Introduction: Festivalisation as a Contested Urban Strategy

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Festivals are important features of contemporary cities that can be understood as celebrations or attractions, but also as agents of urban change. City festivals are associated with a range of intended and unintended outcomes for host places: from community building to commercialisation. Festivals can create visual spectacles, but also distinct soundscapes and atmospheres. They occupy urban spaces, but are also inherently linked to time, allowing for fascinating spatial and temporal analyses of their effects. As such festivals and festivalisation can help illuminate a range of issues relevant to urban studies and urban geography. Festivals have long been understood as distinct time-spaces, defined by their contrast to the everyday. However, it is increasingly clear that festivals are better understood as phenomena linked to the quotidian workings of the city: with urban districts redeveloped as festive places, and festivals appropriated as an urban *strategy*.

The key themes addressed by this book are the contested geographies of festival spaces and places and the role of festivals in the quest for more inclusive cities. Festivals and events are often used by municipal authorities to break down symbolic barriers that restrict who uses public spaces and what those spaces are used for. However, the rise of commercial festivals and ticketed

events means that they are also responsible for imposing physical and financial obstacles that reduce the accessibility of city parks, streets and squares. Even free festivals can be exclusive, with atmospheres and pressures to consume deterring some groups. Festival sites provide good examples of how urban spaces are de- and re-territorialised and tend to be highly contested. Alongside addressing the contested effects of urban festivals on the character and inclusivity of public spaces, the book addresses more general themes including the role of festivals in culture-led regeneration. Several chapters analyse festivals and events as economic development tools, and the book also covers contested representations of festival cities and the ways related images and stories are used in place marketing.

The use and management of urban places and public spaces varies in different parts of the world, and this book focuses deliberately on Western European cities. This is a particularly interesting context given the socio-cultural issues associated with high levels of in-migration and concerns over the commercialisation and privatisation of public spaces. Festivals and events are linked to these issues in complex ways – they can contribute to urban commercialisation, but are also commonly used as policy responses to achieve more inclusive cities (Quinn et al. 2021). The geographical focus of the book also means we can assess whether positive accounts of festivals and festivalisation in North American cities – for example in recent books by Wynn (2015) and Delgado (2016) – reflect experiences in Western Europe.

A range of cases from across Western Europe are used to explore these issues, including chapters on some of Europe's most significant and contested festival cities: Venice, Edinburgh, London and Barcelona. The book also covers a wide range of festivals including those dedicated to music and the arts, but also events celebrating particular histories, identities and pastimes. Chapters address multiple festival genres: from the Venice Biennale and Dublin Festival of History to music festivals in Rotterdam and craft beer festivals in Manchester. Festivals are central to various international schemes such as the European Capitals of Culture programme, but also the UNESCO Creative Cities initiative which nominates cities of literature, film and music. Several of the cases featured in this book have been awarded one of these titles.

The diverse and innovative qualities of the book are also enhanced by the range of urban spaces covered: obvious examples of public spaces are addressed such as parks, streets, squares and piazzas, but the book includes chapters on indoor public spaces (e.g. city libraries) and blue spaces (canals) too. This reflects our interpretation of public spaces as socio-material entities: they are produced informally through their use – including for festivals and events – as well as through their formal designation, design and management.

The book examines these issues through multiple chapters arranged into 4 sections. Several contributions analyse how festivals and events affect urban public spaces (section 1), in particular their effects on their inclusivity (section 2). The book also examines the ways that festivals influence representations of

space via their communication of visual images and narratives (section 3). To counter the focus on major European cities (Barcelona, Manchester, Glasgow, Rotterdam) and national capitals (London, Dublin, Edinburgh) in the first three sections, the final section of the book analyses the significance of festivals for, and impact on, smaller towns and cities. This final section examines the economic development rationale underpinning many city festivals and explores how this influences their social and cultural value. The book concludes with a summary of core themes, but also some forward looking analysis that examines how urban festivals may develop in the future.

