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THE TRANSLOCAL FLUIDITY OF RURAL GRASSROOTS FESTIVALS IN THE NETWORK SOCIETY

Abstract

This article explores the role of rural grassroots festivals in place-making processes associated with the network society. It mobilises dialectical notions of fixity and fluidity, continuity and change to produce a translocal perspective that builds on previous conceptual work by Manuel Castells – emphasising the space of flows and the space of places – and Greg Richards – focusing on iterative and pulsar events. From this vantage point the paper analyses how rural festivals are produced through networked performativity in the space of flows, while their cultural and social meanings are deeply embedded and localised in the space of places. Empirically the current study builds upon six in-depth case studies of grassroots festivals in rural Denmark. The results suggest that peripherally located festivals were more oriented towards the space of flows than their centrally located counterparts. As a whole, findings indicate that the conceptual framework has potential as a valuable device in building a better understanding of the contemporary roles and functions of festivals in society. Simultaneously, the paper raises critical questions for future research about data collection and research ethics.

Key words

Festivals; Network Society; Rural; Translocality; Fluidity

Introduction

Festivals are proliferated at a significant pace in both urban and rural landscapes in recent decades (Wilson *et al.*, 2016). Every self-respecting community, it seems, ought to have at least one, and ideally a whole portfolio of them (Ziakas, 2013). Previous studies on their economic effects, cultural meanings, and social functions took important steps towards explaining why festivals became a

perceived must-have for local communities. They were shown to be powerful tools for resource mobilization (Vestrum & Rasmussen, 2013), for urban regeneration (Smith, 2012), for the stimulation of visitation (Kwiatkowski *et al.*, 2018), and for the creation and maintenance of city profiles (Dragin-Jensen *et al.*, 2016; Richards, 2017). Other studies illustrated how festivals can function as strong accelerators of societal change, particularly with a view to social cohesion, integration, and place-based identity formation (Atkinson *et al.*, 2008; Duffy, 2005). From a tourism perspective, festivals were likewise shown to offer a series of benefits to host destinations, reflecting a potentially rich source of local well-being (Andersson *et al.*, 2012; Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010). Finally, the place embeddedness of community festivals was established to be particularly strong (Jepson & Clarke, 2015). It seems beyond question, then, that festivals play an active and often important role in place-making processes. Seen in this light it is hardly surprising that local communities around the world are increasingly eager to host them.

Festivals can be defined through five key characteristics: (1) a limited timespan within a clearly defined period; (2) confinement at a given location; (3) planned occasions set within recognizable structures as manifested through predefined objectives, themes, and programmes with some leeway for spontaneity; (4) a combination of different activities in beneficial symbiosis; and (5) open and inviting to the general public (Getz, 2010; Wilson *et al.*, 2016). The festivals under consideration here are furthermore characterised as grassroots-driven, meaning that they: (a) represent a collective action at the local level, (b) use ordinary people from the community as the basis for their functioning; (c) are associated with bottom-up, rather than top-down decision making and (d) are considered to belong more naturally to the locality than larger scale professional events and festivals. Moreover, festivals analysed in this particular study are marked by intimate connections with the Danish countryside.

Whereas the existing research literature on events and festivals is empirically rich and multifarious it also exhibits shortcomings in at least two respects. Firstly, the majority of empirical studies continue to attend primarily to larger festivals and sports events hosted predominantly in large urban centers (Agha & Taks, 2015; though see Gibson *et al.* (2011) for a notable exception), and secondly, attempts to situate the festival phenomenon in contemporary social and spatial theory are sparse. As a result, little is known about the role of festivals in on-going processes of societal change. In a series of recent publications, however, Greg Richards begun to break promising new ground by considering the role of events in the network society. The current article joins in this exploration, firstly by reaching back

to Manuel Castells' theories on the network society, secondly by considering Greg Richards' appropriation of these theories in a critical light, and finally by linking up the resulting conceptual apparatus with current debates on translocality in geography and beyond. In particular, this paper aims to increase the understanding of how rural festivals are produced through networked performativity in the space of flows, whereas their cultural and social meanings are deeply embedded and localised in the space of places. Six in-depth case studies of grassroots festivals in rural Denmark are mobilised to infuse empirically grounded insights that can aid in the continued elaboration of conceptual and methodological frameworks for studying the role of grassroots festivals in the network society.

The article thus consists of two main parts followed by a discussion and conclusion. The first part is conceptual and explores (a) the Castellan notions space of places and space of flows with a view to their applicability in the study of events and festivals; (b) the distinction between iterative and pulsar events as introduced by Greg Richards; and (c) the corollaries of integrating this conceptual framing within a perspective that views the world as translocally constituted. The second part is empirical and utilises the Castellan framework to explore how rural festivals orient themselves in the network society. The discussion proceeds from the empirical findings to suggest how the conceptual framework and associated methodologies can be developed further.

Events and festivals in the network society

The rise of the network society, as understood by Manuel Castells (1996; 2010), begs entirely new questions in terms of the roles played by events and festivals in place-making processes. If “all the key dimensions of social organization and social practice” are now “made of networks” as Castells (2010, p. xviii) suggests they are, it becomes pertinent to ask what to make of those social practices – such as rural grassroots festivals – otherwise understood to be intimately associated with place and the local community. What becomes of such practices in the network society? Do they change and adapt to the new circumstances? Or do they carry on unaltered as relics of the past in a parallel universe? This section seeks to establish a conceptual framework with which to approach these and related questions.

The space of flows and the space of places

The main thrust of Castells' argument in *The Rise of the Network Society* builds on the basic premise that "all major social changes are ultimately characterized by a transformation of space and time in the human experience" (Castells, 2010, p. xxxi). In order to make sense of the major social changes going on in global society, he therefore makes an analytical distinction between a spatial logic that pivots on places as the primary organisers of social practice – i.e. the SoP – and a corresponding logic pivoting instead on networks – i.e. the SoF. Historically the former has been dominant, but advances in communication have gradually altered the relation between them, culminating in "the development of microelectronics-based digital communication, advanced telecommunication networks, information systems, and computerized transportation" that ushered in a network society in which "the spatiality of social interaction" has been transformed "by introducing simultaneity (...) in social practices, regardless of the location of the actors engaged in the communication process" (Castells, 2010, p. xxxii).

