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URBAN FESTIVALS AND LOCAL SOCIAL SPACE

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary spectacles are often criticized for tightly scripting public life, proscribing spaces and their meanings, and instrumentalizing the public realm for political, cultural or economic gain. Participant observation of visitor behaviour at festivals in Glasgow, Scotland, and Gwangju, South Korea, and analysis of the festivals' spatial organisation, reveal how such events can also facilitate social interaction at the local scale. Four kinds of spatial conditions - enclosure, centrality, axial connection and permeability – are shown to shape informal social encounters among attendees, and stimulate performances of local identity and engagement with the meanings of place.

URBAN FESTIVALS AND LOCAL SOCIAL SPACE

This paper examines how the dynamics of social life at the local scale are shaped by the special spatial arrangements created for two different types of urban festival events: street carnivals and art exhibitions. Festivals are often depicted as instrumental spectacles. Place, culture and identity are harnessed to imperatives of local and national economic development through place marketing (Hughes 1999, Miles and Paddison 2005, Ward 2003, Evans 2003). Yet there is also a long tradition of participants engaging with festivals as creative, oppositional, liberating and spontaneous events through which their everyday life experiences can be enhanced; festive conditions can be contested and manipulated to serve local needs and interests (Gardiner 2004, Gotham 2005a, Gotham 2005b, Costa 2001). The majority of the academic literature on contemporary festivals pays little attention to the lived experiences of ordinary festivalgoers; additionally, few studies focus on small scale, localised festivals (Willems-Braun 1994). We argue in this paper that in spite of wider political and economic imperatives, local festivals still have a significant role within ordinary citizens' everyday lives in local settings. Through specific appropriations of public and semi-public spaces, festivals support the redefinition, rediscovery and expansion of local social life and the meanings of place (Harcup 2000). By shaping social experiences in local spaces, festivals continue to create new channels for social engagement, providing opportunities to enrich identity and build social bonds. Our aim here is to explore how urban festivals function as "informal discursive arenas wherein social identities are continually constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed... within, at the same time as they engage, the social and spatial organization of the city" (Willems-Braun 1994:76).

Our paper focuses on the public spaces that festival events occupy, the management of those spaces, and the distinctive spatial behaviours of festival participants and audiences, both planned and unplanned. By examining a wide range of social practices connected to festival events, the paper seeks to highlight the potential festivals can provide for maintaining and developing the everyday Lifeworld (Habermas 1985). Festivals are a part of everyday life that is characterised by intensities of sensory experience and temporary escape from narrowly-rational social relations (Gardiner 2004). These intensities are shaped by distinctive behaviours and social interactions, and also by physical settings (Stevens 2003). Festivals, especially inner-urban festivals in large cities, heighten sensation, emotion and memory by compressing many people and activities into a confined time and space. Willems-Braun (1994:78) argues that festival events can thus enhance communicative action, through "the transformation of urban spaces characterized by

rationalization and efficiency into 'festival spaces' marked by intersubjectivity", and he asks "that attention be directed at the topography of these discursive arenas". Through participant observation, our research examines the tensions between the intended representational and behavioural framings of settings for cultural festivals, and how these spatial potentials are actually deployed or contradicted through the actions of participants and onlookers. The paper focuses on the diversity of actions and meanings through which local space is appropriated and inscribed during festivals. The findings of this study highlight that local social space is not a static reality, but is continually produced and redefined through spatialised performances, encounters and discourse between actors (Stevens 2007, Franck and Stevens 2007). By focusing on the extraordinary social occasions of festivals, these findings illustrate the broad scope of social and cultural possibilities of local space (Gardiner 2004).

The structure of spatial experience in festivals

Management practices in festivals achieve instrumental ends through the production of passivising spectacles (Debord 1994), through efforts to define overarching themes for the festivals, including the thematisation of place, and through physical regulation of local spaces. Jamieson (2004) highlights the segmentation, reshaping and representation of central city spaces within festivals in the interest of cultural tourism:

These liminal zones provide spaces 'appropriate to being in the company of strangers' and offer the opportunity for new, safe, and 'exciting forms of sociability'. Within the company of leisurely visitors and re-articulated spaces, an exhilarating pace produces sociable urban conditions where those accustomed to the rules and pleasures of an exhibitionary public life can meet and play. (Jamieson 2004:69, quoting Lash & Urry 1994:235 and Sennett 2002)