To provide a foundation for the chapters and case studies that follow, some key trends, ideas and processes are introduced below. These include shifting definitions of what we mean by city festivals; the contemporary role of festivals and events in urban strategies and place-making; and finally, the notion of festivalisation, a trend which highlights the contested nature of urban festivals.

A Movable Feast: The Shifting Meaning of Festivals

The contemporary notion of a *festival* is increasingly ubiquitous and hard to define. The positive connotations associated with the term mean it has been adopted by a wide variety of organisations to refer to a wide variety of events. The word festival derives from 'feasts' and in English it was first used as an adjective, and then a noun, to refer to religious celebrations or seasonal rituals (Rönstrom 2016). This term was subsequently adopted to describe extended arts events, both in the world of high arts (e.g. opera, theatre, dance) and, later, in popular culture – for example in the fields of rock music and comedy. In this latter phase, festivals became associated with experimentation and counter-culture(s) that challenged the status quo. In the contemporary era, the term has been 'mainstreamed' and festivals now include a wide range of pop concerts and industry-oriented events – for example, film festivals. Festivals dedicated to consumption are now common too. Examples include those dedicated to food and beer which, in line with the etymology outlined above, are perhaps more accurately described as eating and drinking festivals. The notion of using festivals to generate footfall for local businesses has also spawned a series of consumer-oriented festivals, such the Dubai Shopping Festival (Peter and Anandkumar 2014) and the Glasgow Style Mile Shopping Festival (Smith et al. 2021). Some sports events also use the term to highlight their extended length and cultural significance. The Cheltenham Festival – 28 horse races staged over 4 days every March – is perhaps the most famous example (Oakley 2014).

One of the defining features of urban festivals is their extended duration – they are usually programmed over multiple days, or even several weeks. This means there are similarities between a festival and a 'season' of events. Organising and theming events in this way is an established practice but, in the contemporary era, turning a set of disparate events into a coherent festival has

become an event portfolio management strategy (Antchak, Ziakas and Getz 2019). Festivals are formed by linking together a series of events that share a common theme or happen at a particular time of year: for example, winter festivals (Foley and McPherson 2007). Just to add to confusion over what a contemporary urban festival is, festival branding is also used to infuse dull sounding meetings, conferences and exhibitions with a festive flavour. Academics are culpable here: there is, after all, a Festival of Social Science, and several London Universities (including the University of Westminster) have launched Graduate School festivals. In short, the ubiquitous use of the term has caused confusion and ambiguity regarding what a festival actually is. This trend, plus the high turnover of festivals, means working out how many festivals are staged in a particular city has become nearly impossible.

One consequence of the broadening use of the term festival outlined above is to blur the distinction between festivals and events. According to Rönstrom (2016), the renaming of events as festivals is a key dimension of the ongoing process of festivalisation. In conventional usage, a festival involves multiple, festive, events staged across several days, united by a shared theme and location. However, the extended use of the term festival to describe one-day events, plus the introduction of festival elements to make mundane events more interesting, has further blurred the differentiation. This is highlighted by some of the chapters featured here where the term festivals and events are used interchangeably (e.g. Chapter 2 and Chapter 5) and, indeed, the title of this book!

Festivals and Urban Strategy

There is an established and large body of literature that examines festivals and festivity, with some of the most influential work produced by sociologists (Durkheim 1976 [1912]), anthropologists (Turner 1978) and folklorists (Falassi 1987). Many festival ideas and theories are derived from sociological analysis of religion, and authors such as Ehenrieich (2007) have applied key ideas (e.g. Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence) from this body of work to explain the popularity of contemporary (secular) festivals. There is also some very interesting historical work on the festivals of the medieval city which highlights how festivity shaped urban buildings and districts (Browne, Frost and Lucas 2019). Festivities not only helped to shape the design of places like Venice, they allowed these cities to impose political dominance over their rivals (Delanty, Giorgi and Sassatelli 2011).

