role in locally connecting geographically widespread audiences on the basis of the sharing of global tastes, knowledge and aesthetic sensibilities. Even if still little used in music festivals research, the conceptual tools offered by more general sociological theories of arts, media and culture like Bourdieu’s field theory or Becker’s art world approach (see Bourdieu 1993; Becker 1982) would help to link this privileged focus on interactions with the more macro- (or meso-) dimensions of cultural life, where we find market and industry structures (i.e. the recording and radio industries), occupational cultures and careers (i.e. musicians, sound engineers, disc-jockeys, recording industry managers, etc.) and political actors (social movements, political parties, the state). A promising beginning in this direction – to be supplemented anyway with a deeper sensitivity to discourses, frames and identities – is Besancon’s study of the Festival de la Chaise-Dieu, which shows how organization and programming are embedded in larger social, political and even religious fields which both constrain and enable.

Meanwhile, the geographical and anthropological literature has focused less on the interactions of people within the festival space or its immediate milieu, and more on the degree to which – especially in the case of ‘world music’ – they relate to globalisation and its ambiguities. Most of these observations are of limited use to our current study in that the dichotomies they reveal – hybridity/essentialism; celebration/anxiety, etc. – are fairly commonplace in the broader globalisation literature (world music in particular is repeatedly described as emblematic of the ambiguities of globalization); much of the literature then has remained fixated with cultural imperialism, international migration, diasporic communities, and the expansion of the commodity form. Instead, the general observation that Mahon (2000) makes, that contradiction characterizes the work of cultural producers, is possibly a more open and valuable premise from which to investigate the aesthetic public sphere. Erlmann’s view that world music is “a new aesthetic form of the global imagination” suggests that music festivals might indeed be fruitful sites for empirical research; our problem then is how to take account of the diverse sites of the production and consumption of these musics without losing sight of the festival space and ‘time out of time’ itself. We suggest two ‘indigenous’ concepts by which we might try to grasp the spatial and aesthetic elements of these: the Japanese *genba*

or ‘actual site’ discussed by Hendry, and the Indian aesthetic concept of *rasa*. Appropriating these is a way of making implicit reference to the partiality of our intended empirical investigation, for at the very least we need to be self-aware that we are ignoring much of the original and/or other sites of cultural (re)production of our genres (and this is equally true for the publics themselves, as well as their ideologies). Given that the musician’s themselves can be seen as both products and arbiters of cultural imperialism (Feld’s ‘second generation schizophrenic mimesis’), or as the genuine cosmopolitans (Browning’s work, and Veloso’s lyrics above), we also need to find ways to be attentive to the art-forms themselves without becoming bogged-down in (ethno)musicological detail: a basic suggestion is to follow Weidman’s lead and break our research down into the social, cultural and technological agents responsible for both the cultural reproduction of music festivals, and the production of the values and views our interviews may elicit. What is clear is that we need a new analytical language not only to help us understand how translocal music scenes work – and what they might mean to those within them, and imply for the existence of an aesthetic public sphere – but also to take us beyond the shadows of globalization literature.



## **6. Literature Festivals: Literature (Festivals) as a Subject of Sociological Inquiry in Search of Cosmopolitanism**

*Liana Giorgi*

Literature festivals have been studied very little. In fact, it is telling that the sole academic article with ‘literary festival’ on its title – an article entitled ‘Celebrating literature: literary festivals and the novel in 1997’ by William Cloonan and Jean-Philippe Postel – is basically concerned with the potential of French contemporary literary production to produce a ‘bestseller’ and the role of literary festivals in this respect. This is indeed an interesting sociological question and, as will be discussed below, one that is relevant for the study of festivals. What is, however, especially telling about this article is its approach: the authors merely list and briefly describe French novels published in 1997. In other words, a sociological research question is looked at solely from the literary studies perspective of the study of ideas, abstracted or even unrelated to their context of production.

Literature – perhaps more than either music, film or architecture – is often considered an autonomous (as in independent) field, and this is the approach cultivated by literary studies. According to English (2005), the frequent branding of literary prizes (including the Nobel prize) as mere ‘politics’ also helps sustain this belief. Still, literature like other artistic fields is also a cultural production process (Santoro 2008) and, as such, must be studied sociologically.

Our aim in this part of the report (Deliverable D1.1 of the EURO-FESTIVAL project) is to take stock of the theory and research on literature (and literature festivals) from a sociological perspective. As there exists very little on literature festivals per se, we were forced to go back to the main original texts of the sociology of literature in order to extract from these lessons for the study of literature festivals.

### **6.1 A theory for the sociology of literature – from Löwenthal to Bourdieu**

The sociology of literature was outlined first by Löwenthal (1948, 1961) and then extended by Bourdieu (1995). Two recent books, namely those by Casanova (2004, [2001]) and English (2005) deserve to be added to the list of key texts in the field and will be reviewed in subsequent sections.

Löwenthal was the first to look at literature from a sociological perspective. Indeed, his book *Literature, Popular Culture and Society*, goes a step further and outlines a programme for the

sociology of literature. Löwenthal's approach is based on his critique of specialization in the social sciences. Comparing the American tendency to favour what he calls 'technique' or, alternatively, quantitative methods, with the European preference for taking 'the whole of history as their field', he contends in a lapidary tone: 'Nonsense can, of course, result from either method pushed to the extreme' (p. xiii). A similar view is later expressed by Bourdieu (1995) when arguing in favour of the adoption of the field / habitus approach to the sociological study of the arts.

Literature, argues Löwenthal offers the opportunity to place into context what a social scientist observes and studies under the rubric of 'social behaviour'. This justifies the inclusion of literature in the canon of sociological enquiry.

If we limit ourselves to observable facts and to our society, there is no way to determine what is important and what is unimportant (...) Literature shows not only the socialized behaviour of man (sic), but the process of socialization (...) it speaks not only of individual experience, but of the meaning of experience (Löwenthal 1961: xiii).

Löwenthal's argument is developed against the background of communications research, dominant at the time in the U.S. for the study of popular culture. At the theoretical level the main debate at the time – like today – concerned the implications of popular culture on the artistic field and on society. Löwenthal shows that this debate is not so modern, going actually back to Montaigne and Pascal in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century respectively. A century later, Goethe and Schiller conceptualized – and partly implemented – a classification project for characterizing all forms of 'inferior art' according to a set of aesthetic and societal criteria. Furthermore, then like now, there were disagreements about the future of humanity faced with this 'mass' culture. Montaigne, like Schiller, were more optimistic than either Pascal or Goethe, believing in the developmental possibilities of 'man' even under the influence of mass culture. Pascal and Goethe, and with them several religious conservatives believed the opposite.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century these debates continued and were documented in the first perhaps literary journal, the *Edinburgh Review*, launched in 1802. The recommendations advanced there during this time, argues Löwenthal, could very well have originated in some contemporary policy report concerned with the declining standards of either science or the arts:

A number of remedial measures are proposed at various times and by various contributors, such as increased and free education, legal measures against trash, a classification of the theatres and a deliberate effort on the part of intellectuals to renew the standards (Ibid.: 41).

