

FESTIVAL TO FESTIVAL: NETWORKED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FRINGE FESTIVALS

DAVID JARMAN

The Business School, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, UK

This article aims to demonstrate the importance and value of collaboration between members of a formalized network of Fringe festivals. The research was informed by Castells (the network society, space of flows, and space of places) and Richards (network-centric eventfulness, pulsar and iterative events), as well as publications that critique their work. The article combines theoretical and conceptual frameworks with primary evidence, thus responding to prominent criticisms of the foundation texts. Primary research was focused around an innovative case study, utilizing two-mode social network analysis (SNA), documentary evidence, and interview data. The history and characteristics of the Fringe network in question were found to be influential in the nature and characteristics of its member festivals. A policy of collaboration is in the network's DNA, and was therefore inherited by those festivals established under its supervision (the majority of those in the network). This collaboration has taken the form of shared projects, integrated administrative and management functions, and coordinated touring opportunities between the festivals. The article finds that the network itself is now in a preeminent position in terms of its influence on the member festivals. This has positive implications for the network's overall efficiency and effectiveness. Further research may reveal additional benefits and disadvantages for the member festivals, and their various stakeholders. Replicating the research with other Fringe networks would also be revealing, as each such network has a number of unique characteristics. This is primarily an explorative article of value to critical event studies researchers, it complements existing applications of SNA techniques and approaches to events, and contains additional references to festival communities and places. The article also has practical value for Fringe festival producers in terms of strategic management and inter-Fringe collaborations.

Key words: Fringe festival; Networks; Network society; Eventfulness; Castells

Introduction

The nature of “Fringe” festivals lends itself to considering this type of event from a network-orientated perspective. The Edinburgh Fringe,

recognized as the pioneer of this form of event, is described as “an open access festival that accommodates anyone with a desire to perform and a venue willing to host them” (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019a). This feat involves performers and

Address correspondence to Mr. David Jarman, M.Sc., The Business School, Edinburgh Napier University, Craiglockhart Campus, 219 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1DJ, UK. Tel: +44 (0)131 455 4399; E-mail: d.jarman@napier.ac.uk

producers, working with venue managers, administrators, and technicians, in support of audience members, the media, and arts industry professionals (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b). At its most effective, the decentralized nature of a Fringe accentuates the free association of these contributors, unshackled by the constraints, limitations, and power relations that hierarchical organization can impose (Castells, 2000a, pp. 19–20). It is also apparent that preconceived stakeholder groupings and identities are often of limited relevance, as each individual person will most likely fulfil multiple roles, both during the festival and throughout the year, as recognized in an early strategic analysis of Edinburgh’s festivals (Graham Devlin Associates, 2001). Therefore, network-based research has much to contribute to our understanding of the nature and practice of Fringe festivals, both conceptually, and also analytically through the application of social network analysis [SNA]. And yet, it is apparent that these events are themselves part of networks that extend beyond their own borders, both spatially and temporally (Jarman, 2016). Performers and administrators can have commitments to multiple festivals as they pursue either artistic expression or professional development. Venue managers and festival programmers travel nationally and internationally to present work, promote their organizations, and forge connections with potential partners. And, with particular relevance for this article, those who manage the festivals themselves are increasingly keen to capitalize on the potential advantages of tighter and more formalized networked connections between them (Awde, 2019). Fringe festivals are connecting, communicating, and collaborating. This article presents an exploratory case study into the nature, structure, and value of inter-Fringe networks. Social network analysis is combined with documentary evidence and interview data to demonstrate how Fringe festivals have benefited from closer integration of their administrative processes, calendar dates, and opportunities for mutual support.

The current article is a response to two others, each of which is in turn a development of work by Manuel Castells (Castells, 2000b). Firstly, Anttiroiko (2015) recognized Castells’s preeminent position as a commentator on the “network society” and its effects, yet has questioned the lack of data-driven evidence presented in support of his

arguments. There is “almost complete silence” (Anttiroiko, 2015, p. 7) between Castells and the major voices in SNA, despite the potential for each side to benefit from an exchange of theory and practical analysis. Anttiroiko (2015) positioned late-1990s Castells as “possibly the most prominent figure globally in adopting network terminology in social theory,” but noted that he makes “hardly any empirical or methodological contribution to network analysis” (p. 1). This has opened a space for work that combines Castells’s network society theory with the growing application of SNA (Scott, 2017, p. xiii), against a blossoming of global social media usage, while societies and industries are being reshaped around network principles (Shirky, 2009).

Secondly, Fisker et al. (2019) discussed existing applications of Castells’s work within events studies. They credit Richards (2010, 2015, 2017) as the most prominent exponent of network society logic within the field, though advocate a more nuanced application of Castells to events research. For Richards, a rise in eventfulness, or “hypereventfulness,” has been characterized by a “chaotic cacophony of events,” shaped in turn by the network society (Richards, 2010, p. 3). Consideration of the mutual importance of events and networks has since led to the identification of “iterative” and “pulsar” events, and the roles they can fulfil in the “eventful city” (Richards, 2015). Iterative events are here framed as periods of continuity, facilitating bonding social capital, and maintaining local community structures; pulsar events in contrast are a potential challenge to the established order, create an environment suitable for generating bridging social capital, and serve to link the local with the global in dynamic and decisive ways (Richards, 2015). Richards has drawn from Castells’s formulations of the “space of places,” which reflects traditional life from a place-based perspective, and the “space of flows,” which represents life in the network society, where communications technologies have reordered life around flows of information, capital, and interaction (Fisker et al., 2019, p. 4). Fisker et al. sought to avoid dogmatic simplification in the interpretation of these two phenomena (Fisker et al., 2019), which is also attempted below through the deductive and exploratory examination of a network of Fringe festivals.

