

A multi-stakeholder approach: using visual methodologies for the investigation of intercultural exchange at cultural events

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Abstract

New and innovative approaches to event research are continually emerging as the discipline matures and new avenues for research are sought. Thus, developing a greater depth of understanding of event design and how it links to the overall event experience is an area which is becoming increasingly significant to the success of 'planned events'. To this end, effective approaches to the measurement of the social impacts of the event experience on the attendees and other participants are required. Also required, however, are suitable methodologies with which to measure the social impacts arising from the event experience. One such social impact is intercultural exchange and communication, which is often cited, but rarely measured. Visual methodologies have been utilised in tourism and anthropological research but there is little evidence of their usage in event related research. Arguably less effective when utilised singularly, if they are used in conjunction with other methods of inquiry, visual methods can add value and credibility to the research. Based on a case study of Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod (LIME) this paper presents a framework for the investigation of intercultural exchange and communication at cultural events utilising stakeholder interviews, participant observation and visual methodologies. The use of participant-led photography to elicit responses and discussion of experiences facilitates a deeper understanding of the event experience through the assessment of real experiences of intercultural exchange. The paper also considers how such methodologies can be used to evaluate the extent of social impacts in the context of cultural events and guide event organisers as to how events can be developed and engineered to maximise their positive social impacts.

Key words: Cultural events, visual methodologies, participant observation, intercultural exchange, social impacts, phenomenology, experience-scape.

Introduction and background to the study

As with tourism studies, quantitative techniques in events research have governed until relatively recently however alternative qualitative approaches are increasingly advocated as a means of deepening our understanding of participant experiences (Ateljevic, Pritchard and Morgan, 2007; Holloway, Brown and Shipway, 2010; Jaimangal-Jones, 2013). Indeed the need for a more 'qualitative' and 'critical realist' approach to research with an emphasis on the 'situated voice' (Botterril, 2007) with a

focus on reflexivity in the research process, has long been recognised, but not necessarily fully embraced. The *critical* realist paradigm is characterised by its challenge of dominant ideologies, an interest in power relations, emancipatory outcomes and the importance of independence and equality between researched and researcher (Tribe, 2007). The intention is to build a picture of the world-views of the research participants to create as much of an understanding as possible of that reality, and ‘accept[‘s] that our knowledge of the world is only available through descriptions and discourses’ (Botterill, 2007, p.125). This underpins the requirement for a multi-stakeholder approach to qualitative research, which is increasingly seen as the most ‘progressive’ approach within events and tourism studies to explore such descriptions and discourses in the context of multiple participant realities (Getz, 2010).

Getz (2012) states that event studies has only recently developed as an academic field in its own right; at present it is still very much in its youth. Therefore there is a need to develop a much deeper understanding of how social science methodologies can be used in new and innovative ways to support research in the event setting; in particular to identify best and or new practice. The aim of this paper is to present and critically justify the methods of inquiry used to investigate the phenomenon of intercultural exchange and communication within the cultural event setting. Using a single case study event over a period of time, the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod (LIME), the research has produced a framework through which event organisations can identify the processes and mechanisms available to them to enhance and improve intercultural exchange and communication through more effective event design.

The rationale for the actual research project originated from the concept of ‘tourism for world peace’ as pioneered by D’Amore (1992) and tourism for attitude change (Pizam,

Jafari and Milman., 1991; Anastasopoulos, 1992; Nyaupane, Teye and Paris, 2008). The basis of this concept is that tourism can and should be utilised as a political tool to enhance peace between cultures and nations, through intercultural exchange and understanding ‘concerning itself primarily with tourism’s facilitation of cross-cultural contact, which could provide opportunities for people to meet others perceived as being different from themselves face to face and therefore promote stereotype reduction’ (Caton, Pastoor, Belhassen, Collins and Wallin, 2013, p. 23). The role that cultural events have to play within this paradigm is the particular focus of this study, as many nations now produce cultural events as part of their tourism product and/or have encouraged and developed existing events for touristic consumption. But do cultural events provide an effective avenue through which deeper intercultural understanding can occur? The opinion that they *should* is centred on the nature of ‘cultural events’ as put forward by Favero (2007, p52) who refers to them as products or activities that are ‘aimed at representing and communicating global differences’ and as ‘brokers of specific and localised knowledge about foreign cultures’.