Löwenthal concludes succinctly: ‘For all their differences, the academic and the cultural reactions to the rise of mass culture have one important feature in common: both are *essentially moralizing*’ (Ibid.: 42, own highlighting).

Based on a case study of English literature in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, he then goes on to show that this cleavage structuring the debate about (literary) culture would also come to delineate the internal boundaries of the literary scene itself. More than thirty years later, Bourdieu (1995) would embark on a similar exercise for the French literary scene of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup>

Bourdieu traces the ‘beginnings’ of this debate within the literature field to Baudelaire and Flaubert. Partly in reaction to discriminatory practices by the French Academy, both of these authors came to assert the ‘autonomy’<sup>40</sup> of the literary field as equivalent to the independence of the author from economic and/or political influences. This, in turn, became one of the principal rules of the field: ‘to honour their status as writers, they [writers] must manifest a certain distance from the dominant values’ (Bourdieu 1995: 69). With commercialization beginning around 1840, there would emerge, however, a more ‘popular’ form of literature associated with the names of Emil Zola and Viktor Hugo. They became the key speakers of what Bourdieu calls ‘social art’, a form of literature with a (socialist) political inspiration and message. A third type of art, the so-called ‘bourgeois’ art, was associated with theatre, which was also the one form of literary production at the time to be attracting big audiences and also bringing good income for the authors. As a result, continues Bourdieu, around the 1880s the (French) literary field consolidated as one with a dualist structure:

The progress of the literary field towards autonomy is marked by the fact that, at the end of the nineteenth century, the hierarchy among genres (and authors) according to specific criteria of peer-judgement is almost exactly the inverse of the hierarchy according to commercial success (Ibid.: 114).

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<sup>39</sup> Interestingly Bourdieu makes no reference to Löwenthal’s work despite the fact that he follows a similar approach – both methodologically and theoretically. It is not known whether this was an intentional omission or unintentional, reflecting the boundaries and structures of the social science field (according to languages and ‘schools’). What speaks unfortunately for the former (intentional omission) is the structure of Bourdieu’s book. This is very similar to that of Löwenthal even if much bigger in terms of pages. Both books include a discussion of the theory, followed by a historical case study, followed by a study of the book markets (in the United States and France respectively) followed by methodological considerations.

<sup>40</sup> In the *Rules of Art*, Bourdieu uses the term autonomy somewhat sloppily to refer to two situations or contexts: on the one hand, the belief in the independence of the author (the structuring narrative for the literary field of the 19<sup>th</sup> century); on the other hand, for referring to literature as a distinct even if not fully independent social realm (following his theory of the field).

This is how poetry came to represent that form of literary production with the highest (cultural) prestige but the lowest economic returns; in contrast with theatre, which promised the highest returns but assigned the lowest prestige. The novel was located in-between these extreme positions.

But the structuring processes went a step further creating a dualistic cleavage within each sub-field between high and low brow – what Bourdieu calls research and commercial sector, and Löwenthal artistic and popular culture.

Thus between the beginning of the century, with poetry, and the 1880s with theatre, there develops at the heart of each genre a more autonomous sector – or, if you will, an avant-garde. Each of the genres tends to cleave into a research sector and a commercial sector, two markets between which one must be wary of establishing a clear boundary, since they are merely two poles, defined in and by their antagonistic relationship, of the same space (Ibid.).

This process of differentiation is accompanied by a process of convergence in the sense that the different fields come to be structured alike. This applies to the literary field proper but also to the arts more generally.

The process of differentiation of each genre is accompanied by a process of unification of the whole set of genres, that is, of the literary field, which tends more and more to organize itself around common oppositions: in effect, each of the two opposed sectors of each subfield tends to become closer to the similar sector of the other genres (...) In other words, the opposition between the genres loses its structuring efficacy in favour of the opposition between the two poles present in each subfield: the pole of pure production, where the products have as clients only other producers (who are also rivals) ... and the pole of large-scale production subordinated to the expectation of a wide audience (Ibid.:120-121)

Where Löwenthal and Bourdieu probably differ – besides their terminology – is their subjective appreciation of these developments. Even if not as explicitly moralizing like his predecessors in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bourdieu is much more pessimistic about these developments in the literary field, in that he tends to adopt the equation between ‘commercial’= economic returns = low in prestige = low in quality. Löwenthal is more careful but ultimately also more optimistic. The difference probably lies in that Löwenthal, unlike Bourdieu, recognizes the relativity of both ‘commercial success’ and ‘artistic value’. After all, let us not forget that both Zola and Hugo who emerged as representatives of ‘social’ art and

were judged as ‘popular’ at their own time, did not only provide the basis, as shown by Bourdieu, for the figure of the intellectual,<sup>41</sup> but are today considered as literary figures of high cultural prestige.

## 6.2 A research programme for the sociology of literature

These empirical insights motivated Löwenthal to outline a research programme for the sociology of literature that is intellectually based on sociology and the humanities to an equal degree. This research programme comprises five principal components:

- A. Research that places literature ‘in a functional frame within each society and again within the various levels of stratification of that society’ (p.141). This includes examining empirically the diffusion of different types of literary genres over historical periods.
- B. Research to assess the position of the writer in society. This ought to be done from the subjective side (what the writers think) and objectively with reference to the indicators of prestige, income, the role of publishers and other intermediary institutions.
- C. Study of literary materials in order to find out how they relate to specific (historical) social situations or cleavages. In other words, what do texts written in specific periods say about the social relations of that period and how are these reflected upon?
- D. Explorations of the social determinants of commercial success as opposed to artistic prestige. Special attention must be paid to: (i) the way social constellations (like economic growth) impact on reading and writing; (ii) the role of social controls such as prizes (symbolic controls), advertising (economic manipulated controls) and agents (informal controls); (iii) the role of technological change on writing but also reading habits.<sup>42</sup>
- E. Challenging tasks requiring interdisciplinary work include: (a) a qualitative and quantitative inventory of the contents of popular works on a comparative scale; (b) a study of the change over time of writers’ attitudes (through a social

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<sup>41</sup> This he links to the Dreyfus affair and Zola’s essay ‘J’accuse’. The idea of the intellectual as someone who is independent of political and economic influences and dares to speak out is one that owes a lot to the literary field and the latter’s development, argues Bourdieu.