For the purposes of this article Fringes are understood as being inherently valuable and important celebrations for their stakeholders, administered by central organizations that benefit from connections to one another. The case study approach below focuses on a Fringe network where these connections are instrumental to the success of the individual festivals. Case studies have been used elsewhere in the analysis of events, tourism, and networks: Gallelli (2016), used SNA to investigate regional festivals around Piedmont, Italy, and Timur and Getz (2008) used similar techniques in their study of sustainable urban tourism. Three forms of data are used in the current article. Firstly, documents and other materials from the member festival websites has provided a “public-facing” introduction to the network. Secondly, an interview with a key informant focused on motivations to establish both the network and the festivals it encapsulates. Finally, SNA has been used to represent the network, using “two-mode” data to visualize two units of analysis: (1) four Fringe festivals; and (2) applications from those wishing to perform at them in 2018 (Borgatti et al., 2013). It is hoped that the current work will facilitate further application of SNA into festival communities, and provide an empirical response to both Anttiroiko (2015) and Fisker et al. (2019).

Castells and the Network Society

Despite the all-encompassing nature of his conceptualization of the network society Castells welcomed an open dialogue with his ideas (Castells, 2000b), asking that readers adopt “the notion of disposable theory” to use what they value and “discard the rest” (Castells, 2000a, p. 6). He refrained from characterizing the modern world as either an information society or a knowledge society, nor one where technology is the dominant factor; he instead emphasized how all three combine to shape society, through dynamic networks that adapt and reconfigure themselves on a global scale (Castells, 2004). The new technological paradigm drives an economy that is informational, global, and networked (Castells, 2000b), contributing to growing overall productivity, while transforming work and employment to the benefit of some more than others (Castells, 2000a). Greater inequalities are evident between those who can “self-program” and adapt,

and those whose work is “generic” and expendable. In the cultural field, as in politics, the media is increasingly influential, driving a greater plurality of experiences and messages that emphasize both a simplified message and growing demands for interactivity and engagement (Castells, 2000a). The state, such as it has traditionally been understood, is having to respond to crises of legitimacy and relevance: supranational bodies such as the European Union pool sovereignty from their members, while regional assemblies and NGOs take on devolved responsibilities at a more local level. To retain support in this environment the nation state transforms itself into a power-sharing, coordinating “network state,” striving to reflect the views and interests of its citizens in the face of great uncertainty at both a personal level and collectively (Castells, 2000a, p. 14).

As if this was not unsettling enough, the network society is reshaping common understandings of both time and space, and herein lie perhaps the greatest implications for festivals and events. Physical space and copresence at destinations are rendered irrelevant in many circumstances through instant global communications, while time is further distorted through always-available media and changes to the typical sequencing of life cycle stages (Castells, 2000a). Where public events have transformative impacts on their host venues and destinations, albeit temporarily (Getz & Page, 2016), they offer social laboratory conditions in which to examine both space and time, described as “the fundamental, material dimensions of human life” (Castells, 2000b, p. 407). Chief among the resulting ideas is the “space of flows” [SoF] hypothesis (Castells, 2000b), which features in Anttiroiko’s (2015) response to Castells, and in turn Fisker et al.’s (2019) response to Richards. Castells presents the SoF as “the material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows . . . exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors” (Castells, 2000b, p. 442). In the network society, the SoF is the sphere of activity in which capital, information, politics, and other dominant aspects of social life operate. It is a global realm inhabited by relatively few, but decisions made here have far-reaching implications. Network society logic enables the SoF to overcome the twin burdens of physical distance and clock time, as

communications technologies and executive airport lounges facilitate a rarified global culture (Castells, 2000b). Three layers make up the SoF: the physical infrastructure of telecommunications and high-speed transport; the nodes and hubs of different networks, from cities to organizations; and the “dominant managerial elites” who direct activity in the SoF, making decisions and forging connections between networks (Castells, 2000b). To operate effectively in the network society is to engage successfully with the SoF, whatever the industry or cause involved; exclusion from the SoF can be accompanied by a lack of agency, and a conscious dislocation from the networked loci of power and influence.

In contradistinction to the space of flows is the “space of places” [SoP], framing everyday life for the “overwhelming majority of people, in advanced and traditional societies alike . . . [who] perceive their space as place-based” (Castells, 2000b, p. 453). In this realm “form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity,” in physical neighborhoods, towns, and cities, and in the mental appreciation of those who live and work in them (Castells, 2000b, p. 453). Castells was aware of the tension between these realms, with their differing levels of resources, world views, and priorities.

Where, then, might a Fringe festival locate itself? The place-based reality of attending a festival is generally undeniable: as the Edinburgh Fringe puts it, “This is an international celebration that simply would not be possible without the support, creativity, and passion of Scotland’s capital and its people” (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b, p. 4). This is a thrill for those residents who feel an affinity with the festival and welcome its arrival. The same festival also pledges to “Develop the Fringe’s international reputation as the place to discover talent” (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b, p. 7), an opportunity to present and experience myriad cultures in one place, to an infinitely diverse audience. Edinburgh’s highest profile festivals attract about half a million overnight visitors each year from outside the country (BOP Consulting & Festivals and Events International, 2015, p. 9), with the Fringe among the biggest attractions. This is Scotland’s capital at its most cosmopolitan and cultivated, attracting a complementary audience. Yet not all of

Edinburgh’s residents connect with the Fringe, or share the same sense of familiarity and ownership of it. Many residents encounter considerable barriers to engaging with the festival, which require institutional and personal investment to overcome (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, 2019b). It is broadly understood that engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders is necessary for a festival to retain local popular support (Bostok, 2014; Getz & Andersson, 2008), and that this can take time, resources, and no small amounts of creativity and ingenuity. Perhaps Fringes are placeless phenomena, able to relocate and replicate on the basis of an open, adaptable, and networked organizational model. But if they are reliant on resident audiences and locally familiar cultural references this would suggest that they are primarily place bound. Proposing two ideal types in this way—the placeless festival and the one that is place-bound—is not to imply that these aspects of Fringe identity are mutually exclusive, and room can generally be found for both the cosmopolitan and the parochial.

