Power, Hegemony and relationships within the festival planning and construction process

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Abstract

Researching cultural festivals reveals the existence of a multitude of stakeholder relationships, connected and enforced through different cultures. The one commonality is that they are all influenced by power, which in turn impacts on how a festival is constructed, delivered, and consumed. Clegg (1989) and Prus (1999) believe power and its relationships to be one of the major concepts in the social sciences. Church and Coles (2007) are amongst the first writers to point to the influence of power within tourism; production, governance, and consumption. They conclude that tourism and power cannot be separated, and as a result tourism studies should be explicitly engaged with power discourses. This paper will explore power firstly as a result of the political nature of the stakeholders involved in the creation of a local community festival, and secondly through the representations of local community culture from various ethnic groups within the City of Derby. Drawing on observational analysis of the events planning processes, this paper will deconstruct the discourses utilised, deployed and reinvented in the Derby Jubilee Festival. Power is revealed as a pervasive and constructive set of forces that are both enabling and disenfranchising.

Keywords: Cultural festivals, power, hegemony, leadership, local community culture, cultural diversity

Community cultural festivals and power

This paper draws from a much larger doctoral study which focused on the creation, programming and staging of a local community cultural festival. We will present a critical review of the festival by drawing on the literature surrounding theories of power and analyse how power directly or indirectly influenced those involved in the construction of the festival, in particular the festival objectives of *'Embrace all sections of the city's Diverse multi-cultural community'* and *'Celebrate the multiculturalism and diversity of the city'* will be used as a basis for analysis drawing on primary field data from a multi-methods research approach.

Festivals have been viewed as demonstrations of community power (Marston, 1989; Rinaldo, 2002), for example political hegemony could be exercised over less powerful ethnic groups by supplying the vast majority with nationalised celebrations to deflect attention away from these minority groups and their real issues. Jarvis (1994) comments that historically festivals were produced for political purposes or used as a mechanism of social control (Burke, 1978; Ekman, 1991; Jarvis, 1994; Rydell, 1984), for instance it could help to provide a voice platform for those in marginalised or minority groups to speak out on issues and challenge the views of the established order. Within this study there exists a multitude of stakeholder relationships each connected and enforced through different cultures, which in turn can have dramatic effects on how the festival is constructed, delivered, and consumed. Academics such as Clegg (1989) and Prus (1999) believe power and its relationships to be one of the major concepts in the social sciences. Lamont (1989) gives further contextualisation to this study as she identified that there were four prominent fields were power can be a prime cause for investigation; cultural industries as an arena for power struggles; knowledge and aesthetic competence serving as resources in the exercise of power; cultural power exerted indirectly by modes of definition; and finally power by exclusion – either of people or ideas.

Contextualising The Research Setting

The Jubilee Festival , as it became known, took place in 2002 from 22nd June - 1st August. The predominant motivation for the celebration was centred on HM Queen Elizabeth II's golden jubilee. The Derby festival was unique to the United Kingdom, as it tried to encapsulate three major celebrations under the name of 'The Jubilee Festival'. The three major celebrations were concerned with the City celebrating twenty-five years as a city, fifty years of HM Queen Elizabeth II on the throne, and seventy-five years since the Church of England created the new Diocese and the church assumed 'Cathedral Status'. In retrospect there were another six notable celebrations, which were also significant within the city; Twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the Assembly Rooms (1977), The twenty-fifth CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) Beer Festival, Two hundred years since the death of Erasmus Darwin (1731 - 1802) grandfather of Charles Darwin, The twenty-first anniversary of 'Royal Crown Derby' pottery, The tenth anniversaries of both the Queen's Leisure centre (Opened by the HM Queen Elizabeth II), and the Heritage Centre. Although notable these were to play little or no part in the formulation of the Festival as the stakeholders focused on the 'big three' celebrations highlighted previously.

The original concept came from the Dean of the Cathedral who had the idea when he met representatives from twenty music and choral groups, who perform on a regular basis at the Cathedral. The idea was generated by the lack of an original festival in the city; the last example of an official festival had taken place in 1996, and was predominantly concerned with the arts and classical music by Beethoven, Chopin, Gershwin, Haydn, and Mozart. This original intention clearly speaks to a rationale of inclusion and openness. We are dealing with a single festival, although the Jubilee is a composite construction our focus is on the construction of the single entity.