Spatially, the transformation entails that "localities become disembodied from their cultural, historical, geographical meaning, and reintegrated into functional networks (...) inducing a space of flows that substitutes for the space of places" (Castells, 2010, p. 406). This translates into a situation in which our society is constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interaction, flows of images, sounds, and symbols. Flows are not just one element of the social organization: they are the expression of processes dominating our economic, political, and symbolic life (Castells, 2010, p. 442). The new centrality of flows and networks, however, has not rendered place irrelevant. People continue to have their bodily existence in the SoP, but whereas "cultural and social meaning is defined in place terms, (...) functionality, wealth, and power are defined in terms of flow" (Castells, 2010, p. xlv). The result is a disintegration of functionality and meaning in which people continue to understand their world largely in place terms even though that world has actually ceased to operate according to a place-based logic. To understand what makes the contemporary world tick, then, the functional characteristics of the SoF holds the key. According to Castells (2010, p. 442 ff) this consists of at least three layers: (1) the technological foundation necessary to sustain the kind of advanced communication processes that enable spatiotemporal simultaneity; (2) the geographically distributed nodes and hubs that embed networks in specific places with differentiated functions and hierarchical positions; and (3) the social actors who articulate and reproduce the logic of flows and networks as the socially dominant spatial logic.

In short, then, these three levels are concerned with technological foundations, spatiotemporal processes, and power relations respectively.

The latter theme is explored further in *Communication Power* (Castells, 2009) which introduces a distinction between two sources of power, and a corresponding pair of power-holders: ‘programmers’ and ‘switchers.’ He defines programming as “the ability to constitute network(s), and to program/reprogram the network(s) in terms of the goals assigned to the network”; and switching as “the ability to connect and ensure the cooperation of different networks by sharing common goals and combining resources, while fending off competition from other networks by setting up strategic cooperation” (Castells, 2009, p. 45). Although both programmers and switchers are conceived of as social actors they are not necessarily identifiable individuals. Together, then, “*programmers and switchers* are those actors (...) who, because of their position in the social structure, hold *network-making power*, the paramount form of *power in the network society*” (Castells, 2009, p. 47).

Iterative and pulsar events

To date the only systematic and sustained appropriation of the conceptual apparatus developed by Castells relevant for the specific purpose of studying events and festivals has been performed by Greg Richards. In a number of publications Richards (2010; 2013; 2015) has tackled the problem of how to understand the role of events in the network society. Drawing on advances in research on rituals and social capital, Richards (2015) argues that the physical co-presence entailed by events becomes ever more important as society shifts towards a networked logic of social organisation and practice. Citing Granovetter’s (1973) seminal work he draws attention to the ability of events to create both strong and weak ties through bonding and bridging: “events have a potential double function: sustaining existing networks (...) through the development of strong ties and the generation of new relationships through weak ties” (Richards, 2015, p. 557). Furthermore, Richards (2015, p. 5) highlights that events, including grassroots rural festivals, are particularly useful in “creating and circulating the cultural codes and content produced by local programmers in the network society, and therefore play an important role in the representation of places. They can support small world networks in those places by providing temporal focal points for the exchange of information and development of trust between actors”. Similarly, Jarman et al. (2014) using Social Network Analysis point out that events and festivals can play an important role in embedding social networks and linking key actors together that, in turn, may result in bringing in additional resources acquired in denser

relational constellations than in larger urban environments. According to Richards – and utilising here the terminology introduced in Castells (2009) – bonding is primarily performed by programmers while bridging is a task for switchers. Having already positioned events as complex social actors in their own regard, Richards is then able to distinguish between events that act as programmers and switchers respectively. This paves the way for his most important contribution in terms of conceptual innovation: the construction of iterative and pulsar events as two ideal types designed to facilitate a more satisfactory account of events in the network society.

Iterative events, in this understanding, are associated with continuity and fixity, community maintenance and the local, bonding social capital, and ultimately with the SoP. Pulsar events, on the other hand, are associated with change and fluidity, bridging social capital, a global orientation, and thereby with the SoF. Richards (2015, p. 563) sums up the key distinguishing features by asserting that “in general, iterative events tend to strengthen existing structures and network connections, providing moments when people can bond, whereas pulsar events have the potential to change the structures that have created them, and to become momentous in the process.” It is crucial to bear in mind that these concepts are constructed as ideal types and that consequently most actual events will exhibit both iterative and pulsar characteristics. By spelling out the distinction, however, Richards has opened an avenue for empirical research that looks specifically for these characteristics and the relations between them, while also enabling such research to connect with the Castellian framework (for one such example, see Booth, 2016).

Place-makers and bridge-builders in a translocal world

Seen in the light of existing theorising on the role of events in the network society, rural grassroots festivals might have the potential of performing a double function of place-making and bridge-building. As such they are situated between the SoP and the SoF, relying on both for their enactment but also with the possibility of making a difference for both. They seem, then, ideally located social occasions through which to address the “structural schizophrenia between two spatial logics that threatens to break down communication channels in society” (Castells, 2010, p. 459). Indeed, Castells calls precisely for bridge-building as the key remedy: “Unless cultural, political, *and physical* bridges are deliberately built between these two forms of space, we may be heading toward life in parallel universes whose times cannot meet because they are warped into different dimensions of a social

hyperspace.” The danger implied is that while the powerful thrive in a SoF that feeds off the vitality of places, the powerless are increasingly confined to a SoP that may provide them with a sense of belonging, but also severely limits their possibilities for fulfilling both collective and individual potentials due to the subordination of the SoP to the SoF. The double role thus also engenders a dilemma, which can be elucidated by Quinn’s (2005, p. 247) observation that

(...) the process of interaction with other places can act as a means of releasing the potential innately held within an individual place. Equally, there are moments when external forces can appear to overwhelm, when the urge to promote the spectacle threatens to weaken the festival’s ability to engender local engagement with place.