Several recent articles have sought to examine and critique urban festivals in terms of the spatial conflicts, ambiguities, appropriations and negotiations between spectacle and 'authentic' local identities and practices (Gotham 2005a, Harcup 2000, Willems-Braun 1994). Urban festivals involve physical modifications of local space which promote some social arrangements and identities and inhibit others. "Festivals generate regulated and liminal spaces" through temporary appropriations of local settings, when "artists stage their productions in halls, disused churches, reappropriated university spaces, and city center streets" (Jamieson 2004:65,67). Ravenscroft and Gilchrist (2009) suggest that this physical and

temporal bounding facilitates the disciplining of social behaviour in festivals in the interest of existing hegemonies. Willems-Braun (1994) also notes that the apparently liberated, transgressive atmosphere of festivals often serves and reproduces existing hierarchies of class, race, and gender, and tends to privilege the consumptive gaze over active engagement. Yet he emphasises that such events nonetheless establish an informal, intersubjective space where a multiplicity of identities can be expressed and negotiated. Gotham (2005a:241) emphasises that “struggles over meanings and uses of spectacles are inscribed in space”, due to the physical presence of resistant, critical local interests and identities. He foregrounds the importance of embodied experience of the carnival setting, and of sensuous aspects other than the visual. Jamieson (2004:67) highlights the physical limits of this festive atmosphere, the marginal and excluded locations and people which are thereby neglected; she points to the need “to reveal those spontaneous behaviors and performed identities that are exaggerated or overlooked in the festival gaze”. The examination of social behaviour in this paper seeks to focus specifically on such kinds of informal, embodied actions, which have the potential to differentiate and particularise social identity.

What is lacking in the current literature is any specific analytical focus on the spatial settings of festivals. The main contribution of this paper is to examine how festival attendees’ playful, transgressive and resistant experiences are shaped in physical settings at the micro-scale. The physical reality and the meaning of local neighbourhood spaces is transformed for the brief time of a festival, through management by the festivals’ organizers as well as through the myriad formal and informal actions of all those attending. Thwaites (2001) highlights the usefulness of Norberg-Schulz’s (1971, 1980) categorisations of centres, paths, and enclosed domains for analysing the experiential qualities of local neighbourhoods. Morgan (2007) pioneered the analysis of festivalgoers’ experiences in these same terms. Drawing upon extensive ethnographic self-reporting by festivalgoers to the folk festival in Sidmouth, England, Morgan notes visitors’ satisfaction was based on their absorption in the festival atmosphere as a socially integrative, interactive and emotionally engaging experience. This in turn depended on particular spatial conditions: visitors’ ability to move freely through the town along a diversity of paths between venues, so as to create personal itineraries (i.e., permeability); the spatial concentration of the events (i.e., centrality); and the availability of un-programmed public spaces and semi-public ‘third places’ (Oldenburg 1989) adjacent to formal venues and circulation routes, which could be appropriated for informal socialisation. Morgan’s findings confirm that these kinds of spatialised opportunities for socialising, which are outside the official festival programme but shaped within its spatial logic, “are a major part of what attracts

the visitors and generates economic benefits” (Morgan 2007:126). He concludes: “communities of enthusiasts... find centres, paths and domains of experiential space within the physical location. The organisers, professional performers and local businesses do not create the experience, they merely facilitate it.” (Morgan 2007:127). Jamieson (2004) also finds that in Edinburgh, a festive atmosphere is produced within a central, bounded area of the city, and in particular along the pedestrianised axis of the city’s ‘Royal Mile’ and the otherwise-neglected alleyways adjacent to it, and that “wandering inquisitive bodies play and discover the city according to the rules that define Edinburgh’s temporary spaces” (Jamieson 2004:69). Stevens’s (2006) broader study of informal, playful activity in public spaces also confirms that three fundamental elements of public space identified by Lynch (1960) and Norberg-Schulz (1985) - nodes, paths and boundaries – are engaged actively and creatively by users as they perceive and playfully act out the potential behavioural affordances of urban public space.

Methodology

The fieldwork for this research had two stages: The first was discreet participant observation of the complex varieties of social behaviours occurring within public spaces during local festivals and the sensory and spatial perceptions available in that context. The second was to analyse the role of the physical public realm in these behaviours. The analysis sought to describe the fundamental spatial structure of the events, and of public involvement in the events. It explored at the micro-scale the postures and movements of attendees, both choreographed and spontaneous, and the external influences and controls on what attendees could perceive and how they could act. It also examined the locations and forms of interactions among individuals. Together these aspects illustrate the role that organised festival events can play in informal socialisation and in contributing to the meaning of neighbourhood spaces.

The existing literature mostly focuses on famous festivals in popular international tourist destinations such as Barcelona (Schuster 1995), Sydney (Markwell & Waitt 2009) and New Orleans (Gotham 2005a, 2005b). Such festivals’ spatial arrangements, meanings and activities are greatly influenced by the large numbers of tourists that they serve. Following the lead of Jamieson’s (2004) study of transgressive, everyday, local practices at the margins of Edinburgh’s Fringe Festival, this paper focuses instead on the activities and interests of local citizens in connection with large-scale public festival events, and on local spaces and local meanings which are of relatively little interest to outsiders.