Perhaps because of the links with marginality and liminality, festivals were traditionally regarded by academics as ex-urban phenomena that existed beyond the confines of the modern city. In recent years, there has been more focus on city festivals and their urban geographies. This attention corresponds to the re-emergence of urban festivity in the late modern era (Richards and Palmer 2010), and the rise of festival genres that are intrinsically urban: for

example, film festivals and art biennales. A new focus on city festivals is also a response to the *urbanisation* of festivals that were previously associated with rural or peripheral sites: for example, music festivals and food festivals (Smith 2016).

Understanding the role of festivals play in shaping cities has been advanced via a series of recent books, including Gold and Gold's (2020) work on the historical evolution of *Festival Cities*, Wynn's (2015) book *Music/City* which analyses urban music festivals in the US, and Richards and Palmer's (2010) influential text *Eventful Cities* which has a strong focus on European cultural festivals. Academic analyses of festivals now tend to be genuinely multi- or interdisciplinary with important contributions from theatre, media, tourism, marketing, and music academics supplementing work produced by researchers working in the fields of sociology, cultural studies and anthropology. The coherence of the literature on festivals has also been advanced by the emergence of a discernible field of work dedicated to festival or festive studies (Fournier 2019), and by the critical turn in event studies (Robertson et al. 2018).

In terms of the urban geographies of festivals, influential texts include Bernadette Quinn's (2005) paper in *Urban Studies* which focused on the relationship between arts festivals and the city. A subsequent paper by Gordon Waitt published in *Geography Compass* in 2008 reinforced the idea that festivals were important urban phenomena that needed to be analysed critically, taking into account the 'powerful globalising and neoliberalising tendencies' (Waitt 2008, 515). More recently Finkel and Platt (2020), writing in the same journal, analysed the urban geography of festivals, highlighting the ways that festivals are used in various policy fields; particularly in urban regeneration, place marketing and in efforts to achieve community cohesion. These papers have been influential in communicating the idea that festivals are now 'go-to' options for municipal authorities seeking to address a wide range of urban problems (Richards and Palmer 2010). For example, Richards and Palmer (2010) define an eventful city as one that purposefully uses festivals and events to support long-term policy agendas; and Wynn (2015) suggests festivals represent a 'serious cultural strategy'.

This notion of the festival as an urban 'strategy' is criticised by some authors for constituting a rather superficial and insubstantial response to deeper rooted issues. For example, Quinn (2005) notes that festivals are seen by some cities as a 'quick fix' solution to their image problems. Using de Certeau's terminology, the rise of festival cities is a good example of the 'concept city' that simplifies the multiplicities of city life to convey an appealing unified impression (Jamieson 2004). Others are even more critical, arguing that festivals represent an attempt by some cities to 'cover up' urban problems, hiding inequities behind a 'carnival mask' (Harvey 1989). Critical commentators also worry that using festivals as urban strategies compromises the integrity of festivals, prioritising their instrumental value over their wider social and cultural significance. The established (socio-cultural) and the emerging (strategic) functions of festivals

are often seen as incompatible. As Finkel and Platt (2020, 2) contend: 'contemporary festivals now often exhibit complex and uneasy tensions between the socio-economic strategies of commercialised neoliberal cities and the cultural needs of diverse communities to gather and celebrate'. This is why some authors reject the reconfiguration of festivals as urban strategies. For example, Reece (2020, 109) asserts that, whilst festivals can be used strategically, 'a festival is not a strategy'.