It is necessary at this point to interject that the generation of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in the network society is not simplistically determined by the ability of certain actors to (re)program networks and manage connections in the SoF. The dialectic relation between the two spatial logics means that whereas networks have become relatively more important, their functional capacities still depend on the degree and nature of their embeddedness in the SoP. This explains the persistence and aggravation of uneven geographies in the network society. The nodes and hubs of networks are not arbitrarily distributed geographically but emerge precisely at the points where networks become embedded in the SoP. It follows that the flows of capital, people, ideas, materials, and so forth, pass through, and become available for appropriation, in these places and not in others.

Since the networks are reprogrammable, however, the spatial patterns are far from fixed, and the nodal positions of particular places in specific networks are not guaranteed once and for all. This results in a dynamic conjuncture of ever-changing spatial relations that do not necessarily conform to dichotomies such as center-periphery, rural-urban, and local-global. This situation and its varied implications for social practice and organisation have been aptly captured by recent conceptual and empirical work on translocality in a variety of fields and disciplines. The common gist of these contributions was summarized by Steiner and Sakdapolrak:

Authors engaging in the development of a translocal perspective seek to integrate notions of fluidity and discontinuity associated with mobilities, movements and flows on the one hand

with notions of fixity, groundedness and situatedness in particular settings on the other (Clemens & Sakdapolrak, 2013, p. 376).

The kinship with both Castells and Richards is obvious, but there is an important difference. Whereas the conceptual notions presented so far in this paper were pre-occupied with making distinctions, translocal perspectives seek to re-integrate such notions. Instead of creating new dichotomies, they seek to dissolve existing ones by turning attention to the intricate relations that bind them together in pairs. This operation, however, is impossible unless the ability to distinguish is established in the first place. As such the conceptual and empirical operations performed by translocalists comprise the logical next step to be applied to the foundational work of Castells and Richards.

A translocal perspective substitutes dichotomies with a more fluid and indeterminate conception of translocal relations. Taking up the three dichotomies mentioned before, it is possible to sketch how they are altered, if not completely dissolved, by a translocal perspective on the network society. Notions of center and periphery are wrenched free of their geometrical connotations and re-embedded in a networked logic, where nodes and hubs in an intertwined multiplicity of networks replace the previous function of centers. Patterns of (dis)connection and the localisation of programmers and switchers become prime sources of uneven geographies, thus replacing center-periphery relations. Simultaneously the rural-urban distinction loses its functional content and is relegated to a marker of historical legacies which nevertheless continue to condition the developmental fates of localities, e.g. through historical patterns of connectivity associated with urban and rural functions. The metropolitan region of the network society dissolves the dichotomy by including “in the same spatial unit both urbanized and agricultural land, open space and highly dense residential areas: there are multiple cities in a discontinuous countryside” (Castells, 2010, p. xxxiii).

Finally, the local-global dialectic is given new life in the relation between SoP and the SoF. Whereas the network society can only be adequately understood in global terms, the global can never be conceived of independently of the local. This is analogous to the notion that while the functional characteristics of the network society can only be understood with reference to the SoF, there can be no such space independently of the SoP in which it is embedded. Previous engagements with festivals in geography have also grappled with these issues but without considering the Castellian lens imported here (for an example, see Quinn (2005)).

Towards a conceptual framework

The conceptual exposition and discussion above has identified and made connection between a range of theoretical notions which come together to point in the direction of a conceptual framework for studying the variegated roles of festivals in the network society. Before we proceed to employ such notions empirically, this section presents a brief summary and synthesis to guide empirical analysis. Firstly, we have suggested that the Castellian concepts SoP and SoF reflect a nuanced and appropriate understanding of the contemporary sociospatial dialectics through which festivals are produced. As such these concepts provide a more sophisticated entry point for geographical analysis of festivals than, for instance, the omnipresent local-global dichotomy. In order to avoid that the SoP-SoF dialectic simply becomes a proxy for this dichotomy we also want to stress the importance of insisting on a translocal perspective. Whether such a perspective is based on recent literature in which translocality is discussed explicitly (e.g. Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013) or older strands of relational geography such as that represented by Massey (e.g. 1994; 2005) is less important as these perspectives are found to be highly compatible.

Secondly, in order to capture the intricate dynamics of festivals identified by previous research in the field of events studies, the ideal types of pulsar and iterative events as introduced by Richards (2015) are useful as a device for making analytical distinctions. It would be misguided, however, to pursue empirical research aimed at a simplistic and dichotomous classification of events and festivals. Rather, we suggest that the distinction can be used to investigate the complex ways in which an event is (re)assembled from a multiplicity of component parts, each of which contribute to the iterative and pulsar functions of the event as a contingent, unstable whole. Whereas Richards' embrace of actor-network theory is mainly manifest in his claim that events can be conceived of as complex social actors, our perspective emphasises the myriad bits and pieces that go into the (re)production of such actors. Consequently, the iterative and pulsar labels come to be attached, in our view, not only, if at all, to the whole but also to the constitutive parts. This is not, to be sure, a contradiction of Richards' position, but rather results from a redirection of attention. It should also be noted that there is considerable overlap between Richards' conception of pulsar events and related notions of field-configuring events and temporary clusters which have been subject of much recent research (e.g. Schüssler *et al.*, 2015; Comunian, 2016).

Finally, the coming together of Castells' SoP and SoF, Richards' iterative and pulsar events, and a translocal perspective directs attention to the double role of events and festivals as place-makers and bridge-builders. This third distinction cuts across the first two in the sense that neither place-making nor bridge-building processes can be confined to either the SoP or the SoF; rather both occur precisely in the relation between these spaces. Relatedly, place-making results not just from the creation of the new but just as much from the reproduction of the old; hence, both iterative and pulsar functions have important parts to play. Much the same can be said about bridge-building: whereas impulses may indeed be needed to make initial connections, it takes much more than a fragile connection to build a lasting bridge of any practical use. In the second half of this paper we present an empirical application of this framework in which we explore the iterative, pulsar, place-making, and bridge-building functions of rural festivals in Denmark.