Our research focused on two relatively new festivals, both initiated in 1996, where the vast majority of attendees are local residents: the West End Festival in Glasgow, Scotland and the Biennale Festival of Gwangju, South Korea. Glasgow's festival is an annual two-week programme of independent performing arts events spread across numerous local cafes, pubs and live venues, churches, schools, libraries and the adjacent University of Glasgow campus. The festival begins with a carnival street parade, which runs along Byres Road, the area's main commercial street, linking two major green spaces, the Botanic Gardens and Kelvingrove Park. The street and several adjoining minor laneways are closed to vehicles for the entire day of the parade. Gwangju's Biennale is a curated contemporary art exhibition which now occupies a purpose-built facility, fenced off within a large suburban public park. The Biennale begins with a free public concert in the city centre. Gwangju is a provincial capital known throughout South Korea for its active political opposition to the nation's former military dictatorship, which led to the massacre of many democracy protesters there on 18 May 1980. The Biennale was initiated by the local government, who wanted to alter the city's image as a place of conflict, and was supported financially by the national government, as an act of contrition toward local citizens. The first Biennale ignored the 1980 massacre, and was critiqued through an 'Anti-Biennale' held by local, populist artists at the protesters' mass gravesite outside the city (Shin 2004). The relationship between the two events changed over subsequent Biennales; in 2006 an 'Open Biennale', or 'Third-Sector Citizens' Program' exhibited local citizens' own biographical artworks at the main site, and encouraged visitors' close engagement with making and experiencing art.

These two cases are very different types of festival events, with very particular geographical, cultural, political and financial contexts. However, the wider aims and constraints for the organisers of the two festivals are not the main point of contrast for the analysis undertaken in this paper. Rather, we focus on the empirical realities of how attendees act within the spaces specially arranged for these festivals. The examination of only these two cases cannot hope to illustrate the full scope of people's spatial experiences during urban festivals. Nevertheless, the particularities of these examples allow us to sketch out a range of ways in which the spatial arrangements of local neighbourhoods during urban festivals give shape to informal socialisation and the production of meanings, and to explore different nuances. It is expected that further study of the spatiality of other local cases can further refine this area of enquiry. The two cases in question provide an opportunity to frame and to examine two important fundamental contrasts: a performative distinction between informal, participatory festival events and formal spectacular displays, and a geographical distinction between the uses of central and peripheral urban spaces.

Fieldwork examined the main festival sites in both cities, including the three-mile length of the Glasgow parade route, as well as adjoining streets and open spaces. Observations were undertaken before, during and after the main festival events, so that local spaces could also be studied in their everyday use. As will become apparent in the analysis, broadening the focus beyond the time and space of the spectacle reveals many kinds of marginal yet important activities which are shaped around the organised events. Two observers worked independently and simultaneously at both events to optimise breadth and corroboration of coverage of a complex, fast-moving range of activities. Observations were focused around the following key concerns:

FESTIVE SETTINGS (spatial focus)

- reorganisation of public and private space for the festival, through stages, barriers, new connections, and signposting
- how planned festival events bring attention to particular spaces, through decoration or specific activities
- intensive uses of spaces that are usually unoccupied (eg parking lots)
- unusual ways members of the public occupy and claim spaces

FESTIVE ACTIONS (behavioural focus)

- interactions between audiences and performers (eg waving, dancing) – especially relationships between seeing and being seen
- unusual behaviours stimulated by the planned events (eg climbing, dancing, unplanned performances)
- activities occurring ‘backstage’ (Goffman 1959)
- involvement of local businesses, institutions and social groups in the festival events

Field notes, photography and site analyses from live observations of behaviour in public settings were supplemented by archival research of media reports and festival programs from previous years. Through close observation of sensory perceptions, bodily behaviour and social interactions in neighbourhood spaces during the festival events, our fieldwork sought to shed light on how local people’s social existence is structured at the micro-scale around the special spatial arrangements laid down for festivals. The subsequent analysis of the behavioural observations focused on the spatial (i.e. topological), material and representational features of the physical settings where these events occurred. We look in turn at how observations of individual actions

illustrate the role and importance of each of the four distinctive topological elements of neighbourhood structure identified in our literature review: the enclosure of neighbourhood space by boundaries; key central nodes; the axial continuity of paths; and pedestrian permeability within the local area (Norberg-Schulz 1980, Jacobs 1961, Lynch 1960). The final part of our analysis reflects briefly on the methodology of behavioural observation as a means to analysing urban space. From the perspective of participant-observers, we examine the distinctive sensations and bodily actions associated with these festivals, in order to understand at a material level how local urban space is actually perceived and used by its occupants.