Anttiroiko’s (2015) article sees the grand network theory of Castells meet (or rather bypass) the evidence-based social network analysis of a growing field of researchers, active across a range of academic fields and industries. The principle supposition is that Castells is writing from a Marxist-oriented perspective on political economy, and as such concerns himself with institutions, structures, and theoretical class relations; conversely SNA roots itself in empirical relational evidence, which in turn helps detect and illustrate emergent social structures (Anttiroiko, 2015). Regardless of these contrary approaches, complementary themes are present on both sides of the discussion, from communications technologies to industrial stakeholder relations, with attendant opportunities for mutual benefit and deeper understanding. On the one hand, Castells offers theory and discussion at a macro scale, a world view built on network society logic, and a bridge from established Marxist thought to the contemporary world of connections, flows, and decentralized relationships. On the other hand, SNA turns concrete evidence of nodes and ties into graphs and statistics, it views the world from a personal scale, and the unit of analysis is often the individual. The strengths of one match the limitations inherent in the other. Therefore, to better

understand life in a Fringe network it is necessary to place it within a broad theoretical framework, while utilizing SNA tools to illustrate and calculate the evidence available.

Network-Centric Eventfulness

The relationship between time, space, and events was given a policy dimension by Richards and Palmer (2010) in their conceptualization of the “eventful city,” a call for urban destinations to recognize the inherent potential in events and festivals to help achieve positive outcomes for different stakeholders. In 2017 Richards introduced three emerging models of this concept, featuring “event-centric,” “sector-centric,” and ultimately “network-centric” strategies (Richards, 2017). These emergent ideal type models use events in different ways, have varying objectives, and should be evaluated in different ways. For example, network-centric approaches should be judged on the creation of “network value” . . . a measure of the outputs generated by the network as a whole over and above that which the city could achieve on its own” (Richards, 2017, p. 541). A network of Fringe festivals has the potential to achieve benefits beyond what is possible for an isolated festival, or rather there are advantages to the cities involved as a result of hosting these networked festivals. This approach has SoF connotations where cities, organizations, and key individuals are positioned as nodes in the Fringe sector network, either because they host such a festival or contribute artistic content and other key resources (Castells, 2000b). The current research is focused on the experiences of (1) individual festivals and (2) their formalized networks, though it is recognized that there are tensions inherent in trying to dissociate one from the other. After all, such networks might only reveal their presence and value through the actions of their member festivals.

The elemental urge to categorize events and festivals according to size and content has long had a place in the academic literature (Bowdin et al., 2011), though the formulation of “iterative” and “pulsar” event forms marks a decisive break from previous approaches. Thus, in the network society events exist either to maintain and consolidate local connections and communities, or as transformative spectacles able to restructure social bonds on a grand scale (Richards, 2015). Iterative events

have a cyclical nature and emphasize tradition, bonding social capital, local content, and have an innate conservatism. Their SNA characteristics are predominantly defined by clusters, with ties in place redolent of small world networks (Jarman et al., 2014). Pulsar events are disruptive and they are relatively rare, they operate on a global scale to both generate bridging social capital and advance political agendas. Such events exemplify the role of “switchers,” as nodal points “connecting or disconnecting networks on the basis of certain programs or strategies” (Castells, 2004, p. 224). To be a switcher, is to hold network power. Other network members may have the role of “programmers” with a more localized agenda, whose engagement with even the biggest and most transformative of events has a more iterative quality. An event’s size and content are both still relevant to its management and meaning, but in the network society they only go so far in demonstrating its value to different stakeholders. Of central importance to the propositions being presented here, and indeed to the narrative of this article, is the extent to which festivals can tie the local to the global, to link the space of places with the space of flows, where events have “new roles in connecting people, cultures and ideas” (Richards, 2015, p. 554).

Fisker et al. (2019) identified Richards as developing the only “systematic and sustained appropriation” of Castells’s work in the field of festivals and events, setting up the ideal types of iterative and pulsar events, and thus opening an “avenue for empirical research” that can help to better understand such events and connect them with diverse elements of the network society (pp. 5–6). From this foundation Fisker et al. ventured to blur the boundaries between event categories, emphasizing how events can hold multiple characteristics. They may exhibit both pulsar and iterative qualities in varying amounts, with the potential to soften the boundary between the SoF and the SoP. For example, a festival could embody the international SoF culture in physically tangible place-based hubs and nodes. Simultaneously, the everyday SoP residents would have a means of engaging with global flows of creativity and culture, media attention, and finance (Fisker et al., 2019). Such a festival might both draw from its iterative local heritage to gain community support in the SoP, while also

delivering a thematic strand that appeals to visiting audiences and connects the locality to a broader industry in the SoF. Size and scale are not intrinsically determining factors in the success of such projects, rather the ambitions, actions, and achievements of their managements and host communities. Fisker et al. (2019) drew on bridge building, place making, and the integration of cultural and social fluidity and fixity in order to build their conceptual framework. They also highlighted the potential for both qualitative and quantitative data to play a part in future research, part of the “double move of dis- and reentanglement” as festivals are tested against Castells’s and Richards’s dichotomies, before being built back up to reveal a more nuanced whole (Fisker et al., 2019, p. 20).