Insights from the Danish landscape of rural grassroots festivals

The festival landscape in rural Denmark was comprehensively mapped and queried in a research project in 2015 (Hjalager et al., 2016). This project consisted of a survey among organisers of rural festivals and qualitative fieldwork at seven selected festivals, employing participant observation, on-site interviews and supplementary desk-research. However, only six festivals are included in the analysis as the seventh did not correspond with the definition outlined earlier. To gain a more in-depth understanding on how rural festivals orient themselves in the network society a series of semi-structured interviews with festivals' organizers were conducted in summer 2015. The semi-structured technique of interviewing was chosen due its high flexibility and ad hoc possibility to bring up new questions and ideas during the interview as a result of what the interviewee said. The interviews were conducted in Danish by a native speaker in order to gain the best possible understanding and insight. Furthermore, to further deepen the insight and learn more about festivals' functioning, organization and meaning in the local community a participatory observation was used as a supplementary teaching of information gathering. The participatory observation took place directly at the event venue and lasted for at least one full day for all six festivals. Finally, *ex-ante* and *ex-post* desk research aiming at supplementary data collection about festivals history, scope and goals as well as visitors' and organizers' comments in media was used. Despite providing a strong basis for question formulation used during the on-site interviews, *ex-post* desk research allowed on verification of information collected during previously conducted on-site interviews. Altogether, the employed multidimensional

data collection was used in order to provide the highest possible reliability of data collected, and thus an insight into how rural festivals orient themselves in the network society.

The quantitative dataset comprised an inventory of rural festivals and an associated online survey, covering four broad topics: (1) theme, history, frequency, and duration; (2) objectives; (3) organisational and cooperative structure; and (4) importance for the local community and various stakeholders. Most questions were close-ended and utilised a five point Likert-type scale. The survey was circulated among organisers of 521 rural festivals identified in the inventory. 315 replies were received resulting in a 60.5% response rate. Survey findings paint a broad picture of how festivals play an important role in rural Denmark, where they bring elements of coherence, commitment and meaning. They contribute to the quality of life and to the creation and maintenance of local identities. Furthermore, they serve as a form of entrepreneurial resource mobilisation. A number of key themes can be identified: music, sports, arts and crafts, food, market and hobby-related interests. Undoubtedly, the Danish festival landscape is diverse, exhibiting a heterogeneity of styles, formats, target groups, contents, and local objectives. The wide spectrum of objectives ranges from encouraging and raising an interest in the theme of the festival to place branding of the local area. Other objectives include entertainment and support of local pride and identity. Nuanced discussions of the Danish festival landscape can be found in Blichfeldt and Halkier (2014), Dragin-Jensen *et al.* (2016), Hjalager (2009), Kwiatkowski (2016), and Michelsen la Cour (2016) to name but a few.

Detailed findings from the survey have been reported elsewhere (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018), but we also began to suspect that our data might have something to say in relation to the work of Castells and Richards as presented above.

To this end, the current analysis draws on the qualitative data to examine in a comparative perspective the iterative, pulsar, place-making, and bridge-building roles of rural festivals. Supplementary data collection was conducted for this purpose. Each of the six selected festivals were assessed on each of the conceptually derived parameters and were then analysed in a comparative perspective where attention was directed at exposing and making sense of the contrasts and convergences that emerged in terms of the relations between different functions. The selection of festivals for qualitative study was made on the basis of geographical location and thematic orientation. This was done with a view to ensuring locational variety both in terms of regions represented and with regards to the inclusion

of both peripheral and more centrally located rural areas (keeping in mind the caveats identified above), as well as some variety across the different thematic categories included in the quantitative sample. The following festivals were selected (see also Map 1): (1) an apple-themed community festival in Ebeltoft, Eastern Jutland; (2) a cherry-themed festival in Kerteminde, Funen; (3) a place-themed community festival in Nakskov, Lolland; (4) a wool festival in Saltum, Northern Jutland; (5) a literature festival in Vallekilde, Western Zealand, and (6) a viking-themed festival at Orø close to Zealand.

[MAP 1 ABOUT HERE]

Field notes, interviews, and documents were used to determine the multiplicity of roles played by the six festivals in reference to the conceptually derived functions. Results are summarised in table 1 which also comprise the starting point for developing two in-depth productive comparisons. As the table indicates the iterative-pulsar and placemaking-bridgebuilding distinctions are not used as a method of categorisation but rather as a way of identifying the multifaceted functions that these festivals perform. For comparative purposes, however, the six festivals can beneficially be split into two groups: those that are place-bound and those that are merely place-based; i.e. for the latter group it would hypothetically be possible for the organizers to move the festival to a completely different location, whereas for the former group this would be close to impossible. A place-bound festival can thus be said to be situated primarily in the SoP, whereas a place-based festival has its primary anchoring points in the SoF. In the following sections we begin by analysing the three place-bound festivals in Ebeltoft, Kerteminde, and Nakskov, before proceeding with the three place-based festivals in Saltum, Vallekilde, and Orø.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Apples, cherries, and a fjord

The three festivals considered here are place-bound with a primary anchoring in the SoP. They play roles that are clearly iterative as celebratory annual markers and returning occasions for socialisation among people who share a sense of local belonging. At the same time, they are also seen as occasions for showcasing the best of what the location has to offer for tourists and potential future residents.

The celebratory aspect is used not just for looking back but also for projecting and imagining futures by pointing out place-based potentialities awaiting realisation; in other words, the festivals are thoroughly involved in processes of place-making. As anticipated in the conceptual discussion, this initial characterisation should not be taken to indicate any sort of dichotomous mutual exclusion between the iterative and the pulsar, the intrinsic and the instrumental, the SoP and the SoF, or between place-making and bridge-building.

Viewed superficially, both the apple festival in Ebeltoft (population: 7,468) and the cherry festival in Kerteminde (population: 5,855) seem to be classic examples of iterative events in which local communities come together in annual celebration of an agricultural produce typical of the locality. Even their slogans are similar: “Look, Taste, Be Together” in Ebeltoft and “Look, Listen, Taste” in Kerteminde. Below the surface, however, important differences appear. The cherry festival, despite the fact that it has only been around for a decade, is firmly rooted in a centuries-old tradition for cherry-based production and trade. Located on Funen, an island known nationally as Denmark’s garden, these traditions are mobilised in the self-description of the festival:

The cherry is a fruit with old traditions on Funen, where we used to talk about *langeskovbær*; where *Kijafa* originate in Faaborg; where Schaumburg in Vejstrup and Aunslev smithy as well as Holger Voss in Rynkeby were pathbreaking for the invention of cherry picking machines.