Findings and Analysis

The intensity and diversity of interactions among members of the public during both Glasgow's West End Festival and the Gwangju Biennale highlights that physically gathering people together remains important to the constitution of the social realm. With the Gwangju Biennale, the festival events are spatially more segregated, and opportunities for social interaction are more carefully regulated; the events focus on communication through the imagery of artworks and the mass media, which are both distanced from the everyday life of local citizens. The analysis that follows highlights how the site of Glasgow's West End carnival and parade shapes and encourages social encounters through the four key spatial characteristics *enclosure*, *centrality*, *axiality* and *permeability*. Gwangju's Biennale provides a counterpoint which highlights how the spatial arrangement of festival events can also be used to restrict informal gatherings. Nevertheless, what the Biennale shows is how opportunities for citizen interaction, self-expression and self-realisation can often evolve unexpectedly, dialectically and creatively out of such spatial and behavioural constraints.

Enclosure

To create a defined festival zone which can facilitate the intensification of urban social life, the Glasgow city government temporarily closes streets to traffic, by modifying traffic rules and utilising 'soft' infrastructure such as signs, policing and moveable barriers. This reduces traffic noise and expands the amount of space where people can safely spend time outdoors. The increased volume of pedestrians, and their slower, more relaxed walking, increases face-to-face encounters and heightens opportunities for informal social interaction (fig. 1). This protected space apart provides local people with opportunities to use street spaces differently, for sitting, playing football, drinking and talking. People's comfort is illustrated by their sitting on the kerb and directly on the street surface. The enclosure of the street

space itself, with buildings fronting up to the street edge, ensures a high social density.

For the opening concert of Gwangju's Biennale, which takes place on a major street intersection in the downtown, police form a cordon around the large public seating area. Before the concert most of the public remains outside this human wall, although it eventually becomes apparent that the police are not actually preventing audience members from moving through their ranks into the seating area. The police are in fact spread out as a tactical measure to optimise their surveillance of potential trouble-makers, and to enable them to move quickly to deal with any disturbance. Even after the police line disperses, much of the audience are reluctant to move into the seating area, as if it were reserved for invited guests. The tight enclosure of the rows of chairs also compels a higher level of engagement: sitting means people will have to commit to staying for the whole concert. As the concert begins, many people around the perimeter raise placards to protest against South Korea's recent attempts to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the United States. A line of police remains at the back of the seating area, forcing the protesters to remain behind the audience, out of their line of sight, and thus not interrupting the spectacle. Rather than facing toward the people who watch from outside the police cordon, the protesters hold their signs facing toward the stage (fig. 2). The placards are mounted on long poles to enhance visibility over the crowds. The prime visibility of these signs is thus for the television audience: whenever the television cameras pan across the live crowd, to show the nation how delighted the local audience is, they will also see the protest placards. The tightly enclosed visual field of the television spectacle is thus put in the service of protest.

The main, fenced-off Gwangju Biennale venue, where the exhibitions are held, highlights the desire to physically and psychologically separate the Biennale from the negative historical, political events in other parts of the city which were in fact the Biennale's *raison d'être*. People must pay for admission to the Biennale site, and are subjected to numerous means of control - ticket checks, welcome desks, bag searches, guards, tour guides - which all regulate their experience and reduce the scope for informal social interaction. The spatial controls of the 2006 Biennale were ultimately turned to the advantage of the Lifeworld: The bottleneck at the venue's entry point slows the visitors down, which provides an opportunity for union protests against the proposed Free Trade Agreement (fig. 3). In both Gwangju sites, the small gaps in the physical enclosures, intended to regulate the movement and focus the view of visitors, actually provided concentrated sites of opportunity for other, transgressive messages which seek the same audience.

Centrality

Glasgow's formal festival gathers the local community together in the public settings of Byres Road and the two major parks at each end of the parade route. Running a parade along a major street in Glasgow's West End draws large numbers of local residents out onto the streets. In addition to watching the parade, the people drawn to the festival meet and socialize in informal and exploratory ways that are outside instrumental demands and external controls. The large planned event thus also stimulates many small unplanned social interactions. Several performance stages are spaced out at intersections along the main axis of Byres Road, providing particular points of crowd concentration. The organised events of the festival go hand-in-hand with physical planning to develop the public realm as a socio-cultural medium for interaction.