The consistent thread emerging from the work of these authors is that through complexity greater understanding can be revealed. The various dimensions of SoF and SoP, pulsar and iterative, the network society, and network-centric eventfulness offer means by which festivals and events might be interpreted and perhaps better understood. The current research aims to apply this framework by focusing on a set of geographically dispersed Fringe festivals that are nonetheless firmly connected in a formalized network. Castells granted permission to adopt a reflexive approach to theory, taking that which appears useful and discarding the rest. Fisker et al. were confident that a range of data forms have a place in this discussion. Therefore, the field is open to develop an understanding of Fringe networks from conceptual and empirical evidence that considers the meaning and value of these networks to those who shape and inhabit them.

Research Questions and Methodology

A case study approach has the potential to deliver a rich understanding of the experiences of those working within a Fringe festival network. This is both exploratory and descriptive research (Brunt et al., 2017), focusing on an environment that has seen little academic attention. A rarely blended mix of methods has been applied, partly to highlight the role that SNA can play in festival networks research (Ramseok-Munhurrin & Durbarry, 2018). The chosen case has also been selected in light of Yin’s (2014) five justifications for such research designs,

with a combination of critical, unusual, common, revelatory, and longitudinal characteristics. Chief among these are the case study’s unusual and common dimensions, for while Fringe festivals are now found in hundreds of cities there are relatively few formalized networks, and each of these networks is unique in what it offers the various stakeholders involved. The case being studied here affords its member festivals considerable benefits at an administrative level, encourages the sharing of information and mutual support, and facilitates a pooling of effort in the search for external resources. The research process has been primarily deductive in nature, drawing from the theoretical frameworks above, though consideration of the primary data has helped to generate the following three research questions in a more iterative manner:

1. What is the experience of working in a Fringe festival network, and to what extent does Castells’s conception of a network society help to investigate and explain this?
2. Following Richards’s application of network society concepts to festivals and events, what evidence exists of his interpretations?
3. What can SNA offer as a means of exploring and illustrating the role and value of “network society” logic to Fringe festivals?

Targeted answers to these research questions shape the discussion section below. Ahead of that, two sections reflect upon data collection and analysis. Documentary and interview data are discussed first, helping to present the anonymized case study. Secondly, the terminology of social network analysis is linked to Fringe networks, and the specific aspects of SNA used for this research are outlined. Triangulation between these forms of data has informed responses to the research questions (Brunt et al., 2017).

Documentary Evidence and Interview Data

Documents and an interview were used to establish the nature of the Fringe network case study, contextualizing the social network analysis, which in due course provides this article’s most notable innovation. Documents reviewed covered the websites and social media accounts of Fringes included

in the focal network, plus each festival's printed program, their common guidance for applicants, and their shared online application form, the latter three categories all from 2018. These materials were clearly not drawn up for the purposes of the current research (Yin, 2014), they are instead targeted at key stakeholders in the management and delivery of the festivals. Each of the festivals' websites enthusiastically associated itself with the wider network, with the relevant logo and links to additional information prominently displayed on all of their homepages. The longest established of the Fringes set the tone, informing readers that from its earliest years there has been a desire from performers to combine festival appearances with a regional tour. As other Fringes have been established, reaching five countries and seven cities at the time of writing, they have recognized and given prominence to their inclusion in the network. On social media the festivals reference each other and their shared projects. These festivals see themselves as part of an international movement and a shared culture, celebrating the Fringe spirit of discovery and artistic diversity that may otherwise be lacking in their destination. This evidence also reveals some of the practical benefits to be had from this coordinated approach, including the longed-for regional touring opportunities that are now feasible because of a concentrated festival "season" across multiple cities.

This is a network of festivals first and foremost, rather than a network of cities or their governments, who have collectively decided to pursue this form of event-based collaboration. While promoting a shared and collective identity, the management of each independent Fringe is also confident of serving their own local audience. For the applicants the process of applying to one festival or another is identical, courtesy of their shared artist guidelines and online application: the application process is presented as an embodiment and manifestation of the network. Consistent guidance on typical show and venue types helps set the mood, alongside practical guidance on travel time and acclimatization between festivals. There is a general expectation that applicants will put themselves forward for more than one festival. The resulting printed programs, produced by each Fringe, are necessarily more targeted towards individual festivals. However, there

is recognition that a festival's printed materials are powerful opportunities to present itself to the world, and as such these documents include invitations to potential new members to join the network of Fringes.

To enrich the documentary evidence an interview was held with a key informant, namely a representative of the most established Fringe festival within the network. This provided an opportunity to corroborate the existing findings, as advocated by Yin (2014). The interview ranged from a history of the network and the motivations of its original founders, to consideration of the various contexts and environments in which the member festivals operate. It was apparent that informal connections to other Fringes out with the region were vital long before the foundation of the network being studied here: opportunities to attend as audiences, performers, and nascent festival directors were all needed to help learn about the culture and management of such festivals. Tangible collaborations were also highlighted as means by which to forge connections, whether through shared projects or in pursuit of common agendas (e.g., sustainable working practices). As can be seen elsewhere (Jarman, 2007), the working through of early arrangements, approaches, and priorities can have considerable influence on the future development of festivals. The interview data here suggests that once the Fringe model had been attempted, modified, and established in the region it became more feasible for interested parties in other regional destinations to take it on as well. This was always a founding ambition behind the network's first Fringe (to help facilitate touring opportunities and other benefits) and as such the network being studied is effectively older than its members, conceptually at least. Each additional festival then makes good on the network's latent promise to deliver benefits for member festivals and their stakeholders.