<sup>42</sup> For instance: do those reading more also watch more films? On this, see also Peterson (2005).

psychological study of their main characters); (c) a study of marginal media like comics; (d) the evolution and reflection on emotional patterns in different times and the relation of these to styles.

The research programme for a sociology of literature outlined by Löwenthal is still valid today. It is in fact telling for the research field that the research programme he outlined was only partially followed up and in a fragmented manner. This is unlike the fields of film, and, especially, music which are much better covered sociologically and from a historical perspective.<sup>43</sup> A brief summary of the state of research in the field of the sociology of literature is as follows:

Löwenthal's study on the diffusion and uptake of biographies during the first half of the twentieth century, and Bourdieu's analysis of the French book market according to the age cohort of published authors<sup>44</sup> during the same period, remain the main reference works for research of this type (A). This is despite the fact that there exists today much more statistical data on the book market. In the United States, for example, the Book Industry Study Group publishes regular reports with six-year time series data (and five-year forecasts) on the development of the publishing industry with information on outputs, sales, revenues, consumer expenditures and trade.<sup>45</sup> The Federation of European Publishers (FEE-FEP) produces similar statistics for the European Union member states on a bi-annual basis based on information supplied by the national publisher associations.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately both these statistical databases provide little literary *content* information because of the classification schemes used: the American publication distinguishes between adult, juvenile, mass, professional, university and religious books and focuses only on the big publishers, while the European statistics classify books published only according to whether they are educational, professional, consumer-oriented, or for children. The statistics collected by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics on book production (for all country members) are even less informative, focusing alone on professional specialized books<sup>47</sup> by language. Somewhat more detailed information is collected at the national level within Europe in select countries. For instance,

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<sup>43</sup> See Santoro et al. in the section on music festivals of this report: For film, see Segal, also in this report.

<sup>44</sup> The results of these studies are published in the respective books by Löwenthal and Bourdieu reviewed here. Löwenthal's research showed that (a) interest in biographies increased in the United States during the first half of the century, but (b) that this was primarily due to the rising interest of the reading public in the private lives of entertainment figures. Bourdieu's analysis showed how the French book market of the early twentieth century was biased in favour of older and established writers.

<sup>45</sup> See [www.bisg.org](http://www.bisg.org)

<sup>46</sup> The latest publication is from 2006 with data from 2004. See FEP (2006).

<sup>47</sup> The questionnaire used by UNESCO (last revised in 1999) asks only for publications in the social sciences, humanities (including literary and arts studies), 'pure' science, applied science, religion and textbooks.

the Swedish Royal Library collects information on fiction and non-fiction books but also on encyclopaedias, audio and translations.<sup>48</sup>

With regard to reading habits, the situation is not very different. The existing studies are often national (for instance, UK, Sweden) or international (OECD, Unesco) but are mainly designed from the educational perspective focusing on questions of access (according to socio-demographical variables such as age, gender, education, ethnicity), technology (role of internet) or education (uptake of training). General statistics on reading habits are occasionally collected in the framework of the Eurobarometer surveys (as in 2002) but are limited to standard questions such as how many books one has read during the past 12 months.

Studies on the position of the writer (component B above), the link of literary contents to historical and social processes (C) or the changes in reporting styles regarding emotional patterns (E) exist,<sup>49</sup> albeit in fragmented manner as case studies within the humanities field of literary studies, but not within sociology.

Sociological inquiry has tended rather to focus on the fourth component of Löwenthal's research programme, namely that of the enquiry of the social determinants of success. Bourdieu's book on the structuring processes impacting on the literary field from outside and from within has already been discussed. Building on Bourdieu's analysis, two recent books explore what determines success in the literary field from different perspectives. It is in this sub-field of sociological research on literature that we also find scientific analyses of the role of (literary) festivals.

### **6.3 From national to world literature and the role of urban cosmopolitanism**

The first is a book by Pascale Casanova, published originally in French in 2001 and translated in English in 2004, entitled *The World Republic of Letters*. Casanova explores literature as a distinct domain of ideas produced in and through politics, competition and the economy at the interface between the local (national) and the global. Her analysis is based on a socio-ethnographic analysis of metropolitan centres (and mainly Paris of the late nineteenth and

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<sup>48</sup> A profile on the Swedish book market was published in the Bulletin of the European Union's Publishers Forum (No. 2) of 2006.

<sup>49</sup> On comics, two books were recently published: that of Hadju (2008) on comics publications in the United States following the end of World War II and the opposition this created by parents' associations, church groups but also politics; and that of Chabon (2008) that examines both science fiction and comics from the perspective of a writer. These publications are indicative of the development of the research field in this area, i.e. that it occurs outside the disciplinary boundaries of sociology. Hadju is a music critic for *The New Republic* (a weekly American periodical on politics and the arts); Chabon is a novelist and essayist.

early twentieth century) as the meeting place of writers and their networks. This is based on written documentation and archive material as well as a systematic analysis of writers' biographies and their creative output. What is especially successful about Casanova's book is that it advances a solid sociologically-informed argument while being versed in literary studies, thus is able to 'tell the sociological story' also from the perspective of the authors and their works.<sup>50</sup>

Casanova's starting argument is that it is not possible to understand the much celebrated 'world literature' (either empirically or theoretically) from a historical perspective without acknowledging national rivalries expressing themselves in rivalries between language and metropolitan centres. In turn, these rivalries, are linked to the emergence of nation-states linked to the diffusion of printing (cf. Anderson 1983).

There are three major stages in the emergence of the world literary space. The first (in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century) is associated with the emergence of capitalism and nation-states and the role of vernaculars in this process. This led to the demise of Latin and the emergence of French and the latter's claim for universality. Then in the eighteenth century came the challenge to this universality from English followed by Herder's contestation of French hegemony on theoretical grounds. The third stage began with the period of decolonization which resulted in the emergence of yet other nations and languages in the world literary space.<sup>51</sup> Presently, she concludes, we are faced with a new phase of globalization characterized by the struggle between the commercial production mode and the more autonomous literary production mode.