The free opening public concert in Gwangju draws people together into the city centre. But the temporary event does relatively little to develop the social significance of Gwangju's city centre. On the contrary, the concert stage precisely blocks the audience's view of the Jolla Nam Do provincial hall and the adjacent May 18 Democracy Rotary. The hall was the headquarters for citizen occupation of the city during the uprising, and the street intersection was where the massacre of democracy protesters occurred in 1980. Rather than communicating the specific history of the place, the spectacle of the Biennale concert physically and representationally obscures Gwangju's political difficulties, presenting a carefully edited view of the downtown cityscape. The curators of the locally-focused 'Open Biennale' had intended to hold it in the Jolla Nam Do building, because this site was downtown and would allow easy and free access for a larger cross-section of citizens, but were not permitted to do so.

Unlike in Glasgow, there are no other festival events near the site of Gwangju's concert, and few spaces for informal interaction in the surrounding streets. The Biennale exhibition itself is located far from the centre of Gwangju in a purpose-built hall and its surrounding park. The Biennale and its audience have little opportunity to engage with local spaces, local life, or the history of the city. The event is distanced from the local population and from local arts culture. There are no connections - spatial, organisational or thematic - made to Gwangju's Art Street, a tourist site near downtown which emphasizes handcraft production. The main exhibition does not facilitate interactions among members of the public, but only passive reception of art.

Axiality

The West End Festival parade along the neighbourhood's main thoroughfare, Byres Road, is a

carefully programmed spectacle, regulated in its timing, sequence, speed and route. This axial flow maximises the exposure of the parade participants (predominantly local residents) to people in the crowd alongside. Participants in the parade often step out of line to interact with friends in the crowd. Stationary bystanders also engage those parading. Many onlookers also promenade up and down the parade route, before and after the main parade, including families with infants, and children on skateboards. This public circulation enhances interactions, as people encounter those walking in the opposite direction. Such 'secondary activities' rely upon the linear structure established for the organised event (Jacobs 1961, Gehl 1987). Numerous people walk along the route within the crowd to promote political causes and solicit membership for community organizations. Other local organisations and campaigns set up fixed displays alongside the route. As the weather becomes warm on the afternoon of the parade, the owner of a shop on Byres Road stands in his doorway topless, with only a traditional *dhoti* cloth wound below the waist. He places speakers outside his door to play loud traditional Indian music, which clashes with the music from the parade itself. His presentation highlights that stationary members of the public are also sometimes performing to the audience which is moving along the street. The axis of Glasgow's parade creates a long, very public frontage where people can see, hear and encounter others. Performances both in and 'toward' the parade depend on its slow, structured flow.

Although the Gwangju Biennale does not involve a parade, structured axial movements of visitors within the main Biennale site are also made use of to promote social encounters and presentations of local identity. The 'Open Biennale' element of the exhibition centred on autobiographical art installations by ordinary local citizens, facilitated by a neighbourhood organization (fig. 4). The autobiographical installations that local citizens created for the Open Biennale are strategically positioned outdoors along a pathway that links the main exhibition halls to the amphitheatre where the official opening ceremony is held. Invited dignitaries, professional artists and members of the visiting public making their way to the opening ceremony must therefore walk over, under or through the various displays, which often interrupt the pathway. Visitors are compelled to move through this non-professional expression of everyday life stories by the local population; this exhibit is literally 'in your face' (fig. 5).

The permeability of festivity through space and through time

The social atmosphere of the West End Festival extends beyond the immediate time and space of the parade. In times and spaces immediately adjacent to the parade, the festive spirit of the Lifeworld has more freedom and flexibility. The 2006 Mardi Gras parade extends beyond the

end of its traditional route, into Kelvingrove Park, where for the first time it joins the Mela, a separate local festival celebrating the music and dance of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Mela also includes many stalls selling ethnic food, crafts, clothing, fabric and groceries. The West End Festival parade route is extended so that it leads the many people who follow the marchers into the Mela site. The bands participating in the parade walk straight up on the Mela stage to join together with Asian performers.

The atmosphere of the festival parade also spills over into spaces surrounding Byres Road, both public and private, including other streets, laneways, front yards, parking lots, businesses and the entry of the local subway station. Several surrounding streets are also closed to traffic, temporarily establishing a large zone for social engagement. Two large music stages are installed on side streets, set back from Byres Road and significantly extending the pedestrian space beyond that tight parade corridor. People hold informal gatherings on surrounding car parks, as well as in semi-private outdoor spaces such as the front steps of their homes. These spaces do not provide a good view of the spectacle, but are in the midst of the crowd that has been drawn to watch it.

The many other events during the two weeks of Glasgow's festival draw patrons to various formal venues dotted throughout the West End, including local churches, theatres, museums, libraries, the University of Glasgow, and Kelvingrove Park. Previous West End Festivals had included a closing concert in the neighbourhood's Botanic Gardens. Ashton Lane, a narrow alleyway running parallel to Byres Road, which is lined with pubs, cafés and music venues, becomes crowded with festivalgoers and street musicians. Many attendees at the Byres Road parade also find their way into Bowmont Gardens, an adjoining cul-de-sac of small lanes containing restaurants, second-hand stores and artists' workshops. The festival thus permeates the neighbourhood, encouraging more intensive and more varied uses of places that already carry memories and meanings for local residents, and opening up community spaces so that new meanings can be brought to them.