Notable strengths of the network highlighted in the interview include nurturing new festivals and sharing collective practices, so that a regional form of "Fringe" is being established. The network takes precedence and stakeholders are encouraged to engage with the festivals as a collective: artists use a shared online application process; joint funding bids are made to regional cross-border bodies; the network produces collective showcases that feature

at other festivals around the world. However, there are limitations, from the logistical challenges of aligning dates and organizing transport to the varying levels of resources and support available in each different city and country. These are coupled with the relative novelty of this kind of festival, with its emphasis on experimentation and innovation, that simply takes time to engage local performers and audiences. The network is establishing new platforms for performance and creativity, while taking inspiration from generations of Fringe festivals across the globe. To prioritize the network in such an overt manner is uncommon, but the model is valued by the various festival organizers. The remaining round of primary research in this case study used social network analysis to deepen the picture drawn thus far.

Social Network Analysis

SNA's rich vocabulary provides instructive perspectives on the structure and meaning of social relationships. This section draws on such terms in the process of introducing a number of established Fringe networks, of the type being examined in this article. The opening two paragraphs draw from published information relating to these networks, as well as a range of accessible texts on social network analysis methods and approaches. The discussion then turns to the "two mode" SNA applied to the case study's anonymized primary data.

With its global reach, World Fringe "operates to unite, strengthen & connect the Fringe Festival Sector and global Fringe community through introduction, communication, education and the dissemination of information," and lists some 245 festivals on its site (World Fringe, 2019). Building on these foundations, the Fringe World Congress is a biennial event that "brings together directors and organizers of Fringe festivals from across the globe to share ideas and network" (Adelaide Fringe, 2019). From a network analysis perspective, there is synergy between these organizations' stated ambitions and many of the core principles of SNA (Jarman et al., 2014). *Connections* between organizations and individuals are clearly paramount, as is the *contagion* of resources, information, and opportunities that flow between them (Prell, 2012). *Homophily* is also implied, with the awareness that these

networks bring together similar organizations, with shared characteristics and needs (Jarman, 2017b). To the extent that some Fringes are more established or of a greater scale than others, they may have greater *centrality* than others, across a range of measures (Borgatti et al., 2013). This in turn may afford them opportunities to provide leadership to the sector, forming *bridges* between other organizations and acting in a *brokerage* capacity (Prell, 2012). Both World Fringe and the Congress operate on a worldwide scale, giving them prominence and value as they fill *structural holes* to the potential benefit of the sector (Burchard & Cornwell, 2018). However, they cannot fulfil every need, and sometimes a degree of geographical *propinquity* is required to reflect the regional context (McPherson et al., 2001).

Regional networks of Fringes are arguably responsible for deeper connections between their member festivals. In SNA terms, this has implications for *tie strength*, and the overall *density* of the networks (Granovetter, 1983; Scott, 2017). Though the global networks highlighted above will inevitably contain *clusters* of better-connected member festivals (Comunian, 2017), regional networks can increase the density to the extent that every member of a network is connected to every other, whereby a *clique* can be identified (Prell, 2012). Cliques often have strengths (such as ease of communication and coordination), and sometimes weaknesses (including the potential for isolation and lack of innovation). Examples of regional Fringe networks include the United States Association of Fringe Festivals, who offer a bullet-pointed definition of "Fringes," and affirm that in the US "no one organization or individual owns, controls or regulates the name 'Fringe'" (US Association of Fringe Festivals, 2019). This latter point distinguishes the USAFF from its northern counterpart, the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF). In Canada, "Fringe" and "Fringe Festival" are registered trademarks of CAFF, and any festival wishing to identify as such "must abide by the CAFF mandate and the four guiding principles" (Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals, 2019). The open access Fringe ethos lives on in both countries, though the Associations' operational and logistical differences have consequences for the networks they support. In Northern Europe, the Nordic Fringe Network

(NFN) coordinates a growing number of festivals, to “simplify systems and provide touring opportunities for artists applying to one or more of the [region’s] Fringe festivals” (Stockholm Fringe Festival, 2019). By late 2019 seven cities will have hosted NFN Fringes, with a temporal clustering from late August into September courtesy of Bergen, Gothenburg, Lahti, and Stockholm. Each festival is independent, yet the majority have been created under the NFN umbrella, their creators engaging with the preexisting network.

The form of SNA being used in this article is “two mode” social network analysis, so called because it enables two forms of data, two units of analysis, to exist in the same graphs and calculations (Borgatti et al., 2013; Prell, 2012; Scott, 2017). The oft-cited foundation text for two-mode SNA is *Deep South* (Davis et al., 1941), a study of race and social stratification in Mississippi, where the two modes were (1) social actors and (2) the events they attended. Beyond this, the SNA literature demonstrates how two-mode techniques can be applied to a range of scenarios, from open source software developers and the coding bugs they work on fixing (Conaldi & Lomi, 2013), to heterosexual swingers and the

venues they frequent (Niekamp et al., 2013). Two-mode SNA continues to attract researchers’ attention, partly due to the widespread availability of potentially suitable data. SNA methods textbooks frequently contain dedicated chapters, and journal special issues have been produced (Agneessens & Everett, 2013).