The festival was designed to bring together a range of existing events from within the community and add to them a few headline events that would attract further interest. The existing events and the existing cultural organisers were brought together under the stewardship of the representatives of the Cathedral, the City Council and the University, closely followed by an appointed festival coordinator, thus a team of four were in direct control of festivals construction.
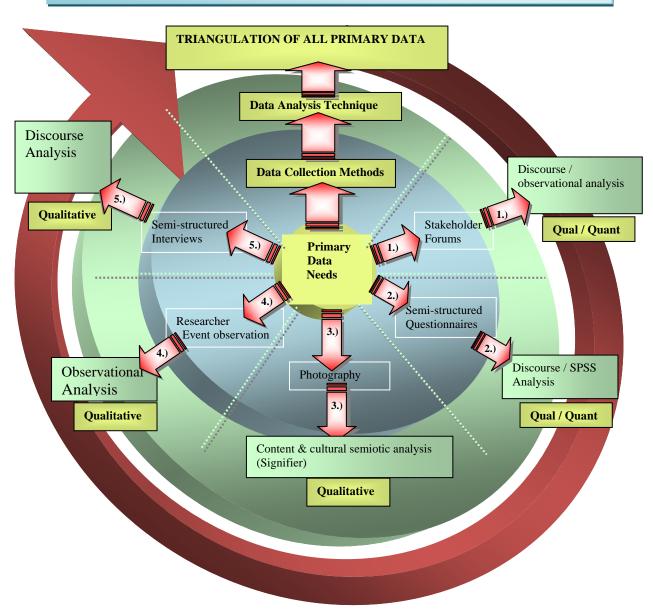
According to the official aims of the organisers, the Jubilee festival was supposed to enliven the local cultural scene and promote the culture of the city both within the city and further a field. The aims of the festival, taken from the post festival report (emphasis added), were to:

- ***Embrace all sections of the city's Diverse multi-cultural community***
- Provide an opportunity for people living and working in the city to celebrate and enjoy a wide range of events,
- Highlight the existing quality of the city's events calendar
- Stimulate new events and activities specific to the jubilee festival
- Focus attention on the main festival period
- Raise the city's profile regionally, and nationally
- ***Celebrate the multiculturalism and diversity of the city***
- Integrate the principles of the city's marketing campaign
- Celebrate partnerships between local organizations

Research Approach

Undertaking the study we recognized the need for utilising multiple research paradigms and data collection methods with an open ontology and constructivist epistemology to cover and critique this multimodal cultural event (Goodson and Phillimore, 2004).

Five point multi-methods, and Analysis Framework

Jepson (2008)

In this aspect of the research we focussed on researching the role of the festival organisers, posing a specific question concerning the compatibility of the organisers' espoused view of culture with the views embedded in definitions and practices of community festivals. We were fortunate to gain access to the decision making process, with attendance at the stakeholder meetings and easy access to the steering group. We were able to follow the creation and the staging of the festival from the very early stages through to the events themselves.

The analysis is based primarily upon these observations and interviews with the stakeholders. Alongside this, questionnaires, secondary sources and photographic analysis techniques were all part of the research and contributed to the data analysis. An open ontology, combined with multiple primary data collection methods, proved to be vital within the context of this research especially as it proved difficult for impartial observations at events and within planning forums to be freed from the bias of their environmental conditions and the literature review (Remenyi et al, 1998). The adoption of different data collection methods and then the use of triangulation within data analysis ensured that the overall level of personal bias within the research context was considerably reduced. Triangulation of observations, interview responses and secondary data contribute to the analysis in this paper and reinforce the sense of control and how this was achieved through and assimulation of 'power' by a small group of organisers. We have limited the account to the questions of community involvement and cultural inclusion within a festival. This draws heavily from the observation of the planning forum meetings and interviews with the three key opinion formers, as well as with other stakeholders involved and crucially not involved with the festival planning processes. Traditional approaches to research have been judged against conventional criteria of reliability and validity. Validity has been seen as the assumption of causality without researcher bias and reliability as the ability of the research measures to capture the data specified by the research, repeatedly, consistently and with the likelihood of generating similar results in similar conditions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Decrop (2004) advances the criteria of trustworthiness, originally developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to replace the older canons of positivist research. There are four dimensions to these criteria:

Credibility - which equates to the issues of internal validity;
Transferability - matched with external validity and more relevant to qualitative research than generalisability;

Dependability - related to reliability. This recognises that knowledges generated are bound by time, context, culture and value (Decrop, 2004). This then focuses attention on the correspondence between the data recorded by the researcher and what actually occurred in the setting;

Confirmability - associated with objectivity. Guba and Lincoln (1994) recognise that research cannot be totally objective but the system of analysis is made objective or neutral to construct a meaningful account of the phenomena and the ways in which those meanings emerged.

They conclude that these all derive from:

Careful use, interpretation, examination and assessment of appropriate literature;

Careful justification of the qualitative research methodologies employed in a study;

Careful structuring of data analysis to ensure full descriptive evaluation, and assessment to data of key significance.

We believe that the iterative analysis and triangulation of multiple sources demonstrates the validity of the research processes undertaken and of the account constructed here.

It can be further concluded that the study of a complex multilayered phenomena such as a community cultural festival requires a complex multilayered methodology to explore how power becomes a feature of both the internal production and construction processes and its external relationship which is developed as a result of its delivery and then through consumption by its visitors.

This methodology becomes necessary because of the ability to follow the festival through inception, construction and consumption. Data was captured throughout and created the basis for a series of analyses which unpacked the issues appearing from the material.

Power

Church and Coles (2007) identify that power does not simply exist, but has to be created and is done so through the relationships between agents or stakeholders in the case of a festival, moreover this can be thought of as the 'social production of power' which also includes the spatial dimensions or 'sites of power' (Westwood 2002:135) . They conclude that in order to progress and develop power discourse in tourism four broad features are vital;

    a. plurality of approaches,
    b. essential contestability of power as a concept,
    c. disagreements over the language used to discuss power, and
    d. the relevance and use of power discourse with regards its analytical value.

This study has been influenced by power firstly as a result of the political nature of the stakeholders involved in the creation of the festival, and secondly because the events themselves should be representations of local community culture from various ethnically diverse groups within the City of Derby. This study is of great interest as any or all of Lamont's fields of investigation could be a feature in the Derby Jubilee Festival. This research centred within a community cultural festival is particularly interesting when one considers emergent power theories such as; equity can only be achieved through power sharing (Ryan, 2002), the redistribution of power/power sharing in stakeholder coalitions is rare (Thomas & Thomas, 2005)

Within this festival research for example we identify the 'power brokers' (Ioannides, 1998; Klem & Martin-Quiros, 1999; Bastakis et al, 2004), i.e. those who hold direct power over the festival and its construction and Judd and Simpson's (2003) 'independent centres of power' within public-private sector urban tourism developments which often bypassed or limited democracy. Swain's (1995) patriarchal structures and male domination within planning processes are also evident. Church and Coles (2007) surmise that tourism has only had a selected involvement with the discourses of power, and that often there is no comment from tourism scholars on the epistemological, ontological, or methodological implications of conceptualisations of power. The theories of Weber, Lukes, Foucault, and Gramsci were used for the discussion of power relations, and Clegg for his theory of power in practice in organisations. Weber's view on power presupposes that there is defined group of people that will obey a kind of command (or all commands). Weber's account of power is rooted in the investigation of the legitimacy of different kinds of authority. He argues that power is linked to authority, where the obedience towards the particular authority comes from two sources: a) any sort of motive to obey and b) belief in the legitimacy of the authority.

The motive behind the obedience determines the character of the relationship between the group exercising authority and the group they have the authority over. However, in everyday situations both morality and interest are ruling these relations, and also belief in legitimacy is added to them. It could be tempting to read power as the ability of one individual or small group, to get their own way, against the opposition of others. However the study of power is by no means that simple, as Lukes (1974) observed in his classic study of the theories of power.