The special social atmosphere that the festival creates within local public spaces also extends in time, both before and after the official events. In these marginal times, people also have special freedom to use local space differently. Before the parade begins, in the 'backstage' area of Glasgow's Botanic Gardens, performers and members of the public circulate around and engage with each other through conversation and photography. Many people who watch the parade join it, falling into line behind the last marchers. They can interact and express

themselves freely, because they are not constrained by the regulated tempo of the official parade. After the parade has passed, a special atmosphere persists in pedestrianised Byres Road, which is also used for many hours both before and after the parade for informal promenading, skateboarding, and playing football. More generally, the formal parade, though limited to a couple of hours duration, encourages people to devote a whole day to spending time together in public places.

In Gwangju, the enclosed, ticketed, managed nature of the events limits the festival's extension across urban space. However, in terms of timing, the official Biennale events overlap in interesting ways with the everyday life of the local community. At the opening concert in downtown Gwangju, temporal breaks in the festivities provide opportunities for local citizen action: during the short pauses between acts in the formal programme, the national television audience watches advertisements and listens to the presenters, while the passive seated local audience becomes distracted by local protesters. During one such break, a lone protestor climbs onto a wall, shouts out a message, and throws political flyers into the audience. Many more flyers are simultaneously released from the top of a tall building nearby. On the evening of the official opening, the main Biennale site is opened to the general public. Sponsors provide free drinks and snacks and a DJ plays on a lit outdoor dancefloor. Although the public are prevented from entering the indoor 'VIP' event, the busy atmosphere of the outdoor plaza and the warm weather draw the invited guests out to larger public party. The curator of the 2006 'Open Biennale' had wanted to do much more to combat the instrumental segmentation of the city space, by putting on auxiliary events which would extend both the physical and temporal frame of the festival, allowing it to permeate the Lifeworld and engage a wider range of citizens:

It might even be that Koreans from around the country and foreigners, breaking with their habit of visiting the Biennale for the day, would spend a night in Gwangju. Since a 'Night Biennale,' a 'Food Biennale', and a night market would be offsite, visitors wouldn't just spend their time in and around the Biennale grounds, but would perhaps recenter their visit around the city center. If 'The Third Sector Citizen Program' [a.k.a. the 'Open Biennale'] succeeds, contemporary art, long accused of being obscure, will become a friend of the public, and a circulation that brings together the public again to the exhibition theme and the exhibition space. (Kim 2006)

In this statement, the art festival is seen as a tool for enhancing social engagement and the discovery of place, making strong connections to local identity and everyday life. The Glasgow

and Gwangju festivals both illustrate tensions between efforts to control place and image, and local citizens' propensity to continuously create, circulate and debate images and ideas about places and identity.

Spatial performances of identity

This final section of our analysis examines the distinctive ways that space, behaviour and meanings are configured and developed in the embodied performances and the perceptions of people attending festivals. Many of the official performances produced for these festivals limit audience engagement to the relatively distant reception of views and sounds. As Lefebvre (1991) notes, visual symbols and spoken language tend to be dominated and regulated by social institutions. In official presentations such as these festivals, electronic media reduce festival experience to passive, disembodied reception. But identity is also constituted and transmitted by being 'lived' up close through the body and through all the senses, and this remains true within the context of these contrived spectacles. For the many local children who participate in the West End carnival parade, this event provides an opportunity to develop awareness of identity, and also to develop skills and confidence in bodily performance as a means through which they can communicate identity and meanings to others. Members of the public use their bodies to utilise, challenge and transform the spectacular conditions they encounter in the special public spaces created for the festivals. In the case of the protester in Gwangju who climbs onto a wall, recognition of potential vantage points, bodily strength and skill, and the expenditure of bodily energy are all necessary ingredients of getting his point across to the audience. People in Glasgow seeking good vantage points to watch the parade stand on kerbs, benches, fences and the front steps of their homes, and climb onto telephone booths, construction scaffolds, vehicles, and window ledges of upper storeys. Though primarily seeking to see, they are also being seen because they put themselves on display. One resident of Glasgow's West End purchases a stuffed bear toy from a stall on the parade route: ostensibly an alienated act of consumption. He props the bear on a window ledge overlooking the parade, from where he makes the bear wave to festivalgoers (fig 6). He uses the bear as a commentary on the licentiousness of the festival time, by making the bear drink beer and point at police passing through the crowd, while calling playful abuse. The bear provides a disguise which makes the owner's carnivalesque, transgressive commentary permissible (Turner 1982).