In the current research, material obtained from the focal Fringe network combines (1) applications submitted to the shared online form in 2018, and (2) the four festivals included on the form in that year. A first look at the ensuing graph (Fig. 1) immediately demonstrates the density of the resulting two-mode network: most applicants (circles) are connected to more than one festival (squares, labeled for their 2018 chronological order). Three hundred thirty-nine applications are represented here, with considerable interest demonstrated for each festival: (1) 258 applications; (2) 248; (3) 277; (4) 301. Three isolates in the top left corner failed to select any festivals in their application. Three hundred thirty-nine applications mean a potential maximum of 1,356 ties had each applicant selected all four festivals; the actual figure of 1,084 represents a network density of 79.9%. It would appear

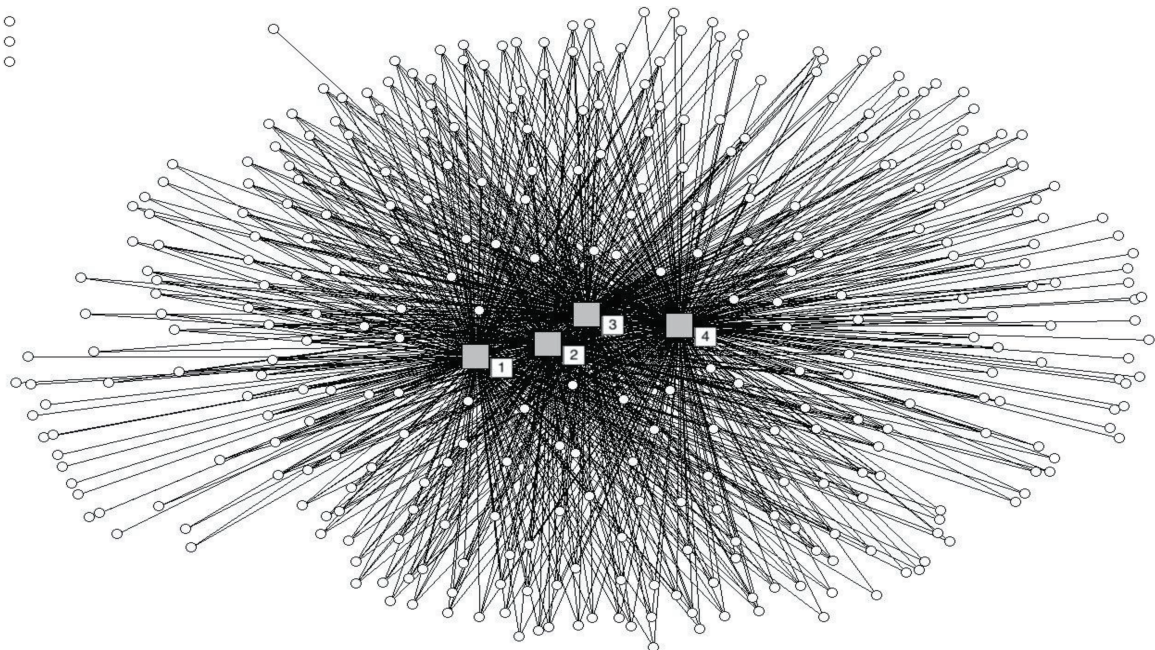


Figure 1. Two-mode sociogram of applications to the Fringe network’s 2018 shared online application form.

that these festivals have followed a successful path to attracting applications, particularly in the context of an open-access process that is dependent on people applying to take part. These were of course mere applications, which didn't commit the performers to anything and were submitted months in advance of the programming and delivery of the festivals. However, these are encouraging signs for those promoting the primacy of a networked approach to Fringe management—particularly so when considering that only one of the four festivals had completed more than two editions as the applications came in, and another had never taken place at all! Where eight theater companies gave inspiration to the Fringe template in 1947, this regional network has demonstrated that the resulting festival model can have instant appeal on a grand scale (Borgatti & Everett, 1997).

Aside from presenting data graphically, SNA allows for statistical analysis as befits the case at hand (Jarman, 2017a; Jarman, 2018), and in two-mode analysis this is often achieved by transforming the data into two one-mode networks (Borgatti & Everett, 1997; Borgatti et al., 2013). Following this approach, the Fringe network data are presented in Figure 2, where the four festivals are displayed

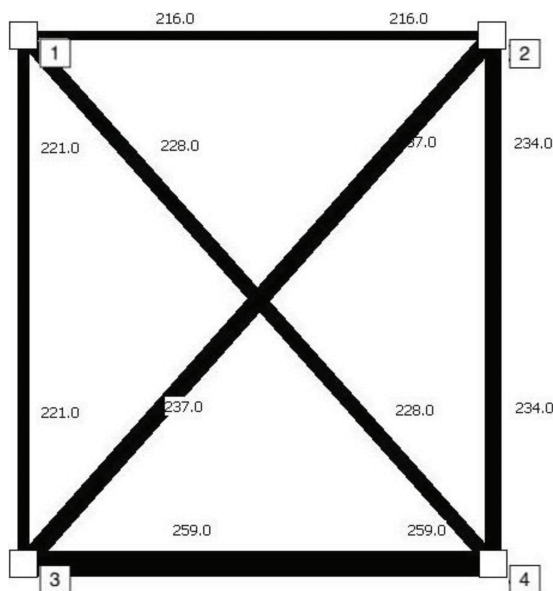


Figure 2. One-mode sociogram of applications to the four Fringes featured in the 2018 shared online application form.

as nodes labeled 1 to 4, and the applications are not included individually. The ties now lie directly between the festivals, rather than between festivals and applications. The numbers adjacent to each tie signify the number of applications that selected both of the festivals connected by that tie, and the width of the ties also reflects their relative weight. Therefore, the strongest connection is between 3 and 4, with the weakest between 1 and 2. Both figures show that in relative terms the differences are not too great: none of the festivals appears isolated, and there is little sense of a profound “core-periphery” structure.