Whilst some stakeholders may try to protect the integrity of arts and cultural festivals from their reconfiguration as urban policy tools, we should recognise that policy oriented festivals can still have very positive social and cultural effects. And we cannot ignore the fact that some festivals were established to strategically assist urban areas. In other words, they have always been strategic interventions rather than artistic, social or cultural phenomena. Film festivals are a good example: many of these events were established for economic reasons: for example, the Cannes Film Festival (est. 1946) was launched to prolong the tourist season. The Brighton Festival (est. 1967) was created for similar reasons. The re-establishment of the Venice Carnival in 1979, following a long hiatus, was also a deliberate attempt to address some of the issues the city was facing at that time, including the lack of provision for young people (Davis and Marvin 2004). These festivities have not been appropriated as urban policy tools: they have always been staged with wider objectives in mind.

The Geographies of Urban Festivals

Whilst most analyses of festivals tend to focus on their temporal dimensions and the way they create 'time out of time' (Falassi 1987), there is less attention to their geographies. This is a major oversight as city festivals tend to be unevenly distributed and skewed towards central sites (see, for example, Chapter 3 in this volume), something that adds to the contested status of festivals (see Chapter 11). Some recent texts have attempted to summarise the geographical distribution of urban festivals. Several texts highlight the disparity between cities – why some cities seem to be more festive than others – whilst others examine the internal geographies of festival provision. For example, Wynn (2015) has developed a conceptualisation of music festivals that explains how they tend to occupy contemporary (US) cities. He identifies 3 key common configurations – the citadel, core, and confetti patterns – which help us to understand the density, turbulence and porosity of urban festivals and the significance of these critical characteristics (Wynn 2015). In a similar vein, Smith et al. (2021) have analysed the different ways that urban public spaces are occupied by festivals and events: these authors identify nine different event types according to their accessibility (free, sometimes free, paid entry) and mobility (mobile audience, semi-mobile audience, static audience). The notion of mobile festivals is also the subject of Marin's (2001) work on perambulatory festivals – parades,

processions and corteges. Marin's work is also inherently geographical as he highlights the significance of the routes selected, particularly the beginning and end points, but also the direction taken.

Any attempt to analyse the geography of urban festivity has to tackle the complex and highly significant relationship between festival and place. Duffy (2014, 229) suggests that the transformative capacity of festivals 'arises out of affective relations facilitated by the festival between people and place'. Reece (2020, 108) adopts a similar perspective and suggests that creating and presenting art during festivals 'gives people and communities a shared experience and a connection to place'. For Richards and Palmer (2010, 72) this is something created by festivals' open structure which 'encourages a more playful relationship between people, places and meaning'. Places can give festivals their meaning and identity, but the relationship is reciprocal: festivals can help to shape the meanings attached to places (Van Aalst and Van Melik 2012).

In many cases, city festivals are not merely festivals *in a place*, but festivals *of a place*: the host location is as important to the meaning of the occasion as the artforms on display. It is inconceivable that these latter examples could move to another city: they are *hallmark* events that are indelibly associated with their host city. Even when the focus is very much on the artform on display, rather than the venue, festivals 'seem to take on something of the character and aspects of the area in which they are situated' (Mitchell 1950, 7). To enhance their placefulness, festivals often occupy public spaces such as prominent parks, streets and squares in city centres (Smith 2016). This is a long established tradition. Quinn (2005) notes that the pioneering Avignon festival (est. 1947) envisaged that residents, organisers and artists would interact with each other and *with their place*. This trend has intensified in the contemporary era: for example the creative director of the Pop Montreal music festival has said 'we try to really be part of the city and make the city kind of the landscape where the festival happens' (cited in Wynn 2015, 18). Cities are keen to ensure that urban festivals are visibly located in recognisable places, to encourage place enriched festival experiences, but also to achieve various place marketing benefits.