Of course, as we know already since Löwenthal and Bourdieu, this duality was also intrinsic to the establishment of the (national) literary fields. What Casanova is claiming is that the 'world' literary space has come to be structured around language competition and the competition between metropolitan centres – first – and only at a later stage around the duality of cultural vs. economic prestige already identified at national level. In other words, her approach is meant to complement that of Löwenthal and Bourdieu, whose empirical reference was that of the national literary space. The links of this narrative to nation-state building and,

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<sup>50</sup> Casanova herself is a literary critic, coming originally from the literature studies field rather than the sociology of literature. While acknowledging Bourdieu, her main inspiration, she writes, was the work of the historian Fernand Braudel on *Civilization and Capitalism* (1992) and that of Larbaud (1925) on literary history and the role of translators (himself one of the translators of Joyce Ulysses in French).

<sup>51</sup> Of course the decolonization phase did not only spell 'freedom' for new languages and writers. Many could only gain recognition through a specific appropriation of their writing by the former colonial powers. On this see Rourke (2003). Casanova considers this phenomenon of appropriation also with respect to smaller (language) nations, for instance the very different reception (and translation) of Ibsen in the UK (as a representative of social realism) and in France (as a representative of symbolism). Ibsen apparently did not agree with his specific interpretation in France but accepted this as the price to pay for world-wide acclaim.

subsequently, post-nationalism echo the more general discourse in the humanities and social sciences during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

World literature is not to be understood as distinct from national literatures but rather as the supra-national level of literature which comprises those texts that gain international recognition, also but not solely, through translations as well as those texts created out of the opposition to the structures inherent in national literary spaces. It is for this reason, claims Casanova, that the literariness, namely ‘the power, prestige and volume of linguistic and literary capital’ of a language is not so much a measure of its writers and readers but rather of its ‘cosmopolitan intermediaries – publishers, editors, critics, and especially translators – who assure the circulation of texts into the language or out of it’ (Casanova 2004: 21).<sup>52</sup> These intermediaries, however, do not exist in vacuum. They are however more rooted in urban rather than national culture. It is for this reason that literariness thus defined is also closely linked to metropolitan centres identified as capital or cities of literature.

According to Casanova, Paris was the first such city (and still a strong literary capital). It became a city of world literature also by attracting many writers or contributing to writers’ publicity. Thus writers like Joyce, Beckett or Faulkner but also Strindberg and Nabokov were ‘made’ famous through the translations of their work in French,<sup>53</sup> often prior to becoming recognized in their own countries. Paris and later other metropolitan capitals had thus an important function of ‘consecration’ in the literary space.

The contemporary literary space has, of course, more than one centre: New York and London are today equally important, if not more important, literary capitals than Paris, next to Frankfurt, Rome and Barcelona. But perhaps more importantly, the contemporary global literary field (with its metropolitan capitals) is today also of dual structure.

The fiction component of literary production in America, as in France, is divided between two distinct poles. The first consists of novels that belong to what Pierre Bourdieu calls the ‘subfield of restricted production’, which is to say autonomous, avant-garde works that exist on the fringes of mainstream publishing (...) The second pole consists of commercial literary production, associated by definition

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<sup>52</sup> The role of these intermediaries has tended to be ignored in literary studies because historians of literature will focus on ‘particular ... history of an individual author, or giving a general account of the development of national literature, or else reviewing the history of the different interpretations (readings) of a given text over time, the process of consecration and littérisation – authorized by critics and carried out by translators – is always passed over in silence, forgotten or simply ignored’ (Casanova 2004: 142).

<sup>53</sup> In the case of Beckett this was self-translation. Nabokov, on the other hand, chose to write in a language other than his mother tongue (Russian): first in French, later in English.

with the least autonomous sectors of publishing, which today exercises all the more attraction as it manages to imitate the achievements of a certain narrative modernity (...) What is being played out today in every part of world literary space is not a rivalry between France and the United States or Great Britain but rather a struggle between the commercial pole, which in each country seeks to impose itself as a new source of literary legitimacy through the diffusion of writing that mimics the style of the modern novel, and the autonomous pole, which finds itself under siege not only in the United States and France but throughout Europe ... (Casanova 2004: 168-69).

The duality of the literary field as originally established by Löwenthal for England and the United States and by Bourdieu for France has come full circle to also dominate the world literary field.

Some illustrative trends are worth pointing out:<sup>54</sup>

- Contemporary publishing is first and foremost characterized by both concentration and diversity. Despite the existence of several publishers' titles, the number of publishing companies has tended to decline. Thus, for instance, Random House is today owned by Bertelsmann but also the umbrella brand of at least 50 imprints including Knopf, Doubleday, Transworld, Jonathan Cape, Chatto and Windus etc. As more generally in the media sector (cf. Giorgi 1995), the implications of this change of ownership relations for content is a hotly debated topic, whereby the Murdoch-feared model is not necessarily the standard or even more usual outcome.
- The publishing market is today extremely specialized. The genre classification in literature, especially in the English-speaking environment, is quite extensive and affects not only the spatial and thematic organization of bookstores<sup>55</sup> but also, primarily, the professional work of publishers and agents. From the perspective of a writer, getting access to a publisher or a literary agent usually implies successfully packaging and classifying literary work as belonging to this or that genre, hence addressing a specific clientele. Whereas in the U.S. access to so-called readership

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<sup>54</sup> The following observations are based on information gathered at the Backspace conference (New York, May 2007), where the author of this paper attended seminars on how the modern publishing market works (especially regarding the work of publishers and agents), and on information supplied through the *Publishers Market*, a subscription-based service regarding the acquisitions and deals in the contemporary publishing field; see [www.publishersmarketplace.com](http://www.publishersmarketplace.com)

<sup>55</sup> The modern story of literature space can also certainly be told from the perspective of the book sellers. Relevant issues in this respect are: (1) the emergence of book seller chains (W.H. Smith in the UK, FNAC in France, Barnes and Nobles in the U.S) at the detriment of smaller bookshops which today can only survive if specialized and addressing a niche market, (2) the strategy of book title acquisition, (3) the influence book stores have on book covers or titles etc.

‘platforms’ is explicitly considered a positive element, in Europe the practice is equally used but less admitted to (like with the use of public or private subsidies to publishers).

- The publishing business is today not limited to the production of books. Audio, film and, to a lesser degree, translation rights are in fact the real income-generating part of the business. This is a development also known from film and music but comparatively new to literature. Internet presence is also increasingly an issue.

The above processes may have been dominant – a proof for some for the commodification of literature – but they are, in parallel, giving rise to a new (supra-)field which transcends cultural nationalism while still being rooted within national language boundaries. To this argument we turn to in the next section.