There is no doubt that cultural events can facilitate deeper intercultural understanding as a social impact for their attendees but, as noted by Morgan (2008), the effectiveness of this process depends greatly on both the orchestration and narration of the event organisers and the personal interpretations of the event participants. Intensification of experience can lead to extremes of emotional or physical experience leading to greater integration and interaction with others and creating a temporary consolidation of cultural values. In terms of research methods, this further consolidates the need in event studies to adopt a qualitative, *verstehen* approach that is ‘differentially empathetic to the lived experience’ (Hollinshead, 2004, p.68). As stated by Westwood (2007), ‘projective

techniques' can aid the understanding of experiences by encouraging 'respondents to open up and freely express themselves' (p.294).

Cultural understanding may not be the key motivator for festival attendance although it is a prevalent theme within numerous studies of event motivations (Crompton and Mackay, 1997; Lee, Lee and Wicks, 2004; Baker and Draper, 2013). However, despite this prevalence, the concept of intercultural communication and exchange as an avenue for deeper cultural understanding in the festival event setting remains largely unexplored. The question therefore is how do these events achieve intercultural understanding and through which processes and mechanisms is it encouraged and facilitated? The identification of this phenomenon is the overarching rationale for the research project. As a step towards achieving this aim it was necessary to identify a suitable methodological process to investigate those processes and mechanisms which can be implemented at cultural events. From this it will then be possible to develop a model for effective cultural event design that enhances intercultural exchange, understanding and knowledge building between cultures.

Since this paper presents the development of the research methodology it does not contain detail on the results obtained during each stage of the research process. Instead it justifies why the techniques adopted are appropriate for the particular phenomenon under investigation. The structure of the paper is as follows: exploration of the concept of intercultural communication and exchange within the event setting, a review of developments in event studies research leading to a critically justified research methodology design for the measurement of this phenomenon.

The evolution of dedicated research into the event phenomenon

Planned events are perishable products for consumption (Stanley, 1998, Xie, 2003) but at the same time they are social and cultural meeting places. As such, the measurement of event phenomenon can be derived from a variety of subject areas including sociology, management studies, cultural and anthropological studies, tourism and leisure studies, politics, economics, and psychology. The development of event studies as an academic discipline in its own right has come from recognition that events have a role to play in many areas including destination management and image (Robertson, 2008), the attainment of social, cultural and economic policy objectives (Foley, McGillivray & McPherson, 2012), education and revitalisation and urban regeneration (Richards and Palmer, 2008). Foley et al. (2012) consider the complexity of event studies and suggest that not only should events be considered from a management perspective and a social science perspective (see Andrews and Leopold, 2013), but also from a macro-level or policy perspective. This reflects the classic work of Levi-Strauss (1963) in identifying politics as a major facet of social structure which cuts across all aspects of society and culture.

Rojek (2014), however, challenges the political roles that events have to play within society and the nature of their social impacts, describing these impacts as ideological outcomes that can and should be attributed to leisure per se. He argues that events adopt a communitarian and market logic to achieve perceived objectives similar to other leisure pursuits, such as 'escapism, integration and transcendence' (Rojek, 2014, p.32), but that events tend to represent themselves as 'stateless solutions to global problems' (ibid, p. 45) as opposed to traditional leisure pursuits which are much more grounded in 'welfarist intervention' (ibid p. 33). As Bowden et al (2006) noted events, in particular

cultural events, frequently claim to have a positive impact in the areas of social integration and the expansion of cultural perspectives, but provide little evidence as to the long-term meaningful impacts they actually achieve. Acknowledging Rojek's (2014) criticism both confirms the need for far more robust methodologies to be identified and encourages the development of a more critical research perspective in relation to the events phenomenon.