These arguments can be thought of as pertinent in the evolution of the Derby Jubilee Festival as the key players develop power from a number of different sources; the traditional bases of the church and the local authority. In addition they also inscribed a professional bureaucratic system by appointing a manager (festival co-ordinator) and introducing a recognisable accountability structure which held a heavy basis in financial viability. Weber also notes the existence of a bureaucratic hierarchy, where every authority has a 'superior' scrutinizing and controlling authority, and where the inferior bodies and persons also have the right to appeal and make official complaints. The Weberian viewpoint of power stipulates that the power gained by 'winners' (i.e. those in charge or holding power) will be at the direct expense of 'losers', all of these procedures are regulated by technical rules and norms. *Legal authority* presupposes that any arbitrary or need-based *rational* rules can become codified laws, which may claim to be respected by at least the members of the bureaucratic organisation. This type of authority is characterised by continuous, rule-bound official - bureaucratic procedures. In the case of *traditional authority*, the person exercising the authority is appointed on the basis of the traditionally 'inherited' norms. The commands are legitimate because the content of the command is legitimate by tradition. *Charismatic authority* is based on the extraordinary abilities of a person. Charisma is only legitimate as long as it is 'proved', therefore accepted by the followers. It must be noted that authority never exists in the pure forms described above. The most typical form of everyday administration draws on traditional and legal and bureaucratic use of power: as it is "tied to precedents transmitted from previous generations and (is) being bound by abstractly formulated universal principles" (Giddens, 1972:38).

Foucault (1978) concluded that it is knowledge itself that gives disciplinary power which could in the case of the Derby Jubilee festival be restricted by the small number in charge thus giving the group enhanced power over other festival stakeholders.
In the case of the Derby Jubilee Festival the construction space of the festival is within a politically charged setting of the council chambers, a feature which is likely to have significant impact on the power involved in the construction of the festival.
According to Clegg (1989:189) "power in organisations must concern the hierarchical structure of offices and their relation to each other, in the classical Weberian sense." Clegg considers not only legitimate power but also the illegitimate power, where the latter is understood as 'local struggles for autonomy and control' which do not threaten the formal, legitimated structure. Clegg argues for circuits of power rather than the static sources as Weber would suggest, with Clegg's "circuits mobilizing relations of meaning and membership" (1989:219). Power can be seen as 'the rules of the game', which both enable and constrain action. Where rules are invoked, there must be discretion. The freedom of discretion requires disciplining if it is to be a reliable relay.

This has become popularised in the concept of 'hegemony', where power is seen to be exercised through consensus as well as through coercion Gramsci (1976). In effect the power relations are to be analysed by what is thought 'proper' and what is excluded. This has particularly serious repercussions for discussions of cultures, where the power to value and the power to deny can be very profound. Gramsci and Clegg both see the need for power to be analysed in terms of networks, alliances, points of resistance and instability which are also acknowledged by Foucault (1981). As Clegg continues (1989:201) "Power is implicated in authority and constituted by rules: the interpretation of rules must be disciplined, must be regulated, if new powers are not to be produced and existing powers transformed." Nothing will ever be wholly stable; therefore resistance to discipline will not come from 'human nature' but "because of the power/rule constitution as a nexus of meaning and interpretation which, because of indexicality, is always open to be re-fixed." (ibid). This is the war of position which the Gang of Four undertook during the development of the festival.

Clegg (1989:209) reinforces this when he observes: "Rules will never be as static and idealised as in chess or some other game but will instead be far more fragile, ambiguous, unclear, dependent upon interpretation, and subject either to reproduction or transformation depending on the outcome of the struggles to keep them the same or to change them this way or that." Clegg (1989:200) suggests that "Organisational locales will more likely be loci of multivalent powers than monadic sites of total control."

To be or not to be

Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner (1980) argued that the perspective of culture as 'dominant ideology' still survives in present society, which means the benefits of culture are only witnessed and given to the dominant classes within a society, although in this context the benefits of culture should theoretically be available to all local communities. Festivals could also create demonstrative resistance to that social control (Cohen, 1982; Jackson, 1988, 1992; Smith, 1995; Western, 1992), resistance can take many forms but protests are usually its most likely form or demonstrating a resistance to power (Gramsci, 1976).