#### **6.4 Economic prestige vs. cultural value on the glocal stage of festivals and awards**

That the opposition between economic prestige and cultural value which has weighed on the literary field (and its analysis) over centuries might be gradually becoming short-sighted despite being still valid, is one of the main arguments of English’s (2005) book on *The Economy of Prestige* dealing with the role of prizes and awards for consecrating but, more significantly, circulating cultural value.

English’s analysis, like that of Casanova, also builds on Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘field’ and ‘capital’ where capital is broadly defined as ‘asset’ existing in relation to both its particular field and other fields as well. English’s research is based on the systematic analysis in terms of process and output (over time) of all major and minor prizes and award systems developed for literature as well as film and music. These include national prizes like the UK Booker prize for literature or the French Prix Goncourt but also international prizes like the Nobel. Many prizes – even if not all – are awarded in the context of festivals or special celebratory ceremonies.

Prizes represent a form of consecration, their main role being that of diffusing information to the general public about what constitutes (world) literature. According to Casanova (2004), the Nobel prize, for instance, has over time set four criteria for literary value: the first (also historically) is that of political neutrality understood as a counterweight to nationalist excesses. This was reinforced by the second criterion established in the course of the 1920s, namely that works eligible for the Nobel prize had to be universal and that universality was incompatible with ‘cultural nationalism’ (Casanova 2004: 149). The third criterion concerns

the public perception of a work – an indirect acknowledgement at the same time of the economic forces at work in the world literary space. The fourth criterion is internationalization, that is enlarging the literary universe so as to grant recognition also to writers from the periphery, i.e. from outside Europe.

Prizes have tended to proliferate since the 1970s and, according to English, this is illustrative of economic developments in the cultural field. Prizes correlate with commercial success, especially for those books that were unknown to the general public prior to receiving the award. Some prizes are known to lead to increase of revenues for the authors and their agents of up to one million dollars. Many prizes involve also direct payments, the Nobel being of course the one which the highest returns. In the meantime, however, prizes have grown into an own industry. They are often linked to serious endowments or investments, are based on a strong organization and rely on extensive social capital through the activation of both professional and volunteer networks. The publicity attached to prizes (through festivals, celebrations as well as radio and television) is an inherent part of the consecration process linked to prizes. It is for this reason that activities such as the establishment of counter prizes (in ideological opposition to the original ones) or the occurrence of scandals (linked, for instance, to the refusal of a prize or to a biased decision by the jury) do not necessarily undermine the prize industry but rather support it. For the awards industry even bad publicity is better than no publicity. Indeed sometimes bad publicity is even better.

Most writers adopt an ambivalent attitude towards prizes, wanting to appear disinterested in awards in view of the latter's commercial dimension. This is, however, one of those rules of the literary field (and the arts more generally) linked to its presumed autonomy, which Bourdieu already as central to the reproduction processes of a particular field over time. The prize industry has mostly tended to appropriate this rule in its own subfield.<sup>56</sup>

However, it would be wrong, cautions English, to consider prizes alone as indicative of the ever erosive process of art commodification. The situation is not as clear cut. Even those prizes that begin from a 'pure' commercial position tend over time to 'upgrade' seeking 'symbolic profits' (English 2005: 88). Vice-versa, prizes with high cultural prestige seek also commercial success and wider publicity. For the long-term sustainability of prizes, in other words, both economic and symbolic gains are important.

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<sup>56</sup> There are as always exceptions to this rule which provide its definite proof. The most notable exception is that of Toni Morrison and her novel *Beloved*. Her network of friends actively lobbied for receiving the Pulitzer Prize thus breaking the rules of apparent disinterest – rightly so, English argues (English 2005: 210-244): 'Morrison and her supporters undoubtedly share in the ideology of art, and believe in a distinction between artistic value and social esteem. But this does not prevent them from investing a great deal in the economy of prestige and its dominant instrument (...). Morrison's strategy is one of negative affirmation treating the prize as a more false (...) and a more true (...) measure of cultural value than its traditional critics would even allow' (Ibid.: 244).

There is also a political dimension to prizes that should not be ignored. Clearly, prizes represent also an act of legitimation for the authority that awards them. But besides this, the proliferation of prizes in the 1970s occurred not only in anticipation of the growing economic dimension of the arts, but also in response to the ‘politicization’ of culture. The growth of popular culture, it should be recalled, is also a result of the democratization of culture.

We need to recognize (...) that the very terms “post-Sixties” and “post-1968” evoke (...) historical narratives about the politicization of culture, the ever more direct convertibility of cultural with political capital. These narratives stress not so much the rise of a new (economic) class as the rise of new social movements (...) which began around 1970 to claim a significant share of the cultural field and to reshape it along more representative, if not precisely more democratic, lines (Ibid.: 78).

This politicization of culture is also seen in festivals – frequently the places for staging award ceremonies. Just like ‘world literature’ emerged in cosmopolitan urban capitals against the background of linguistic competition and the ambivalent interface – for the writer – between the national and the international,<sup>57</sup> festivals represent the cultural product of internationalization understood as the peaceful competition among nations (as in sporting events). This international dimension confirms and at the same time undermines (cultural) nationalism.

This is not to say that cultural nationalisms are of little moment, or that national governments and institutions are necessarily weak actors, within this competitive paradigm. On the contrary, this whole convergence of art with sport was, to begin with, and for at least the first five or six decades of the twentieth century, a matter of fundamentally inter-national festivals and prizes, by means of which nations were understood to be competing against other nations. But even at the outset of these developments, a certain challenge to cultural nationalism was implicit (Ibid.: 257-258).

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<sup>57</sup> The interface between the national and the international is a problematic one for the writer. On the one hand, their language and, in part, experience is linked to national identity. On the other hand, a place in the world literary space is linked to the ‘overcoming’ of the narrow national view and the adoption of a more cosmopolitan approach (Manning and Taylor 2007). This is not only a question of identity but delineates at the same time a sociological process: ‘The internationalization that I propose to describe here therefore signifies more or less the opposite of what is ordinarily understood by the neutralizing term ‘globalization’ (...) understanding the way in which writers invent their own freedom – which is to say perpetuate, or alter, or reject, or add to, or deny, or forget, or betray their national literary (and linguistic) heritage – makes it possible to chart the course of their work and discover its very purpose (Casanova 2004: 40-41).