This speaks firstly to a highly specialised local geography in which different cherry varieties are associated with different places, and secondly, to a positioning in the history of agricultural mechanisation that turned traditions into industrial enterprise. In the population there is a great pride of being “Denmark’s garden” in, and the festivals supports the image in the sense that everyone can distinguish variants and species of fruits and vegetables. Private gardens are weeded and polished with extra care in the week of the festival, also supportive factors for the image of place. It also reaches beyond Kerteminde and into the wider geography of fruit production on Funen, an outreach affirmed by translocal connections with other fruit festivals on Funen.

The apple festival, by contrast, takes its thematic cue from the etymological origins of the place name Ebeltoft; *ebel* is an obsolete spelling of *æble*, meaning apple. The theme, however, has little connection to a sustained tradition and the area hardly occupies a prominent position in the apple

trade. In that sense, organizers and participants needed to reinvent history to a higher degree. As far as themes are concerned, then, the two festivals relate in very different ways to the SoF and the SoP: the cherry festival connects to the SoF through the long-established networks of the cherry and fruit industry on Funen, while the apple festival aims directly at the flows and networks associated with tourism and leisure, a difference derived from the disparate material and historical bases of their food-based themes in the SoP. Yet, even if the festivals do share a strategic orientation toward the SoF, their primary focus remains within the SoP as iterative, self-celebratory, community-oriented events. The apple festivals community is more imaginative than in the case of the cherry in the sense that the thematic framework is allowed to be contradicted and boosted by a range of leisure activities in connection with the festival. This focus is even clearer in Nakskov (population: 12,665) where the ‘fjord days’ centre attention directly on the places in which the festival unfolds: the waters and shores of Nakskov Fjord. Although the festival is organised by the regional tourism association, most of the 5,000 annual participants are locals, often accompanied by friends and family visiting from other parts of the country. Celebration of place pervades the festival as exemplified in the opening speech from 2008, held by the chairman of the regional tourist foundation: “It makes sense to organise a feast for the fjord which has created the conditions of life for the community here on Western Lolland and opened the road out towards the wider world.”

While organisers are keen to use their festivals as impulses to help host localities tap into networks in the SoF, they are also very much aware that if they do not succeed in their iterative functions, then they risk undermining their own legitimacy, thereby quickly becoming irrelevant. Thus, they continually face a dilemma in terms of the balance between iterative and pulsar functions. In Ebeltoft, citizens and organizers want to pursue the apple-theme further and would like to generate a local revival of apple-related production activities (i.e. a pulsar function), but they are also aware that for most participants the festival is primarily an occasion for socialising with people who share a sense of belonging to the local area (i.e. an iterative function). It is also this sense of belonging that motivates an army of volunteers to enable the festival every year, a trait shared with Kerteminde where it has prompted organisers not to seek any further expansion of the festival. The festival chairman explains:

If you ask me, it shouldn't be any larger. I think we've found the right level now. (...) We have to be cautious not to become too ambitious. It's the volunteers that we draw on and I don't think that it would be possible to expand more without having to pay salaries to someone.

A similar dilemma is negotiated by organizers in Nakskov, where it finds expression in the festival programming which has become a balancing act between tradition and innovation. Among the 80-90 mostly family-oriented activities that make up the programme, the spotlight is invariably turned to returning regulars such as the herring buffet, the open-air church service accompanied by accordions, and the special ferry services that connect a string of host sites along the shore. But each year the organising committee also strives to bring renewal by mobilising new actors to add their own event to the programme. Dialogue on programming is sustained by staging open planning meetings and through continuous communication in local media, acting as willing platforms and amplifiers for organizers. This pattern can be found throughout the six festivals but is particularly notable in Nakskov where both the local and the regional newspaper are involved in the festival to such a degree that their role is better characterised as one of co-production than one of simply reporting on a local event.

Ultimately, the SoP trumps the SoF and the iterative comes before the pulsar; not because organisers have no ambition of generating impulses to affect local development by connecting to lucrative and influential networks in the SoF, but because they have realised that they can only hope to do so insofar as they nurture their position in the SoP by continually performing their iterative role. In Ebeltoft they found that one of the pulsar functions that can be aligned with this is to position the festival as a pioneer in the development of a round-the-year event portfolio to buttress the tourism industry. The main organiser – the local Rotary Club – made this its mission by taking a coordinating role in other events and festivals, as explained by the chairman of their tourism and business committee:

It's not that the Rotary should take the lead on everything. Now we've taken a coordinating role upon us in the arts festival and we're also willing to do that if others have ideas for a festival. The goal is that people should see Ebeltoft as a lively and dynamic town all year round.

Here, it is the experience gained from the iterative nature of the apple festival that allows it to play a pulsar role by lending organisational know-how to other festivals. Likewise, in Kerteminde the extraordinary visitor numbers before, during, and after the cherry festival have been exploited by integrating another festival – *Sansedage* (Sensuous Days) – as a three-day warm-up to the main

festival. Again, the pulsar function is oriented towards paving the way for, and actively helping in, the development of other local events and festivals. While not specifically aimed at the establishment of an event portfolio (as in Ebeltoft) this nevertheless indicates an orientation toward the making of an eventful place. Finally, in Nakskov each iteration of the festival comes with its own theme, casting the fjord in a particular light and performing a pulsar function, sometimes directed inward and sometimes outward. In 2009, for instance, the theme was ‘climate’ in an attempt to highlight the environmental fragility of the fjord. The local municipality used the theme to launch their own climate and energy festival, running throughout the following month. Similarly, in 2011 the theme was ‘health for body and soul’ with the purpose of promoting healthy activities and local produce. Such pulsar functions have come about through collaboration with other local stakeholders, including municipal actors whose funding and participation are also instrumental to ensure the annual return of the festival.

Wool, literature, and vikings

In contrast with the festivals analysed above, the three considered in this section are characterised more by their thematic orientation than by the places that happen to play host to them. While they are certainly not geographically footloose, their relations to the host locality are less tight, making them place-based rather than place-bound. Rather than festivals based in the SoP with orientations toward the SoF, then, what we see here are festivals that are both based in and oriented towards the SoF. The SoP is by no means eliminated but it mostly plays a supporting role. Most notably, place identities are decentered in the sense that neither their utilisation nor their development are explicitly pursued in the ways we saw above.