Richards and Palmer (2010) see festivals and events as ideal vehicles to counter placelessness. However, the serial reproduction of successful festival genres and the globalisation of festival brands mean that some festivals now contribute to, rather than resolve, the problem of homogeneous and generic urbanism (Quinn 2005). Using a new type of arts festival – light art festivals – to generate off-season tourism, public art and after dark attractions is perhaps the latest example of a festival strategy that has proliferated globally (Giordano and Ong 2017). MacLeod (2006, 229) notes the emergence of festivals that are 'global in appeal, ungrounded in local identity'. This is a useful reminder that the relationship between place and festival is not always as strong as we might assume. As Van Aalst and Van Melik (2012) argue, festivals differ in their degree of place dependency, and the importance of place for festivals may be becoming weaker. Festival organisers often aim to create immersive experiences, consciously

separated from quotidian urban experience, and the destination sought and experienced by attendees is often the festival space not the city place (Van Aalst and Van Melik 2012). We know much about what festivals do for places, but we need to better understand how places contribute to festivals and festival experiences. McClinchey and Carmichael (2010) note that more research is needed to examine the relationship between festivals and place, particularly the role of place perceptions and the ways these connect to experiences.

Festivals and City Making

There is a substantial amount of literature on the ways that one-off mega-events, including cultural events like the European Capital of Culture event and World Expos, are used in urban development and regeneration (Smith 2012). However, the relationship between *festivals* and urban development is less well understood. Festivals have long been associated with urban revitalisation – making cities more alive – but are less frequently linked to urban regeneration strategies. There are obvious reasons for this – regular festivals and smaller events do not require the construction of purpose-built arenas and new infrastructure in the same ways that sports mega-events seem to. However, festivals and urban regeneration *are* linked, both in obvious, material ways (new venues and physical facilities have been developed to stage festivals) but also more subtly. As urban regeneration is, ultimately, about instigating social and economic change as much as physical transformation, festivals can be used as catalysts for a softer, more people-oriented approach. As criticisms of top-down physical regeneration intensify because of related gentrification and reliance on trickle down effects, socio-economic development is arguably the most important and most justifiable form of urban change – particularly when it builds on what already exists. This highlights the potential of festivals to be catalysts for, or agents of, urban regeneration.

Jonathan Wynn has emerged in recent years as one of the key exponents of festival-led urban development. Wynn (2015, 228) argues that we now have seen the failings of high stake cultural projects such as those driven by sporting arenas, museums or entertainment districts, and suggests a festival-led strategy 'can more fluidly respond to the changing needs of the city, its residents and the audience'. He is not suggesting a radical alternative to neoliberal approaches which aim to reinvent cities as sites of consumption: Wynn suggests this objective can be achieved using temporary and flexible festivals rather than more permanent, concrete culture. In his view festivals not only provide experiences, they are 'effective tools for branding and promotion in the post-industrial, experience focused economy' (Wynn 2015, 43), and have the added bonus of bolstering not-for-profit organisations. This latter point is supported by Davies'

(2015) observation that we tend to underestimate the role of festivals in developing community leadership – a key factor in achieving positive urban change.

Wynn's notion that festivals could lead urban development in cities suffering from structural decline seems perhaps a little simplistic and optimistic, but his thesis is more convincing when viewed in conjunction with other ideas. In recent years, festivals have been increasingly understood as 'field-configuring events' (Lampel and Meyer 2008). This term was traditionally reserved for conferences, fairs and trade shows that bring key people and ideas together; forming the basis for new industrial clusters. But now various cultural festivals – from electronic music festivals (Colombo and Richards 2017) to light art festivals (Freire-Gibb and Lorentzen 2011) – are used to forge relationships with creative professionals, and to use the regular (albeit temporary) presence of those involved in the production of festivals to bolster local creative industries. Festivals involve the transfer of knowledge between cities via networks of festival professionals (Jarman 2021). And, as Comunian (2017) reminds us, festivals are also opportunities for artists to interact and learn from each other, and provide chances for local creatives to learn directly from the temporary influx of professionals from around the world. This means festivals can be used to nurture the development of creative industries. There are some fascinating cases where urban festivals have been used as the basis for more permanent creative clusters. One of the best examples is Roskilde in Denmark which has used its world famous rock festival (est. 1971) to develop Musicon Valley – a new district which hosts education and research organisations, a museum and small creative firms (Hjalager 2009). The project is described as both an 'offspring of a festival, which rebuilds itself from nothing every year, and of a historical city with a global heritage and proud traditions' (Musicon 2021). Other examples include a cluster of small businesses (and a museum) on the outskirts of Valencia which designs and produces the figures used in the city's hallmark festival *Las Fallas* (Richards and Palmer 2010).