This exclusive nature of the original festival events was also mirrored by the festival's organisers who held the view as a result of their cultural positions within the locality that the cultural dimension of the festival should be educational and intellectually stimulating. Further evidence of the organiser's exclusive cultural stance is drawn from the desire for 'quality' events expressed by the festival organisers which clearly showed that they were under the impression that high cultural or exclusive cultural events represented high quality. In holding these views of high or exclusive culture the organisers could be thought of as accepting traditional viewpoints on culture which view popular culture as cheapening high culture and as such did could not value popular or inclusive culture as its equal. In taking an exclusive view of culture the organisers also held the view that inclusivity of local community culture would weaken the festival, which culminated in a strong bias toward exclusive cultural events within the festival programme. In failing to identify, understand and embrace definitions of culture as a way of life the festival's organisers greatly restricted the types of events which would become a part of the festival programme and the cultural diversity within it.

This can also be seen as a missed opportunity to soften traditional cultural boundaries

and open cultural products to a wider culturally diverse local audience as well as introduce and integrate new ones into Derby's cultural sphere. It can be seen as an exercise of power by the 'Jubilee Four' as they restricted knowledge about local community culture which gave them disciplinary power (Foucault, 1978) and they were therefore able to manipulate the festival towards their own direction rather than one in favour of the local communities.

The second contributing factor to the hegemonic position of the festival organisers became apparent as a result of their limited research and consultation, which meant invitations to engage the support and involvement of the local community in the festival through consultation meetings were only extended in English language. This action which perhaps could be viewed as an exclusive gesture rather than one of inclusivity as it had the effect that local communities of the city of Derby who should have been the backbone of the festival were not included within or represented during the festival planning process and so had no direct voice in what was hypothetically their festival This gives the realisation then that a community festival was being constructed without the local community whose lack of inclusion and voice laid the foundations for hegemony and a minority to exercise and retain power within the festival planning process. The lack of involvement by the local community also meant that they were not able to claim ownership of the festival, the result of which allowed a dispute between the City Council and Derby Cathedral to claim ownership of what effectively what should have been a community festival. The inability to take ownership of the festival or claim the idea of it was also a reason the City Council Arts Department was not able to fully integrate within the festival planning process. This reveals the competitive nature which can be a result of involvement in cultural production and whilst healthy competition can be considered an asset, in the case of the Jubilee festival it caused departments to become separatist and work in isolation because they were not able to assume ownership of what was a 'community festival' rather than integrate and cooperate to ensure the festival delivery was the best it could be, under the 'lead-time' imposed.

Another result of the civilising process and the third contributing factor to the planning process hegemony was the appointment of a festival coordinator rather than as literature advocated (Greenfeld, 1988; Dale, 1995; Arnold, 2001; Edensor, 2001; Maurin, 2001; Derrett, 2003; Jeong and Santos, 2004; Lade and Jackson, 2004), a festival director or producer. The selection and appointment of a festival coordinator by the three established festival organisers created an unbalanced relationship within the festival planning process where those who appointed the coordinator became the 'employer' and the festival coordinator became the 'employee' which resulted in the festival coordinator having limited power to challenge decisions made by the established hierarchical order of the original festival organisers and not be able to fully assimilate into the group of festival organisers which also caused great confusion over his roles and responsibilities. This meant that the festival's original architects maintained their influence over the festival and became the 'directors' or 'gatekeepers' (Greenfeld, 1998; Derrett, 2003) of its cultural and creative direction rather than it could be argued a coordinator who had considerable more festival expertise.

However this control took the form of an events selection process which was loosely based around the ability of events to be produced within the festival's 'lead-time' and was spontaneous in nature not meticulously planned as suggested within previous

research (Jeong and Santos, 2004). As a result of the festival's short 'lead-time' many events could not be produced which left festival organisers with an overly reliant amount of annual festival events which struggled to adopt the festival's celebratory themes as a result of their own strong independent and established.