Borgatti and Everett's wide-ranging 1997 article considers the opportunities and drawbacks inherent in analyzing two-mode networks, including consideration of different measures of centrality. They note that some measures are not suitable for two-mode networks, while others come with caveats and limitations. Taking this on board, the case of festival 1 might be revealing. Festival 1 has the lowest ranking for Eigenvector centrality of 0.474 (where a node's centrality is a function of the centrality of its adjacent nodes, and this festival has relatively weak connections to the other three compared to their ties to each other). Yet festival 1 ranks second in terms of betweenness centrality at 0.244 (a result of a node's position on paths between other nodes) (Prell, 2012). Therefore, this festival appears to be relatively isolated with comparatively few applicants who also want to appear at other festivals. However, this then appears to be a factor in how important the festival is as a link between its applicants and the rest of the network. Festival 1 seems to have an important role in incorporating more peripheral contributors to the network, in ways that are not replicated elsewhere to the same extent.

The relationships between these networked Fringe festivals are based on a wide range of connections, of which shared applications offer an imperfect and incomplete picture. The data do not indicate how many of the applications resulted in actual appearances at the festivals, nor what proportion of applicants appeared at multiple Fringes and thus took concrete advantage of the network. Further data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, could expand upon those themes. Here, in the final sections of this article, attention will return to the three research questions.

Discussion

RQ1: What is the Experience of Working in a Fringe Festival Network, and to What Extent Does Castells's Conception of a Network Society Help to Investigate and Explain This?

In this Fringe network, festivals share leadership and governance functions for mutual benefit. Member organizations benefit from the pooling of administrative processes and the apparently generous exchange of support. Newcomers stand to gain the most if they engage fully, bypassing slow and organic growth to attract an instant pool of keen applicants. From Castells we see evidence of the combined power of information, knowledge, and technology, with online platforms facilitating engagement between the festivals, and between the network and its stakeholders. Shared online applications are part of the picture, sitting alongside other manifestations of the network's primacy over the individual Fringes. The space of flows is perceptible here, though this is a network of festivals rather than a network of cities. When the network is dominant it has the power to bend space and time around itself: the Fringe network is present when its members deliver their events, but it is also in evidence when its representatives travel to other festivals, to present showcases of work, and appear on discussion panels. The network is a story worth telling and retelling, in person, in news articles and on social media. Physical and virtual copresence are in operation, from the Fringes' host locations to the journeys between them, and the online interactions between all interested parties. Local authorities, national governments, and international organizations all see the potential benefits of supporting the network, with its ability to ignite artistic passions and interests, and to promote (and critique) shared cultural norms and models.

Everyday life, for the most part, is lived in the space of places, which could prove limiting for this network of Fringe festivals. The logistical difficulties of traveling between locations need to be overcome for the benefits of scheduled temporal clusters to be realized. The network counts for little if the festivals struggle to find audiences and the applicants are unable to justify their investment. Should the relationship between a Fringe and its governmental authorities start to fracture then this

too could be damaging: Castells' facilitating "network state" (Castells, 2000a, p. 14) could assert its hegemonic and controlling potential, threatening sources of funding and support for these individual organizations. Despite all this, the network society provides Fringes with the means to develop effective and meaningful relationships, creating benefits for the festivals and their key stakeholders. Information technologies facilitate the administrative and communications links between them, on to which can be built layers of shared artistic and cultural understanding. To interact with one festival is to engage with them all, for this is a network that speaks with both one voice and with many: the application process, the values, and the ethos might be shared, yet they are expressed in many ways, not least of which are the festivals themselves.

RQ2: Following Richards' Application of Network Society Concepts to Festivals and Events, What Evidence Exists of his Interpretations?

Network society thinking underpins network-centric eventfulness (Richards, 2017), and the twin concepts of iterative and pulsar events (Richards, 2015). All three forms of primary data used here support the notion that members of the Fringe network under consideration are both pursuing and achieving positive outcomes that would not be achievable by festivals acting independently: they are benefiting from the realization of network power, primarily in terms of attracting applications and external support, and sharing information and administrative practices. Alternative models of cooperation might well result in similar outcomes, but in this case the network takes precedence over its members, and thus provides the context for further analysis and interpretation. The network sees its tangible manifestation made real in the delivery of its member festivals, but there is also a role reversal in operation. To the extent that the festivals are so closely aligned to the network, their validation and true expression comes through being part of something bigger: the value of each festival is enhanced by the domestic actions of its peers, and their collective work throughout the year to present a coherent identity to the region and the wider world.

Locating these networked festivals within iterative and pulsar interpretations of events is challenging,

because for all their dynamism and international interconnectivity, they must rely on local support as do all Fringes. The novelty of the festivals has clearly struck a chord with artists and performers, illustrated by impressive application rates despite their recent creation. This suggests a pulsar-orientated identity, introducing new models of creativity and expression on a foundation of external talent, driven by universal themes of liberal and artistic tolerance. The Fringe model has legitimacy from the countless other cities in which it operates, but for this network of young festivals to be effective it relies on managers and directors who can operate on an intercity and international basis. Their work, in turn, attracts the interest of global cultural communities and media. This is important evidence that the space of flows is a meaningful interpretation of the Fringe environment (Richards, 2015), which in the case study has resulted in a regional interpretation and style that allows for a more place-based experience. To set up a new Fringe as part of the network is to adopt the existing administrative models and systems that underpin it, as well as its founding characteristics and motivations. This may be part of what motivates so many applicants to express interest in festivals that have little or no track record on which to build, because they have a sense of the dynamic and progressive atmospheres they are likely to encounter there. There is certainly evidence that herein can be found both iterative and pulsar qualities, a model of open access festival that allows for political and social agendas of all kinds to be housed within the same creative program.

RQ3: What Can SNA Offer as a Means of Exploring and Illustrating the Role and Value of "Network Society" Logic to Fringe Festivals?