In Saltum (parish population: 1,284), the wool festival was initiated in 2007 by the proprietors of local yarn shop Bindestuen. They were inspired by the success of a knitting festival on Fanø; instead of focusing on this specific handicraft they turned attention to the variegated uses of wool as a nature-based raw material. The festival has a capacity of around 50 stalls and each stallholder is strictly evaluated: products have to be made from natural materials and it has to be genuine handicraft work of sufficient quality. With visitors and stallholders drawn from across Scandinavia the organisers are in a position to enforce these standards because of the high demand for stalls. The festival is well-known among those with a keen wool and knitting interest in Denmark, and it has established itself as an institution for activities in the field. Although the wool festival shares commonalities with temporary clusters (Comunian, 2016) it is important to underline that it is entirely organised by

volunteers from the local community. This illustrates how temporary clusters are not necessarily confined to the professionalised circuits of trade fairs and congress-style events, especially where boundaries between producers and consumers are blurred as it is when arts and crafts meet DIY and raw material providers as exemplified here.

The primary embeddedness of the wool festival in the SoF was further underlined in 2017 when capacity and permission issues prompted organisers to relocate the festival from the village to a field in the open countryside. Instead of dislodging the festival from its previous host locality, actors in the village – led by the retail association – quickly created a spin-off festival called *Ulddage* (‘wooly days’) at the old location, not as a competitor but as a complimentary event less strictly focused on the theme. This event has more in common with the iterative community events covered in the previous section, and the split thus exemplifies another way in which festivals can perform both iterative and pulsar functions. As a temporary cluster and field-configuring event, the relocated wool festival emphasises pulsar functions by influencing the wool-related networks for which it is a spatiotemporal hub, where members meet up for mutual inspiration, while the spin-off community festival in the village emphasises the iterative function of bringing the community together in annual self-celebration where wool is the occasion rather than the focus (playing much the same role as cherries and apples in the previous cases).

In Vallekilde (parish population: 888) the Litt Talk festival has been held annually since 2012 by the local folk high school. Instead of community volunteers it relies primarily upon the free labour of literature and event management students enrolled at the school. Local residents are invited to attend at reduced rates, but apart from this local connectivity is relatively weak. Festival contents are only sporadically place-based and the location in Vallekilde relies on the presence of the school; dating from the 1860s it was one of the first in the Danish tradition of folk high schools. Like the wool festival, Litt Talk generates a temporary cluster in which established authors meet both their readership and budding writers eager to gain glimpses into the workshop of literary authorship. This is reflected in the tag line advertising the next iteration of the festival:

Welcome to intense, odd, intimate and funny insights into the personal universes of a range of Denmark’s most current authors. Welcome to literature served by experienced authors with a

large back catalogue and new seedlings transmitting a breeze from the next generation. (Litt Talk, 2018).

The festival consists of a line-up of talks loosely modelled on the TED talk formula. Rather than the content of their literature, speakers are expected to open a window into the process of writing as they experience it. The talks are not reserved for on-site visitors but are live-streamed on YouTube and made available on the festival's Vimeo channel. As such, the festival exemplifies how rural festivals navigate and manipulate the technological foundations of the network society through sophisticated use of viral communication and web-based platforms including social media. The festival organizers regret that the locals are not more involved, but mention also that the intended sophistication of the event may discourage some of them. Of the events considered here, Litt Talk stands out as the most professionalised although it depends on the free labour of students.

On Orø (parish population: 909), the Viking market began in 2013 as a living history event organised through a regional cultural policy alliance consisting of municipalities in Western Zealand and supported by the Ministry of Culture. The first edition was part of a larger, translocal festival strung together by three reconstructed Viking Age ships touring between five different locations, each of which hosted themed events. Since then the annual organisation of a one-site festival has been taken on by grassroots volunteers from a local Viking-themed historical re-enactment group. Promoted as the “smallest but cosiest” Viking-themed festival, organizers do not aim for the festival to be field configuring. They are content to establish the festival as a recognised fixture on the specialised circuit of events catering to Viking Age enthusiasts. Timing has been used actively in this regard by placing the festival during the week leading up to the much larger Moesgaard Viking Moot as a cosy, small-scale event where a few closer-knit groups meet up before journeying to one of the highlights on the Viking calendar.

Whereas special interest is thus also a key to understand the Orø Viking Market, the networks that such an event taps into are very different. Most importantly, no direct links exist to any particular, established industry as we saw with the wool trade and publishing. Instead, the networks are produced through a translocal convergence around the Viking theme between a variety of grassroots-level special interest groups. The sense of place-based competition which accompanied the other festivals is replaced here by a sense of translocal community, most notably demonstrated in the continued visits

of reconstructed ships. When Orø Viking Guild took over as sole organizers in 2015 no ships were on the programme as this was impossible to fund. Nevertheless, Saga Oseberg of Norway showed up anyway and at no cost to the organizers.

Arguably, all three place-based festivals considered here have achieved the production of temporary hubs in the SoF with regards to key networks in their respective spheres of interest. As such they share important traits with professional trade fairs and congress-style events in their ability to temporarily transform the festival site into ‘the place to be’ for actors in relevant networks. Still, they depend entirely on ‘free’ labour for their production, even if many of the volunteer organizers do share a professional relation to the core themes and networks, whether as yarn shop proprietors, events management students, or cultural historians.

Placing rural grassroots festivals in the network society

The empirical findings presented above invite a return to the conceptual framework presented earlier. In this section we therefore discuss our findings with a view to reconsider key tenets of our approach. We also reflect on the wider implications of our findings for the study of both festivals and events more broadly defined. The first subsection directs attention to the relation between grassroots organisers and volunteers, the professional events industry, and the various partners that also enter into the production of festivals. In the second subsection we follow up on the empirical disentanglement of festival functions by attempting to re-entangle them with a view to how they relate to each other. Finally, we discuss the methodological limitations and implications that flow from our initial conceptual choices.