The hegemonic relationship which developed within the festival planning process was therefore not demonstrated through exclusion strategies as Jeong and Santos (2004) suggested because although hegemony was exercised over less powerful subcultures and ethnic minority groups in Derby it occurred as a result of not carrying through all the local community festival consultation meetings. Other suggestions that the festival was used as a mechanism of social control (Burke, 1978; Ekman, 1991; Jarvis, 1994; Rydell, 1984) can also be supported within the context of the Derby Jubilee festival but in an accidental context rather than one which was meticulously planned.

The key examples with regard to the planning process were the limited identification of; and subsequent non inclusion of the local community voice during the planning process which then had far reaching effects on festival goals such as '*Embrace all sections of the community*' and '*Celebrate multiculturalism and diversity of the city*' rendering them almost impossible especially if it is considered that only the area of Normanton was identified as culturally diverse, other districts within the city offering equal amounts of cultural diversity, such as Peartree, Mickleover, Littleover, Sinfin and Alvaston did not feature in festival planning process a point which is taken further to conclusion in the paragraphs addressing the exclusions which occurred during the Derby Jubilee festival as a result of the planning process

It can be concluded that the festival planning forums as a result of the planning process adopted by the festival organisers became firstly; a largely undemocratic platform through which organisers were able to express their cultural stance by selecting mainly exclusive annual cultural events which had already been produced and by packaging them loosely under the umbrella of the Jubilee festival making use of already existent product strategies; and secondly as an avenue to justify private sector spending within the festival. The festival organisers therefore missed a valuable opportunity to integrate and promote ethnic understanding across the city mainly because as a group they did not consider the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity within the festival context and also because they could not agree on how they could widen cultural understand and participation in cultural events.These results highlight the lack in diversity both within the events themselves and the audiences they attracted, which demonstrates that local culture was not well represented through events which as well as being clearly visible through photographic evidence was further reinforced through event questionnaires and stakeholder interviews. Ethnic minority groups and diverse cultures within the city from India, Pakistan, the Ukraine, Poland, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Bosnia – Herzegovina, Japan, Persia, or the Peoples Republic of China, all of which exist within the nucleus populations in the city districts of Normanton, Peartree, Mickleover, Littleover, Sinfin, Alvaston, were noticeably absent from the events and audiences which were created as a result of the festival planning process.

The Derby Jubilee festival also demonstrated exclusion of a variety of cultural forms and venues. Within the festival programme for example there were no film, photography, drama, dance, theatre, or comedy based events. The city's public houses

and clubs were also not utilised as festival venues and the parks within the city were only included once within the 'DET Motor show' which was an annual occurrence.

Conclusions

The 'Jubilee Four' were able to achieve hegemony over the stakeholders involved in the festival by firstly restricting their knowledge, but in terms of the organisations who contributed financially, and the local communities themselves. In doing this the four were able to retain discipline and governance [helped in addition by the spatial dimensions of power held by the political venue of the forums], which limited the opportunity for any resistance to power. As a result of limited resistance to the 'Jubilee Four's' power and influence no 'counter-hegemony' was possible, leading to the 'Jubilee Four / three' assuming full control over the direction of the festival.
Marston (1989) and Rinaldo (2002) identified through their festival research that nationalised celebrations were used to achieve political hegemony and although national celebration was a core theme of the Jubilee festival the major event of the Queen's Visit was organised by Pride Park Stadium and not by the festival organisers. The event was inclusive of local community culture from Derby and Derbyshire and so could not be considered as contributing to political hegemony. The hegemonic control which was knowingly or unknowingly demonstrated had far reaching ramifications within the construction and delivery of the Derby Jubilee festival. Firstly the local community for example as a result of their non inclusion were not able to challenge the established order of the planning process on decisions affecting the festival which meant that community opinion was not demonstrated (Marston, 1989; Rinaldo, 2002). Secondly this meant that local cultural identity and what was culturally appropriate for the festival was defined by the dominant social group (Saleh and Ryan, 1993) which in the context of the festival was the 'Jubilee Four'. And thirdly that very little democracy was able to exist within the festival planning process because the four male organisers were consistently in charge of making festival planning and construction decisions which meant stakeholders were unable to hold any influence or have an effect on the decision making processes.

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