The idea of field configuring events highlights that the economic value of festivals to cities lies in their production and their potential to boost creative enterprises, not just their potential to generate tourism, consumption and attractive images. And the *making* of city festivals is not merely something that can assist economic and cultural development, it can also assist social development too. The acts of planning, organising and making city festivals provide opportunities to get people involved – building connections, skills and confidence amongst host communities (Edensor 2018). If those involved are from a range of diverse social groups, or from disadvantaged backgrounds, there is great potential to assist community cohesion and marginalised people (Mair and Smith 2021). There are now a series of organisations that specialise in using the processes associated with festival making to build community development and assist disadvantaged groups. These include Handmade Parade, an organisation based in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire that works across various UK

towns and cities to help local people put on festival parades for themselves. By organising workshops prior to events, and by taking those workshops to marginalised groups (carers, refugees, people with disabilities), Handmade Parade not only guarantee local involvement in festivities, they engineer positive social legacies from the making of the festival. This approach chimes with Reece's view that 'festivals are not audience engagement strategies. They are a critical act of community building' (Reece 2020, 105).

We started this section by arguing that one of the benefits of using festivals in urban policy is that it doesn't involve expensive, risky or exclusive physical transformations. However, in some instances, festivals have instigated physical changes to cities, something illustrated well by Gold and Gold's chapter on the Venice Biennale that features in this book (Chapter 9). Film festivals also provide good examples. Several cities have built a dedicated cinema to provide the key venue for their festival, including Rome which built a special cinema designed by Renzo Piano to launch a new festival in 2006. The critically acclaimed Tribeca Festival in New York (est. 2002) also has its own purpose built cinema, a structure which has assisted its founding mission: to assist the cultural revitalisation of Lower Manhattan in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Wong 2011). In 2020 plans were announced to build a new Filmhouse for the Edinburgh International Film Festival which aimed to enhance the programme and the prominence of this event. Controversially, the new building is to be constructed in a public space which, in typically dismissive fashion, the developers argue is a deserted site that needs bringing to life (Murphy 2020). This depiction is somewhat ironic given the name of the public space earmarked to host the venue – Festival Square. The issue of exclusive festivals 'occupying' urban public spaces generates controversy, but the development of Edinburgh's Festival Square seems to be an even more extreme example of the ways that festivals can occupy, commodify and privatise public spaces. Giving a festival a permanent home with year round programming also seems to contradict some of the defining features of a festival. As Reece (2020, 108) notes 'a festival doesn't have to be an ephemeral thing that appears and disappears. Yet, critically it is not an institution or a venue'.

The significance of festivals to place-making in contemporary cities has been reinforced by the introduction or rebranding of sites, spaces and buildings as festival facilities. The most obvious examples are festival marketplaces which were initiated in the US by James Rouse and replicated across the world (Cudny 2016). There are also festival 'quarters' in various cities, such as Montreal, and individual festival buildings – most famously the Royal Festival Hall in London which was developed for the 1951 Festival of Britain. The history of sites as venues for notable festivals is sometimes inscribed into the names of contemporary facilities too. A good example is Festival Park in Stoke on Trent – a retail park built on the site of the 1986 Garden Festival. Festival branding is now being extended to settings with seemingly few links to urban festivity: for example, a redeveloped part of Poplar in East London has been renamed New Festival Quarter. At a wider spatial

scale, entire districts are now promoted as Festival Boroughs – for example Tower Hamlets in east London (Koutrolikou 2012) – or Festival Cities. The most famous example of the latter is Edinburgh – a case discussed at length by Louise Todd in Chapter 11. Using festival branding to provide positive place identities and city images is a key way that festivals contribute to urban place-making, and this is addressed by several chapters that feature in this book, particularly in the third section which is dedicated to city narratives.