Between grassroots, the events industry, and resourceful partners

The festivals investigated in this paper are characterised by a clear emphasis on grassroots organisers and volunteers. More detailed information derived from quantitative survey about Danish festival landscape can be found in Hjalager and Kwiatkowski (2018). Professionalisation was found to be very modest and most festivals are completely dependent on, mostly local, volunteers in terms of procuring the labour needed before, during, and after the festival. As a result, strategic orientations as engendered by festival objectives and aims cannot be unproblematically assumed to be instrumental with reference to some purpose external to the festival itself (generating tourism, place branding, etc.). In most cases the festival itself *is* the purpose. In this sense our study adds further support to the

conclusions of Gibson *et al* (2011) about the tendency among rural festival organisers towards intrinsic rather than instrumental aims. What we may add is that the intrinsic-instrumental balance seems to be conditioned in particular by the choice and availability of resourceful partners. Volunteer support notwithstanding, few festivals are viable without the financial and/or institutional support of partners such as municipalities, museums, foundations, tourist agencies, business networks and so forth. And it is from these partners that their instrumental elements often derive. The involvement of public institutions and business networks in particular tends to infuse instrumental orientations into festivals that are intrinsic at heart.

Seen in the light of network society theory the intrinsic-instrumental distinction can be taken a few steps further. An intrinsic orientation does not necessarily prevent grassroots organisers from becoming powerful Castellian programmers and switchers, and their festivals may become key nodes and hubs in various networks connected to the festival theme. In these regards they may also be observed to utilise the technologies of the network society in highly sophisticated ways. In many ways, then, they learn from the professional events industry. But this should not distract attention from the intrinsic nature of their aims and objectives which remain firmly entrenched in the SoP. What their practices indicate is therefore not a strategic reorientation towards the SoF but that, given the functional dynamics of the network society, it is imperative to work through the SoF even when ones purposes lie in the SoP.

Even though rural festivals in Denmark and elsewhere tend to be grassroots-driven, knowledge about the professional events industry cannot simply be dismissed. As hinted above, grassroots organisers tend to imitate their professional counterparts when it comes to planning, preparation, organisation, and promotion of their festival. Through formal and informal channels they acquire resources from local businesses, associations, and public institutions, e.g. Wi-Fi-access, meeting places, storage facilities, and logistical services. Festival managers emphasise such alliances as crucial in terms of the pragmatics of running a festival, but they also indicate their role in gradual processes of professionalisation. Furthermore, even thoroughly professionalised events and festivals often depend on volunteer labour in much the same way as grassroots events. It seems pertinent, therefore, that studies of events and festivals become more finely attuned to the contradictory tensions that may arise from the coming together in the production of festivals, firstly, of grassroots and professional actors, and secondly, of intrinsic and instrumental purposes. Indeed, this is one of the ways that festivals may

be seen as potential bridge-builders in a world of increasing disconnection between the SoP and the SoF.

Re-entangling the functions of rural festivals

It seems safe to conclude that grassroots festivals can and do play different roles in the network society. They can be programmers and switchers, temporary nodes and hubs, placemakers and bridge-builders, preservers of tradition and bringers of renewal. In a very literal sense, the programming of rural festivals implies both a projected image and a staged performance of place-based identities. Importantly, such projections and performances are seen here to extend across past, present, and future; remembering and celebrating distant and recent pasts, showcasing what is currently on offer, and using pasts and presents to conjure up projections into a local future full of potential. This is the primary sense in which these festivals become involved in processes of place-making. In doing so they engage in what Castells (1999) has called ‘grassrooting the SoF’, but in ways and for reasons that are often somewhat different from what he envisioned. They do strive “to preserve the meaning of locality, and to assert the space of places, based on experience, over the logic of the space of flows, based on instrumentality” (Castells, 2009, p. 35-36), but their mode of operation is not defensive struggle but positive assertion. And while their practices may reflect contradictory tensions between the SoP and the SoF, grassroots organizers operate on both sides of the dialectic. Their focus may be on place, but they are as much at home in the SoF, whose switches they attempt to flick to their own advantage.

Disentanglement of festival functions is thus not enough to understand their roles in the network society; we also need to re-entangle the functions to see how they relate to one another. If we stick to the notion that the role of place-maker is pushed to the fore in rural festivals, then our understanding of how that role is performed cannot be built without considering how the different functions enact place together. A pulsar function may be utilised to affect redirections of developmental trajectories, for instance by injecting and highlighting a certain theme, not just during the festival but as something that pervades local imaginaries. But place-making – insofar as place is understood as an event (Massey, 2005) – is as much about making things ‘hold together’ as it is about pushing for change. In the making of place, then, the pulsar needs to be accompanied by an iterative function of repeatedly re-enacting certain meanings, identities, and senses of place. Furthermore, places are never made in isolation from other places but, on the contrary, through translocal interaction and interrelatedness.

Bridge-building, in other words, is an integral part of place-making whose importance is accentuated in the network society wherein bridges are not just built between particular places but also between the spatial logics of the SoP and SoF.

The gist of this re-entanglement is that the hybridity and fluidity exhibited by the rural festivals studied here are not incidental but necessary, because festivals in general are characterised precisely by being hybrid constellations produced in a context of indeterminate fluidity. This is also why they stand out as relevant occasions for studying what Massey (2005) has called the ‘throwntogetherness’ of place. As distinct spatiotemporal moments they afford some measure of access and legibility to this throwntogetherness which otherwise belongs mostly to what Henri Lefebvre (1991) referred to as space as directly lived and hence unthought. Place-based festivals, whether place-bound or not, compel actors to reflect on how the place that they perform through the festival has been thrown together to produce the unique constellation that they are both celebrating and nurturing into new iterations of itself.

Methodological implications

Our approach does not purport to reveal all there is to know about grassroots-driven rural festivals. Rather, by focusing on a defined set of dialectics derived from network society theory we are able to pinpoint those aspects of festivals that pertain to their roles in a context defined increasingly by the tensions arising from the partial rupture between the SoP and the SoF. The inherent danger of relying on conceptual frameworks based on dialectical pairings lies in the risk of an analytical slippage into pseudo-dichotomous classification schemes. Our analytical strategy in this regard has been to use the dialectical pairs not to classify festivals but to disentangle them, and then to insist on the necessity of re-entanglement. The latter step is based on the premise that the strength of dialectical thought lies in its capacity for analysing the relations between the terms of the dialectic in question thus necessitating that they are not kept analytically apart. So whereas Richards has used the Castellan entry point mainly as a vehicle for developing classificatory schemes, what we contribute is a reassertion of Castells’ dialectics through the double move of dis- and re-entanglement.