To some extent this work has already begun in that there have been three prominent progressions in event research over the past ten years. First was the inception of the 'triple bottom line' approach to measurement. Building on Elkington's (1997) revolutionary approach to business management, in 2007 Hede placed the 'People, Planet, Profit' paradigm very firmly into the events agenda and in doing so highlighted the need to move away from traditional quantitative empirical studies, focused on economic outcomes, towards ones which also take into account social and environmental factors. Unlike previous studies, which recognised the need for an effective format for studying the social aspects and impacts of events (Fredeline, Jago and Deery, 2003; Delamere, Wankel and Hinch, 2001) by focussing on the impacts within local communities hosting them, Hede's (2007) work explored the impacts on those actually attending or participating in the event.

Second, Berridge (2007) initiated and Brown and Hutton(2013) further identified a shift in event research from event management and impacts to event design and experiences. Agreeing with Getz (2012), they show that that the rationale for developing understanding of design lies in the fact that what is designed has become of considerable importance to anyone who is interested in what events can achieve as

‘instruments of policy or strategy’ (p.44). In conjunction with this has been the emergence/ recognition of the experience economy (Lugosi, 2008; Morgan, 2008, 2009; Morgan, Lugosi and Ritchie, 2010; Getz, 2012) and its significance to the events industry. Philosophically the experience economy has been an accepted phenomenon since the 1980s when Pine and Gilmore (1999) introduced the concept. Ayhob, Wahid and Omar (2013, p. 179) confirm the current relevance of the experience-scape noting that ‘experience plays a central role in influencing consumers’ choices ... in today’s modern society’. Getz (2008) goes one step further, focusing more specifically on the event experience and suggests that individuals’ ‘experiences should be conceptualized and studied in terms of three inter-related dimensions’ (p.415): conative (behaviour), affective (emotions, moods or attitudes) and cognitive (awareness, perception and understanding). This emergent study of both event design and event experience has required the development of new research methodologies.

Third, it has been realised that fundamental to all event studies are the power relations between stakeholders and therefore the need to explore and investigate the range of stakeholders involved in events (Anderrson and Getz, 2008). The event industry is a fragmented one involving many different parties, therefore to fully understand any case study all appropriate stakeholder views need to be considered. The varying nature of each stakeholder group tends to support a mixed-method approach to research as each will have their own specific characteristics. This also often demands the development of new methodologies.

Whilst research utilising visual methods has a long and respected history in anthropology it has only recently entered the realms of sociology (Banks, 2001) cultural

studies (Pink, 2007 and 2008, Garlick, 2002), and tourism studies (Rajic and Chambers, 2012, Scarles 2010, Haldrup and Larsen, 2006). Considering that writing on visual methodology refers very often to the capturing of 'experience' it is surprising that it has not been utilised more within events research. One of the few studies that can be cited from event studies is one conducted by Park, Daniels, Brayley and Harmon (2010) which looked at photographic documentation as part of participant observation at the National Cherry Blossom Festival to aid the analysis of the facilities and services at the festival to meet the needs of the visitors. Although some ideas for research design can be taken from this study (for example, selecting specific areas of the festival site to undertake visual research), it is not based within ethnographic or phenomenological paradigms and does not investigate a specific phenomenon of the event experience.

Alongside the recent developments in event research discussed come the challenges that they present. Some of the challenges lie with the nature of events themselves including their perishability, uniqueness, and 'inseparability' (Shone and Parry, 2004). The term event covers a very broad range of activities, e.g. from a new product launch to an international music festival, local to global. Therefore there is an emergent need to design effective measurement techniques that are appropriate to individual case studies but which can also be utilised at others to enable global investigation of the same phenomenon. This means dealing not only with characteristics of the events themselves, but also with the problems associated with qualitative forms of inquiry; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). This paper seeks to go some way to overcoming some of these challenges by focusing on one particular aspect of events, the cultural experience within the arts and music festival context.