This challenge of cultural nationalism through the very instruments set up to assert its domination is best shown by the way festivals are in their symbolic narrative and contents seeking to link the local – usually the city – with the global, often, bypassing the national (administrations).<sup>58</sup> Festivals are about place understood as ‘destination’, thus implying travelling. This is best shown in the so-called ‘exilic’ festivals established to provide a voice and platform to those writers who are travellers by reason of their origin or dislocation, the ‘culturally unhomed’. Even though such festivals remain minor in importance to the major ones of the main European cities, the cosmopolitan networks they rely on represent a growing force in the international literary field and are gradually coming to play a greater role in prize establishments and known festival institutions. The critique they face from the ‘established’ (national) networks must, therefore, be understood as representative of a ‘power struggle’ for prestige. This is the same critique often addressed to world music or world cinema, and revolves around three arguments: namely, that it is responsive to commercial demands alone, is tourist-driven and does not represent ‘true’ literary value.

Once again we are faced with the same ‘moralizing’ debates identified already by Löwenthal and Bourdieu in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and intensely ongoing since the 19<sup>th</sup> century – in England, in France, the United States and now the ‘world’. Presently, English goes on to argue, ‘this ostensibly universalist critique is in fact a long-established form of nationalist and racist resistance to the globalisation of cultural prestige’ (Ibid.: 308-9).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries new literary forms (as well as writers and their networks) had to make their way into the literary field in opposition to the established organizations for consecrating cultural value, such as the elite academies or religious institutions. As a result of the democratization of culture brought about through the nation-state – and over time supported by mobility, multilingualism and the new technologies<sup>59</sup> – the locus of conflict has now shifted to the international level. The literary field may remain dually structured around economic prestige and cultural value, but national (literary) authorities – whether public or private – are less powerful in defining and assigning ‘cultural value’. It is at this interface that cosmopolitanism is perhaps to be found.

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<sup>58</sup> This bypassing of the national administration is also the reason, according to English, that it is impossible to sustain on the long-term a festival on a non-competitive basis.

<sup>59</sup> The role of the internet in this connection also deserves mentioning. Writers’ blogs are today quite a common occurrence and the same is true for writers’ self-publishing on the internet. Some publishers (in the United States) are encouraging this because they consider it one other way to attract readership. There are already examples of books that made it to be published after their writers had managed to establish a ‘reading community’ on the internet. Apparently the internet is in this respect not operating as a substitute but as a complement of print media.

## 6.5 Conclusion: what lessons for the comparative study of festivals

Löwenthal (1961) was right: pushed to the extremes, any approach or single-minded perspective can lead to results which are, at best, biased and, at worst, nonsensical. The present review about the argumentative development of the sociological study of literature has shown that there are two, rather than one, process impacting on the literary field and its sub-fields, including festivals.

- The advent of popular culture followed by commercialization has led to the part transformation of the literary field into a bureaucratically-organized ‘industry’ centred around the proliferation and exchange of economic prestige. This orientation co-exists with that of the quest of the writer seeking recognition alone on the grounds of literary value. The latter might be a myth but it has served to establish literary networks as autonomous structures for the reproduction of the literary field itself.
- Within a globalized inter-dependent world, the horizontal enlargement of the literary space, which was brought about originally through democratization and citizenship in the context of the nation-state, implies an increase in the number of readers across the world, but also an increase in the number of writers and other professionals in the literary field. This opening up of the literary space, in conjunction with the proliferation of international prizes and festivals, is shifting the focus of the critique of cultural value from the commercial locus to the national vs. post-national cleavage.

In any case, the contemporary literary field is no less hierarchical or competitive than it was back in the nineteenth and twentieth century, even if the terms of reference for this competition have partly changed. In this new environment, we can observe different trends, not all of which are congruent or pointing in the same direction: Thus, globalization as a process of standardization in economic exchange is perhaps a social fact; but it has not eliminated international exchange and communication – it might have rather given it more impetus. Autonomous literary production still takes place despite, but also because of commercialization and the openness of the literature field. Finally, specialized literary production is contributing to the creation of limited (partial) public spaces at the same time that the expansion of the literature space (vertical and horizontal) creates more openness and cosmopolitanism.

Literature festivals represent a micro-cosmos of the greater world literature space providing the opportunity to study the processes identified above as active therein. For example:

- Literature festivals are often conceived of as platforms for communicating literature value to the greater public. This function they share with literary prizes.
- They are used as opportunities for presenting new writers from peripheral literary spaces within or outside a dominant literary language.
- They are used for effecting communication across literary borders, and are thus interesting equally for translators or translation purposes
- They reproduce dominant economic relations in the publisher markets, but often they are organized for the purpose of also counteracting these relations.

It is therefore important to study literature festivals as sites of representation, competition but also negotiation not only of different stakeholders – in the strict interpretation of the latter term – but also of different narratives about the future of the literary field.

## 7. Film Festivals

*Jérôme Segal*

Film festivals seem to be those festivals that are expanding the most rapidly: the first film festival was established in 1932 in Venice; today, there are between 700 and 800 film festivals worldwide. At the same time, less and less people go to the movies, many preferring instead to watch films in the comfort of their home, on television or, through the internet. Festivals are ‘exceptions’ to this standard practice and this, alone, would make film festivals a subject for sociological study.

The literature on film and on film festivals is extensive, and a comprehensive classification is difficult. The majority of the books and articles on film festivals are festival-specific or written as guides for professionals of the film industry. In his book *Sundance to Sarajevo: Film Festivals and the World They Made*, Kenneth Turan, film critic and lecturer at the University of Southern California, proposes to distinguish between three types of festivals:

- festivals with business agendas (including the Cannes festival and the Sundance festival, which is devoted to independent movies and takes place in the state of Utah, in the United States),
- those with geopolitical agendas (like the Fespaco in Burkina-Faso dealing with the African movie or the Sarajevo Film Festival founded in 1995 during the siege of Sarajevo),
- and those with aesthetic agendas (Turan 2002).<sup>60</sup>

Insofar as the literature is concerned, this can be sub-divided in five types:

- literature concerned with the organization and management of film festivals, and how they constitute places for and of commercialization;
- writings written for the cineaste public and treating films primarily as cultural and artistic objects;
- literature for professional festival participants written as guides, and
- literature on specific festivals.
- There are only three books, however, that study film festivals from the cultural sociological perspective.

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<sup>60</sup> A fourth part of his book deals with the politics of festival, including an interesting part on the festivals that failed, in addition to an insider view on the functioning of a festival jury.