In the current study dialectical reflection through dis- and re-entanglement was possible in qualitative analysis only. Our initial attempt to utilise quantitative data was hampered by the necessity of using pre-existing classifications relying on conventional dichotomous notions of centre and periphery.

Several paths are available for future inquiries to overcome this and related constraints. Firstly, analysis of the uneven geographies of festivals in the network society would need to rely on methods of spatial differentiation based on levels of connectivity in the SoF rather than dated centre-periphery assumptions. Secondly, approaches drawing on the principles of relational comparison as promoted by Gillian Hart (2018) may stand to benefit from a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection that attends specifically to the translocal constitution of festivals. Such an approach does not compare places or cases but processes and practices which are assumed to be always already related. Thus, instead of conceiving of connectivity in the SoF as something to be generically measured, in relational comparison such connectivity would be sought after in the throwntogetherness of place that crystallise in festivals. Both paths are promising extensions of the explorations initiated in this paper.

With regards to event studies more broadly, our findings suggest that there is a need for renewed attention to the role of grassroots in the production of festivals (and likely also in other types of event), including those that belong more squarely in the commercial events industry. The conceptual framework proposed in this paper suggests that attention should be directed at the dilemmas and internal contradictions that arise when organisers who operate mainly according to one spatial logic (i.e. the SoP or the SoF) are faced with the necessity of navigating and negotiating another. This creates an opening towards the somewhat under-appreciated issues associated with the local conflicts occasionally engendered by festivals. The contradictory presence of disparate spatial logics and orientations may very well prove to produce better understandings on such issues.

Conclusion

The conceptual exposition and empirical probing presented in this paper can be used as pointers in the further development of conceptual and methodological frameworks to study the role of festivals in the network society. By pushing in this direction we are not in any way suggesting that the network society thesis as put forward by Castells is the only valid or relevant contemporary theory of sociospatiality to employ in geographical festival studies. But we *are* arguing that it affords a much-needed critical perspective in which festivals are not seen unproblematically as generic must-haves for each and every locality. By exposing the contradictory tensions between different spatial logics our conceptual framework enables a nuanced interrogation which is sensitive to the complex ways that festivals are constituted by ensembles of organisers, participants, funders, places, traditions, and so forth. To this end we offered the notions of place-making and bridge-building as expressions of

the disparate but intertwined roles that festivals can be seen to play in the relation between the SoP and the SoF. By further incorporating the notion of iterative and pulsar functions appropriated from Richards, the framework is also sensitive to the dynamics of continuity and change which often confront festival organisers and local communities in the form of various dilemmas.

Through empirical application and grounding of the conceptual framework we attempted, firstly, to provide new insights about the roles of festivals in the network society, and secondly, to prepare the ground for future empirical endeavours by spelling out the methodological limitations and demands entailed by a conceptual approach based on the Castellian framework. The analysis revealed some of the intricate ways in which ostensibly similar festivals turn out to perform surprisingly disparate functions in the network society, while apparently contrasting festivals turn out to share key functional characteristics. Comparative analysis furthermore made it clear that relations between the three conceptual pairs utilised in the paper (SoP and SoF; iterative and pulsar; place-making and bridge-building) are far from straightforward. Contrary to Richards' allusions to an inherent link between pulsar events and the SoF, our research suggests the existence of much more fluid relations where iterative functions may just as well relate to the SoF through bridge-building as pulsar functions may relate to the SoP through place-making.

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Tables

Table 1: Iterative, pulsar, place-making, and bridge-building functions of six rural grassroots festivals in Denmark.

Function	Iterative	Pulsar	Place-making (SoP orientation)	Bridge-building (SoF orientation)
Festival				
Ebelfestival (apple/community festival)	- Socialisation among people with a sense of belonging towards the local area.	- Attempt to revive lost local traditions around apple production.	- Returning Ebeltoft to its etymological roots ('Ebel' is an old Danish spelling of apple).	- Extension of the local tourist season (autumn).
Kerteminde Kirsebærfestival (cherry/community festival)	- Temporary cluster of cherry-related producers, distributors, and consumers. - Cherry-harvest festival.	- Attempt to make wider connections to cultural heritage, production, and consumption.	- Symbolic and material reproduction of place-based traditions	- Strengthening the locality as a node in cherry-related economic networks. - Stimulation of tourism.
Nakskov Fjorddage (community festival)	- Socialisation among people with a sense of belonging towards the local area.	- Intended as a beacon of hope and optimism to counter negative place narratives.	- Reproduction and recollection of place-based traditions. - Gradual introduction of new activities.	- Tapping into national tourism flows (local tourism board as main organiser).
Uldfestival (wool festival)	- Socialisation among people animated by a shared passion. - Temporary cluster of small-scale wool-related producers and consumers.	- As the largest and arguably most important of its kind in Scandinavia the festival plays a field-configuring role in the hobby-oriented wool trade.	- Community-wide inclusion in organising efforts. - Only weak thematic links to the locality (a local wool business was a cofounder).	- Extension of the local tourist season (spring). - Establishment of the locality as temporary hub in Scandinavian wool networks.

<p>Litt Talk Festival (literature festival)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socialisation among people animated by a shared passion. - Temporary cluster of literary producers, distributors, and consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilisation of Litt Talk reputation to create and promote pop-up events in other locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only weak links to local communities (a festival <i>in</i> but not <i>of</i> the locality). - No use of local volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the festival venue as temporary hub in Danish literature networks.
<p>Orø Vikingemarked (viking market)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socialisation among people animated by a shared passion. - Annual fixture on the viking-themed events circuit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Putting Orø on the map among Viking enthusiasts - Facilitation of learning through historical re-enactment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-wide inclusion in organising efforts - Close alignment with strategic efforts of the ‘island office’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the local harbour (during the festival) as a logical stop for Viking re-enactment ships

Maps

Map 1: Locations of the six festivals included in the qualitative study (Base map: Wikimedia Commons)