The form of SNA used in this article is "two-mode," with four Fringes in the network providing one unit of analysis, and their 339 online applicants the other. SNA's contribution has been to reveal the structure of the overall network while enabling consideration of its constituent parts, such as was seen above regarding Fringe 1. The 79.9% density noted in the resulting analysis demonstrates a very high appetite for applying to multiple festivals within the network, through the shared online form. Communications technologies have made it possible for

potential applicants to research these festivals, decide that they would like to perform at more than one of them, and to submit their applications as they seamlessly engage with the network as a whole, rather than the individual festivals. Castells (2000b) championed the importance of such technologies, stating that this is what separates the current age from others that might justifiably be seen as organized around information and/or networks (Castells, 2000b). He also deploys the language of SNA when he talks about the "interconnected nodes" of a network, and the "distance" between nodes (from zero to infinite) being a function of whether they are operating in the same network(s) as each other (Castells, 2000b). However, from an SNA perspective the terms are used loosely, giving rise to some of the critiques that this article seeks to engage with.

The two key papers that this article is responding to both highlight the need for more empirical research, more engagement with the data, so that when networks are promoted as the vital social morphology of the day these ideas can be investigated and examined (Anttiroiko, 2015; Fisker et al., 2019). Anttiroiko celebrated Castells's pioneering role in developing a grand social and political network theory, his recognition of the growing importance of technology, and the impacts this has on power relations (Anttiroiko, 2015). However, in critiquing the work, Anttiroiko placed Castells within a Marxist tradition that prioritizes economic and political institutions, and therefore this is the context within which individuals are subsequently situated. SNA generally approaches social relations differently, commencing with data about people and their connections, yet tending to underplay the influence of "macro-level structures and determination relations" that cannot be derived from network statistics alone (Anttiroiko, 2015, p. 11). The Fringe SNA used in the current article offers a response to this situation, using primary analysis as part of a case study that has a clear conceptual framework. As a theoretical backdrop to the article the network society has guided the data collection and discussion, but it is the SNA that has driven home the ways all the shared planning, promotion, and administration of these festivals have served to benefit them in terms of applications and interest.

The revelatory impact of SNA on festival analysis would likely suit Fisker et al. (2019) as they

examine network logic through Richards's analysis of iterative and pulsar events, advocating a nuanced interpretation of his work. The risks of false dichotomies need addressing in their eyes, such that iterative and pulsar qualities are not always synonymous with the space of places and the space of flows as Richards might suggest. The current article has shown that the overall network is taking advantage of dynamic "pulsar" activity between the Fringes, delivering bridging advantages to their managements and stakeholders while challenging accepted norms of cultural expression, in a model where the network predates its member festivals. Yet each festival is also a product of its local circumstances, which molds its resources and agendas, and in time facilitates the bonding social capital, media interest, local talent, and political support that "iterative" events are capable of (Richards, 2015). SNA's role in the current article has been to highlight the advantages of a networked approach to festival management, in particular for emerging and nascent Fringes. The wide array of approaches to SNA, the forms it can take, and the data it can incorporate offer myriad opportunities for those researching this field. It utilizes a clearly defined set of terms and methods, combines multiple units of analysis, and addresses their attributes and connections. SNA also draws from a heritage of insights into both communities and events, and has much to offer the contemporary researcher.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, networks matter. They underpin the action and ambition of individuals, and the form and function of communities and organizations. In the network society, information and knowledge combine with all-pervasive communications technologies, unshackling social networks from their previous limitations of "size, complexity, and velocity" (Castells, 2004, p. 221). In the Fringe case study, the basis for today's network lies in the genesis of its founder member: touring opportunities, mutual recognition and support, collaborative projects, and shared technological administrative solutions have become part of the network's DNA. Thus, these network resources are inherited by each new independent Fringe that joins the network, while festival managers have established

their positions of influence through their networked roles. Presence in the network gives festivals greater value from the perspective of their performers, and everything that supports a festival's content has the potential to benefit members of each key stakeholder category. Where a lone Fringe festival is a network of contributors, audiences, and media, the significance of a network of Fringes, a network of networks, lies in the broader platform it provides for discourse, identity, and cultural expression.

In response to Anttiroiko (2015), this article has shown that Castells's work on the network society indeed offers important conceptual insights and contexts for those applying social network analysis methods and approaches. This is perhaps of little surprise given the thematic overlaps between his work and mainstream applications of SNA, but with this connection now established in the realm of festivals research future opportunities for SNA-based investigation have been opened up. Thus, the current research claims a place among the emerging critical event studies literature, which is bringing new insights and platforms to the field (Robertson et al., 2018). This article is not the only work to link Castells with events research, of course, and as shown above SNA can also respond to Fisker et al.'s (2019) critique of Richards. In Richards's conceptualization of iterative and pulsar events, it is not obvious where a networked Fringe festival should be positioned: established Fringes deliver iterative benefits of bonding social capital; yet it is apparent from the primary research above that brand new Fringes can attract considerable levels of interest, offering pulsar potential. Operating in the space of flows has benefited these Fringes both individually and collectively, allowing each to tap into a collective understanding of what this form of festival can deliver in the local space of places environment.

A Fringe festival is a network based within and around a place. A networked collection of Fringes, formalized through shared operations and mutual understanding, expands the local network beyond its temporal, geographic, and artistic boundaries, to connect with and influence other networks. The case study has shown, through two-mode social network analysis and applications of network society theory, that with careful stewardship such festivals can establish themselves very quickly and

begin to realize their cultural potential. For the festivals studied here, perhaps the only way they can achieve their collective ambitions is to commit to and consolidate their networked approach. Their message to other Fringes is to recognize the value of this strategy. For outside observers it is apparent that a creative and complex attitude to research is appropriate, to better understand these festivals and what makes them successful platforms for their many, many stakeholders.

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