## 7.1 Festivals as trading zones of cultural goods

Bourdieu's approach and terminology might be useful to understand how film festivals are sometimes considered as the place where the value of films is converted. First considered as cultural capital goods, films acquire symbolic value through awards and by being sold to producers, TV channels or other distribution companies. The film markets which are often organized in the framework of festivals remind us of this convertibility of film value. In Cannes, the film market was established as early as 1959, in Berlin its significance is growing with every year. As Olga Bauer puts it,

The film festival is a phenomenon embedded in the attention economy, event management, and the film industry, and its most important role is to translate cultural and artistic values into economic and social ones (Bauer 2007).

The major European film festivals were first established in order to support national film industries, and in opposition to the U.S. film industry. A dichotomy has thus been established: on the one hand, we are said to have festivals aiming at supporting and publicizing 'true' artistic talent and production; on the other hand, the U.S. film production is branded as the place where Hollywood stars are made and commercial success realized. It is one of the merits of Vanessa Schwarz to have shown, through the case of the Cannes festival, how this apparent antagonism is not only old-fashioned but wrong (Schwartz 2007).<sup>61</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Seventh art of movie-making is the most expensive. The minimum budget for making a film and having it screened in movie theatres is quite significant. Subsequently, film festivals are only possible through the engagement of many stakeholders. These involve governments, sponsors, the business community, media, filmmakers, and the city host. A significant part of the literature on film festivals is, therefore, concerned with their organizational and economic aspects (Klamer 1997). This literature addresses mainly the question of how film festivals earn money, thus becoming sustainable. Williams and Bowdin (2007), for instance, evaluate seven art festivals in the UK from this perspective. Only few authors consider the economics of festival organization from a critical perspective (Walters 1990).

Tourism studies dealing with film also tend to adopt this economic approach (see for instance, Prentice and Andersen 2003, Beeton 2005 or Getz 2005). The management aspect of film festivals is also increasingly the subject of study (Allen et al. 2005, Byrnes 2003).

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<sup>61</sup> In the same vein, on the relation between politics and the origin of many film festivals, see (Elsaesser 2005) and one of the related books review (Zielinski 2007).

## **7.2 Festivals for the cineaste**

Film festivals are also praised by the cineaste community as providing the opportunity for watching films in movie theatres, on a large screen, and together with others, that is as a collective experience. Festivals bring the opportunity to gain access to films which would be very difficult to see in mainstream movie theatres. As Dargis puts it:

Once local cultural events, places to catch up with a favourite foreign director or discover someone new, festivals have evolved into a crucial distribution network. They are of particular importance to small distributors like Kino International that can't always afford to buy their way into the national consciousness. (...) Festivals are the best public evidence of the endurance and expansiveness of our movie love and a face-to-face complement to the more private, geekier side of cinephilia -- to those cinephiles who hack their DVD players to gain access to world cinema or swap online news about the latest outrage from the gonzo Japanese director Takashi Miike (Dargis 2004).

Cinéphilie is a cultural field that is closely associated to film history (Baecque 2005). The 1959 Cannes festival, for instance, is the place where the 'Nouvelle vague' was launched. Writings under this rubric tend to consider festivals as pivotal for overcoming the differences between European and American movies (Keathley 2005). Martha Nochimson, mostly known as a David Lynch specialist, writes about festivals that they are "venues that offer both an occasion for the collapse of provincial limitations imposed on national cinemas and high level exposure for movies sprung from personal visions discouraged by mass production efforts" (Nochimson 2000).

Film Festivals are presently also a major issue for distribution companies which are thus trying to cope with the rise of the internet as a medium for film distribution and presentation. The music industry has already been seriously affected by the massive use of broadband internet connections and the film industry is facing a similar crisis (Sparrow 2007).

## **7.3 Literature related to specific festivals**

The biggest part of the relevant film literature considers specific film festivals: the Cannes Festival, the 'Berlinale', the Jewish Film Festival in Vienna and the 'Mostra' in Venice, considered as a part of the 'Biennale', a mixed-arts festival.

Insofar as Cannes is concerned, the list of monographs in French language, including writings by critics, actors and directors, always specifically related to the Cannes festival, is quite lengthy.<sup>62</sup> English sources are significantly less but on the increase.<sup>63</sup>

Regarding the Berlin festival, the literature is not so overwhelming and the main source is clearly the work of Wolfgang Jacobsen, on the first 50 years of the festival (Jacobsen 2000). The book of Fehrenbach on *Cinema in democratizing Germany* is also worth mentioning, mostly for its chapter on ‘Mass Culture and Cold War Politics: The Berlin Film Festival of the 1950s’ (Fehrenbach 1995). More recently, Reichel-Heldt published a book on *Film festival in Germany*. This book is mainly concerned with the impact of cultural policies, but it also provides extensive information on the festival as such (Reichel-Heldt 2007). Grenier (1960) and Saunders (1999) provide useful insights about the political dimension of the Berlin festival. The role of the Berlinale for the German cinema has been studied by Nusser (1959) and Halle (2002).<sup>64</sup>

The Venice film festival, or Mostra, is the oldest film festival (1932), and, therefore, it is not surprising that it was also written about as early as 1933. The relevant piece (Ludwig 1933) is highly political as part of *Talks with Mussolini*. The relation of this festival to the birth of the Italian film industry is addressed by Finer (1935). More recently, Julian Stringer (2001) has written about the impact of the Venice film festival on tourism, while the festival’s early economical dimension has been studied by Marla Stone (1998).

There is in contrast very little written about the Jewish film Festival (exceptions are Segal 2007, 2008), which is perhaps not surprising considering its relative youth. The Berlin Jewish film Festival was recently studied from the perspective of Jewish identity by Galliner (2004).

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<sup>62</sup> See: (Baeque 2007; Barozzi 2006; Bart and Variety 1997; Beauchamp and Behar 1992; Bessy 1977; Billard 1997; Bresson 1981; Clézio and Chazal 1991; Corless 2007; Craig 2006; Cuman 2005; Deleau 1993; Erlanger 1974; Ethis 2001; Frémaux 2007; Jacob 1986; Jacquemelle 1997; Kossmann, Cheval, and Knapp 2004; Latil 2005; Manciet and Carrière 2004; Michel 1997; Mitterrand 2007; Monsigny and Meeks 2007; Moreau and Collectif 2002; Ollé-Laprune and Alion 2007; Philippe 1987; Quin and Simsolo 2007; Henry Jean Servat 2004; Henry-Jean Servat 2007; Toubiana 1997; Uféras and Bessou 2005; Thévenin 2006)

<sup>63</sup> They include: (Harrington 1952; Jacquemelle 1997; Moreau and Collectif 2002; Walker 2001; York 1997; Bart and Variety 1997; Corless 2007; Mazdon 2006)