Bringing the Glasgow West End Festival's 'Mardi Gras' and the Asian Mela together in one space engages a wide range of identity, through the production of new and distinctive trans-cultural performances on stage, and also by broadening the range of role-relations and

interactions among different members of the community. Traditionally-dressed Asian spectators dance and clap along to carnival music, which fuses a heritage of African, French and Caribbean influences, and which is performed by predominantly Spanish band members, while white British dancers in elaborate Afro- Caribbean carnival dress mix with the crowd. In Gwangju, the short-term closure of a major downtown street for a free public concert offers little scope for spontaneous social action. Lanes of vehicular traffic are replaced by an equally rigid management of space: rows of chairs facing a brightly-lit stage, and lined along each side by police. Sitting encourages bodily passivity. Interactions among citizens are minimised.

Better spatial opportunities for local citizens to act out and develop their own identities, and to communicate with others, are available at the main Biennale site, through 'The Open Biennale'. This element of the Biennale was effectively a protest against the institutional control of art, by projecting the realities of local everyday life into a space reserved for art, and presenting alternative forms of art which could enhance communicative interaction among attendees. As visitors approach the Biennale's main exhibition hall, staff posted near the entry invite visitors to write messages or draw on old compact discs, which are then hung in a large outdoor mobile for other visitors to see. Climbable sculptures in the exhibition's forecourt bring children into close contact with others. Elsewhere in the Biennale grounds, visitors are invited to make music on unusual, decorated percussion instruments. Nearby, children can paint their own personal artworks to take home with them. Thus visitors became involved in the production of music and art. These activities use art to expand ordinary people's social capacities. Some of the autobiographical installations aligned along the path to the amphitheatre invite visitors to play children's games such as hopscotch and marbles, providing a bodily reawakening of traditions from everyday life (Connerton 1987). These installations encourage visitors to watch, listen to, and interact with other visitors, and not just to passively observe artworks. These installations configure the visitor's own body as a form of cultural presentation. Some works provide opportunities for visitors to add their own personal messages to the stories told through the artworks. All these elements constitute resistance to the institutional control of art and the passivisation of audiences; visitors are brought into close, active contact with the artworks, and also with each other.

Conclusion: The social dynamics of festival spaces

Festival events in Glasgow and Gwangju highlight that place is not static. Neighbourhood space is constantly being produced and reproduced, in terms of its concrete material, its

meanings, its management and rules, and its social uses – both official and official. This fluidity makes regimentation difficult. The choice of site for the 2006 Gwangju Biennale venue avoids the city's historical geography of conflict, and the official street concert tries to mask it. Yet crowds that are enclosed and concentrated in space are still exposed to unexpected performances by protesters, who take advantage of bottlenecks at the exhibition entry and who present their message to a wider mass media assembled at the concert. Enclosure and centralisation are of fundamental importance in the spatial definition of both the festivals studied here, even in the ways they are resisted.

Our analysis also considered two other spatial parameters of festival events which were significant to social interaction: axuality and permeability. These characteristics do not imply tight control of space and action. They are more open-ended and they thus frame good prospects for introducing new uses into local space. Both festivals show that festival events tend to persist across time and spill over into adjoining spaces. In Glasgow this included extension into the Mela, to streets adjoining the parade route, and during the preparations in the Botanic Gardens beforehand. In Gwangju, local residents mixed with artists at the after-hours party, and protesters interjected during pauses in the televised concert. The axes on which the Biennale exhibition was organised were made locally meaningful by protesters at the entry gate, and by amateur artists' unexpected images and activities which interrupt the pathway between the exhibition hall and the amphitheatre used for the opening ceremony. Our analysis of axial paths and movement in both festivals emphasises that the flows of people during festivals are not restricted to only choreographed marching and docile queues of visitors on predetermined itineraries. Communication, interaction and movement is constantly occurring two ways at festivals, back and forth across the interface between those on the move and those who are stationary. Spectacles are perhaps not as concentrated or as seamlessly choreographed as Debord (1994) suggested.

These preliminary findings reinforce and extend previous research from Morgan (2007) and Jamieson (2004). They confirm that boundary enclosure, nodes, axial paths, and pedestrian permeability are useful characteristics for understanding the spatiality of organised festivals. More importantly, they illustrate how the same framework gives insight into unplanned and unexpected local activities. Morgan's (2007) finding from surveys is that visitors consider informal, peripheral, 'fringe' events, and the flow of festival activity through the host town, to be key to the social importance of festivals. He also highlights the related economic benefits: the oft-discussed 'spin- off' expenditure from festivals, which is often the main aim used to

politically justify public investment in local festivals. The importance of permeability for both festival visitors and managers suggests that festival spaces should not be too tightly regulated. In spite of the obvious benefits of enclosure and centralisation, there are good reasons to loosen up the physical and managerial frame within which festivals occur.