Urban Festivalisation: Festival Spaces as Contested Sites

Over the past two decades, various commentators have not only examined the roles played by festivals in cities, they have identified a process of urban festivalisation. This term is used by different authors to refer to various trends, so it is worth providing some clarity here as to what festivalisation means. At its most basic level, festivalisation involves an increase in the number of festivals and events that are staged in cities in general, and in public spaces in particular (Smith 2016). The rise of the experience economy and increased demand for events has driven this trend, but it is also due to the ways municipal authorities have enthusiastically adopted festivals and events as urban policy tools (Richards and Palmer 2010). At a more complex level, festivalisation involves the repackaging of culture as a festival – mainly to expand audiences and to increase the instrumental value of various art forms (Ronström 2016). This happens at the mega-event scale – for example, the festivalisation of national culture during the Olympic Games (Roche 2011), but it is now a feature of more mundane, everyday leisure too. A good example is the re-presentation of multiple cinema screenings as a film 'festival' (Négrier 2015).

   This book is particularly interested in the festivalisation of urban public spaces, and so it is useful to apply the different interpretations of festivalisation to this specific context. Inevitably, an expansion in the number of city festivals means an expansion in the number of festivals staged in public spaces (Smith 2016). But the increased use of public spaces as venues is a deliberate rather than accidental trend with municipal authorities keen to animate and promote prominent parks, squares and streets, and to use festive spaces as sites to nurture communitas. This is reaffirmed by Wynn's (2015, 12) statement: 'I see festivalisation as not just the general rise of festivals but an ongoing organisational process wherein short-term events are used to develop, reinforce and exploit an array of communal goals'. Other uses of the term also highlight interesting trends. Festivalisation is used by some authors in a more narrowly defined way to refer to the tendency for city festivals to 'spill out' beyond their temporal and spatial boundaries (Duffy 2014). Following this interpretation, a city is festivalised when festivals are no longer confined to specific venues or specific time periods. This is why some authors, such as Richards and Palmer (2010), use the term festivalisation to refer to the ways the city has entered an almost permanent state of festivity.

Festivalisation is not merely a descriptive term that refers to recognised processes of change, it is also a loaded and pejorative concept that tends to be used by academics to connote problematic effects (Getz 2010). Indeed, festivalisation has become associated with neoliberalisation and the associated commercialisation, privatisation and securitisation of urban public spaces (Smith 2016). In this sense, the term helps us to understand why urban festival spaces are often regarded as exclusionary or contested sites – a key issue covered by various chapters in this book. However, some authors adopt a more positive perspective, including Wynn (2015) who argues that festivalisation is a cultural policy that combines cultural activity and place-making; and Newbold and Jordan (2015, xiv) who feel that festivalisation 'has become a key element in the endeavours of local governments to act out community cohesion policies and give cultural voices and diversity a platform'. This latter view is also reflected in Chalcraft and Magaudda's (2011, 175) nuanced take on festivalisation that recognises it is about city branding, but that festive space can also be 'democratic space where the performance of culture requires the interaction of artists, audience and locality'.

The festivalisation of urban public spaces is one of the key themes addressed in the first section of this book. This section includes four chapters, each written by one of the FESTSPACE project teams about their case study city (2019). These chapters are all dedicated to different types of public spaces: squares, streets, parks, plus indoor public spaces. Chapter 2 addresses the festivalisation of London's parks; Chapter 3 focuses on the types and locations of festivals and events that are staged in Barcelona (particularly in the city's streets); and Chapter 4 addresses the ways a prominent square in Glasgow is used and designed as a venue for events. The final chapter in Part 1 examines a different type of public space: libraries (in Dublin). These spaces have also been transformed into venues for festivals and events.

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