<sup>64</sup> The ‘Forum of young film’ (‘Forum des jungen Films’), which is part of the Berlinale is discussed by a volume of the Friends of German Film (Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek, 2000). This book is a homage to the first director of the forum, Ulrich Gregor, who was the head of the Forum from 1971 to 2000. Moritz de Hadeln who directed the Berlinale from 1979 until 2001 has also been the subject of a book by Baer (2001) and there are several journal articles on his successor, Dieter Kosslick (Elley 2007)

## 7.4 Guides for film professionals

Film festival guides are written to provide background information to film professionals about how festivals function, how they link different stakeholders, their admission policies etc. Often they will rely on information gathered through interviews with film-makers or festival organizers. Interesting examples are the guides written by Gore (2004) (dealing mostly with US-festivals) and Stolberg (2000) <sup>65</sup>

## 7.5 Literature on film festivals directly related to cultural sociology

The French intellectual Edgar Morin is probably the first sociologist to have published on film festivals, with his “Notes for a sociology of the Cannes festival” (Morin 1955). He went on, later, to develop film studies as a sociological field of inquiry (Morin 1956).

Writing from the historical perspective, Mona Ozouf, concentrates on the symbolism, psychology, and significance of festivals, showing their importance for creating a new world view (Ozouf 1991). For Ozouf, ‘The festival is regarded as a medium for national civic education and a manifestation of a new world order basic to modern civilization. (...) [Festivals] show a society in the process of creating itself anew’.

In the field of intercultural studies, we find a few writings concerned with festivals as a means to promote diversity (Bloomfield and Bianchini 2004). Film Festivals are important means for the promotion of collective identity. This is obvious in the case of the gay-lesbian film festival (Gamson 1996) or black film festivals (Greaves 1991), where minorities are directly at stake.<sup>66</sup> This constructivist approach has also been applied to the Sundance festival (Dayan 2000). Moreover, Forsher has shown how cinema, as both a medium and a part of the public place, helped to create a community (Forsher 2003). Film festivals definitely belong to the society of entertainment and experiments [Erlebnisgesellschaft] (Schulze 2005).

For larger festivals like those of Cannes, Berlin and Venice, one might be inspired by the work of Julian Stringer in his book on the London Film Festival (Stringer 2003). Stringer claims that the retrospective, which is a significant part of all the big festivals, plays an important role in the building of collective identities among participants.

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<sup>65</sup> Less interesting material but still worth mentioning are the books of Craig (2006), Langer (2000), Gaydos (1998) and Greuling (2004).

<sup>66</sup> Regarding minorities, Matti Bunzl drew an interesting comparison between gays and Jews in Austria which could be useful (Bunzl 2004).

Such revivals also helped to set in motion two specific memory narratives which the London festival has activated in diverse kinds of ways across this twenty-year period. On the one hand, the Thames events very often fetishised industrial and technological innovations, or ‘firsts’. On the other hand, they promoted fairly traditional conceptions of authorships” (Ibid.: 85).

The festival, he goes on, seeks to create the impression that it is possible to witness, so-to-speak, the making of history. This is achieved, for instance, through special events (like silent films with live accompaniment):

With the exhibition of these kinds of movies, the archive is ‘raided’ so as to revive key moments of cinema history via appropriate modes of big-screen audio-visual presentation. Such a method to promote the highbrow rarefied atmosphere of ‘authentic’ Hollywood pleasures works to separate public film festival screenings from the more private pleasures associated with home video spectatorship” (Ibid.: 87).

A German book on “The Church, the Film and the festivals” also provides interesting insights on the way juries are constituted and work, since it deals a lot with the ecumenical juries of the Cannes and Berlin festivals but also with the history of these festivals (Helmke 2005). Of all the books reviewed above, three stand out as particularly relevant to the study of film festivals from a cultural sociological approach.

- Emmanuel Ethis edited a book with eight other sociologists, anthropologists and communication science specialists on the Cannes festival (Ethis 2001). They used field work, quantitative as well as qualitative studies to address, among others, the question of identity-building among participants, basically following the way paved by Morin in his seminal paper mentioned above (Morin 1955).
- Vanessa Schwarz drew on the development of a Cosmopolitan Film culture by studying the relations between the Cannes Festival and the dominant culture in the United States. The second of her four chapters is particularly interesting since it shows how both Hollywood and Cannes managed to take advantage of the development of the Film industry (Schwartz 2007).
- The most interesting book is that of Marijke de Valck on European film festivals. De Valck uses the actor-network theory to compare the festivals in Berlin, Cannes, Venice, and Rotterdam. Her book tackles issues such as the oppositions between space and place, mobility and ubiquity, mapping and tracking, or the cultural memory of

space (Valck 2008: 138) and the politics of participation (Ibid.: 174). Valck has also together with Skadi Loist from Germany established the 'Film Festival Research Network' which, in turn, is linked to the European Network for Cinema and Media Studies. Both these networks are relevant for the systematic follow-up of European film and European film festivals.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

It is astonishing to see that just a few scholars from the field of cultural sociology got apparently interested in film festivals. From Marijke de Valck's book many points could inspire further research. She gives hints to an application of cultural theory to festivals. This is not really developed in her work, even if she addresses the study of audiences for the case of the Rotterdam festival, regarding the new cinephilia (Valck 2008: 181-183) and regarding the archetypes of festival participants (Ibid.: 188-189). One could think of larger empirical research which has been done in this direction, on the theatre festival of Avignon in particular (France). Two recent books might be useful in that respect, the first is written by Ethis, Fabiani and Malinas (2008) as a result of a 15 years field work analysis in Avignon and the second one, focused on audiences and debates, is authored by Fabiani alone (Fabiani 2008). Of course, the Avignon festival is specific, in the sense that it was conceived by Jean Vilar in 1947 as a Brechtian experience of democratisation with a large emphasis on public debates and educational issues.

Another thread which might be followed along the lines sketched out in the book written by de Valck, and which would also have methodological implications, is the issue of cultural diversity seen as the emergence of a topic overcoming the classic relation between 'authors', 'art' and 'nation' (Ibid.; 205). The rise of film co-productions and the relation between Hollywood and European film festivals (as described by Schwarz) are just visible aspects of this trend (and surely not the most interesting ones). The approach chosen by de Valck enables to study hybrid connections "between human agencies and structures", which can be best analyzed by network and system theory (Ibid.: 29). In that sense, controversies which regularly occur in film festivals, along with competition among festivals, could constitute other objects of enquiry, applying in this case theories developed by Latour (2008).



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