Intercultural communication and exchange in the event setting

Intercultural communication and exchange in the event setting is the phenomenon under investigation in the wider research project, upon which this paper is based. In order to understand the associated meanings of these terms and how these can be applied to the event setting the meaning of intercultural communication and exchange, as used in this paper, needs to be contextualised within the concepts of the social impacts of events and as an element of the overall event experience.

The phenomenon of cross-cultural exchange and intercultural communication has long been recognised within tourism literature. Steiner and Reisinger's work (2004) exemplifies the view that in contrast to the traditional theory of communication's role as the achiever of common ground, conformity and consensus between cultures, researchers in tourism should be more accepting of the Heideggerian theory that communication should be interpreted as the acceptance of cultural differences. Building on this work Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012, p.5) suggest that 'the study of intercultural communication is about the study of communication that involves, at least in part, cultural group membership differences'. This approach relies heavily on an analysis of both culture and identities. Although definitions of culture vary greatly, it is agreed that culture is a value-laden system of signs and meanings that help us make sense of our everyday lives. Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) use the analogy of the iceberg in terms of understanding culture: a surface level culture which all can see and consists of popular culture; underneath, at the bottom of the iceberg, the traditions, beliefs and values expressed via symbols, meanings and norms. Without mastering these they argue that it is not possible to understand another culture. Within the level of

meanings and norms, the importance of the 'setting' in which the intercultural communication takes place is identified. It can be argued that in a cultural festival event setting there could be more opportunities for intercultural communication than in many other settings due to the feelings of *communitas* (Lugosi, 2008) created by the event. Chalcraft, Magaudda, Solaroli and Santoro (2011) and Van Winkel and Backman (2009) suggest this is dependant on factors such as the design of that particular event, people's prior knowledge, motivations, perceptions and experience, and their individual disposition in terms of cosmopolitanism and mindfulness. Contradicting this Bruner (1991) and Shone and Parry (2004) argue that due to the perishable and time-constrained nature of events, there is not enough time to form strong relationships and therefore only a shallow understanding of others' cultures can be achieved.

Like Getz (2012), Gearings' (1973) approach to intercultural communication was largely concerned with the cognitive although preferring to use the term [inter]cultural transmission as opposed to [inter]cultural communication. He broke down transmission into four areas – the setting (where the transaction takes place), the individual's sense of the nature of the world (cognitive anthropology), categories of social identity (through the study of social structure) and, lastly, the perceived agenda of the cultural transmission (what each individual expects of the encounter). Gearing suggested that the amount and direction of cognitive change was hugely dependent on the agendas of the individuals involved in the transaction. This theory not only considers intercultural communication as a pure moment of knowledge exchange but simultaneously each element of the transmission and its place within the wider context. Different events will offer varying opportunities for intercultural exchange between a range of

stakeholders including performers, attendees, staff and volunteers. Since each of these groups need to be involved in identifying transmissions of intercultural exchange at cultural festival events in order for a holistic understanding to be obtained this supports a mixed method research approach.

Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012, p.33) point out that ‘intercultural communication often involves mismatched expectations that stem, in part, from cultural group differences’ leading to difficulty in exchange which ultimately leads to ethnocentrism arising from differences in values between cultures (Jandt, 2007; Sorrells, 2013, Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2012). These differences in values are what make cultural identities (Maalouf, 1998). Accordingly, identities and the forming of them will have a strong correlation as to how cultures communicate both internally and externally, e.g. collectivist cultures as opposed to individualist cultures (Yuki, 2003; Steiner and Reisinger, 2003). Additionally and adding to the complexity of clear communication and understanding there are different types of communication habitually grouped into two forms, verbal and non-verbal (Nueliep, 2009; Jandt, 2007; Brislin, 2000). The non-verbal forms refer to transmissions such as kinesics (body language), proxemics (use of personal space), chronemics (use of time), paralanguage (sobs, whistles, ums and ahs), haptics (use of touch), clothing and physical appearance and silence.