The second part of our analysis focused briefly on how bodies made use of spaces during festivals. Not all attendees at festivals and other urban spectacles are passive; people also act out the possibilities inherent in the festival spaces. In Glasgow's West End, during the day-long closure of Byres Road, people bring new uses to the street including dining, meditating, promenading, sitting and talking, and playing football. The crowds also transform the normally genteel Botanic Gardens and Kelvingrove Park into dense, active social spaces. Attendees dancing to the bands assembled on the stage at Glasgow's Mela are engaged in both a form of identity presentation and a form of close social encounter with strangers. Gwangju's Open Biennale provides settings whose meaningful content is constantly being produced, commented upon and modified by visitors. Many of the artworks encourage forms of action from attendees, and interactions between them, sometimes by providing spatial reminders of well-known settings from everyday life, such as a hopscotch court.

In both cities, performances occurred in spaces which provided particularly good opportunities for seeing and being seen. But these opportunities were not always easy and obvious. Seeing and being seen often involved quite strenuous bodily efforts to position oneself within space, such as climbing on street furniture, or pushing through lines of police. Policymakers who design or select sites for festivals might thus give consideration to the importance of ensuring good two-way visibility between performers and audiences. The legibility of local place during festivals has representational aspects as well as physical ones. The spatial configuration of the Glasgow's West End Festival sought to contribute to attendees' sense of local place, whereas the Gwangju Biennale mostly sought to obscure it. But regardless of whether a given urban festival excludes local meanings, activity patterns, and spaces, what our observations emphasise is that during festivals, meanings and values are added to places through visitors' unprogrammed activities, and not only by decorating or renaming them. Festival can also reawaken old meanings in spaces, whether festival organizers want it or not.

It was often the minor, smaller, more marginal spaces in both cities, such as windows, entryways, and minor pathways, where attendees to the festivals were most easily able to introduce new functions and meanings. This is in part because such spaces were experienced

personally, up close, and actively with the body, whereas sites of major significance, such as the Jolla Nam Do government building in Gwangju, were placed off-limits by event organisers. The direct, bodily involvement of Biennale attendees in the artworks of the 'Open Biennale', and the local content of those works, helps to make these exhibits more meaningful and more memorable to the local attendees than the exhibits contributed by international artists. Skipping or jumping in a place is clearly more affective than passively observing a distant image. Attendee behaviours at festivals foreground the meaning of place as a bodily reality, and thus as a reality which cannot easily be alienated from the individual citizen. The Gwangju Biennale illustrates how the spatial arrangement of festival events can actively mask the spatial meanings and memories of a city, just as barricades, policing, entry gates, admission fees and physical distance can inhibit physical interaction among the populace and between citizens and artists. Event planning might thus consider what forms of embodied engagement they offer to meet local needs; the ways in which festivals and their spaces are active, tactile, and malleable. In this respect, what Gwangju's 'Open Biennale' provided was a critique of the form that the main official Biennale programme took – i.e., the passive reception of art – more than it was a critique of its representational contents.

While the planned spaces and events of these two festivals reflect particular social and political objectives, both festivals also clearly provide an important basis and mechanism for different social groups to come together and to act together on their own terms. Morgan (2007: 155) similarly stresses the 'co-creation' of social space during festival events through active participation: "rather than treating (consumers) as 'human props' in a carefully-staged managed performance", these festivals "provide them with a 'creative space' in which experiences can happen". Our cases corroborate Harcup's (2000:228) findings about a neighbourhood festival in Leeds: "Whatever the conscious intentions of the organizers... the St Valentine's Fair retains traces of carnival in that it suggests that our relationships to place and to each other are not fixed, not for all time, not God- given; that such relationships can be altered". The notion of urban festivals as being wholly liberated, liberating and transformative settings has been extensively critiqued (Goffman 1972, Jamieson 2004, Gotham 2005a). By looking closer, our two case studies suggest that 'creative spaces' within festivals are not rigid, and do not exist independently in a vacuum. Creative, transgressive practices, through which festivalgoers act out meanings on their own terms, often occur in marginal, liminal spaces, in particular around the edges and thresholds of formalised festival sites (Stevens 2007), and also in the more nondescript connective tissue of the neighbourhood between them. The same is true in the temporal context: ordinary citizens' own performances often occur before, after, and in-between

official festival events. Planning and management of festivals might thus broaden its remit, to recognise such ‘festival ruptures’ which are not directly folded back into the strategy of city marketing (Jamieson 2004:68).

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