However traditional theories of intercultural communication frequently fail to take into account a third avenue, commonly found in the tourism, hospitality and events industries, by which culture can be transmitted; ritual, dance and music (Gibbs and Ritchie, 2010; Lugosi, 2009; Morgan, 2009). All of these are elements of cultural events which can arguably be said to transmit messages of different cultures in powerful

ways. Indeed authors such as Matheson (2008) and Chalcraft et al. (2011) argue that music is an international language in its own right and can thus be utilised to bring cultures together.

The types of intercultural communication that are present within the music festival event setting and therefore investigated in this research can be summarised as follows:

- Verbal communication – song, conversations, spoken word;
- Written communication – in the form of marketing material and programmes as well as any other literature produced at the event.
- Non-verbal communications – music, dance, rituals, symbols, haptics, proxemics, kinesics, paralanguage, clothing and physical appearance.

Intercultural exchange can also be categorised into different settings within the music festival event environment, for example the staged environment where performer-audience exchange is very different to the attendee-attendee exchange, which in turn is different to the exchange between performer and performer. These exchanges take place in various settings and at various times both within the event's timescale and beyond. The times and places in which these exchanges take place has a significant effect on the nature of the exchange, therefore the recording and analysis of different incidences of intercultural communication and exchange in varying settings at various times between a number of groups of people within the case study were deemed necessary. This led to the evolution of the mixed method research approach discussed in the remainder of the paper.

The case study

Cultural events and festivals range from small scale community run events to international festivals, but they share one thing in common – they are 'celebrations of

the expressions of specific cultural groups' (Bladen, Kennell, Abson and Wilde, 2012, p. 330). Whether they involve just one cultural group or several depends on their aims and objectives. The case study for the investigation of intercultural communication and exchange in the cultural event setting is Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod (LIME) whose objectives are to 'engage in excellence with the global community – bringing the world together to sing and dance in an unparalleled spirit of friendship and goodwill' and to be the 'foremost world arts festival of Hope, Friendship and Peace' (Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, 2013). In this sense the festival celebrates a range of cultural identities via national and international arts performances. In Rojek's (2014) terms the event is a cyclical global event in that it is a calendarised festival, designed as a festive event to celebrate 'individual or team prowess in [...] the arts in the name of international brotherhood or global unity' (p. 35). LIME is an annual 6 day event staged in the small town of Llangollen in North Wales each July; its origins are post Second World War with the first event staged in 1947. The event was created from the idea that alongside the traditional National and Urdd Eisteddfodae¹ which take place in Wales each year there should be an international event to bring nations together in a message of peace and understanding. It includes singing and dancing competitions, with groups from all around the world performing and competing in the main pavilion and other smaller external stages within the 'maes' (Welsh terminology) or grounds of the event. As well as the competitions there are evening concerts that can be attended separately which have included mainstream acts such as Jules Holland and Bryn Turfil. Although most of the event takes place within the specifically designed site fringe events also occur in smaller venues and on the streets of

¹ An Eisteddfod is a traditional Welsh festival of literature, music and performance dating back to the 12th century

the town, offering further avenues for intercultural exchange and communications. There are no camping facilities on site but visitors stay in local campsites, caravan parks, bed and breakfasts and guest houses. LIME has approximately 30,000 attendees each year, along with 4,000 competitors, half of whom are from overseas. LIME is run by a charitable trust made up of paid staff and volunteers most of whom interact with both attendees and artists.

The methodology and theoretical justification

The case study evolved from a single into a longitudinal case study in which LIME was attended three times with the data generated in each visit being analysed and reflected upon so as to build a stronger platform from which to gather data in the next round. Throughout the process an auto-ethnographic approach involving participant observation and researcher photography was undertaken by the researcher in order to fully understand and immerse herself into the event. Initially it was believed that a single attendance along with interviews with management would generate sufficient primary data for the first phase of the full research project. Instead it demonstrated that there were many more instances of intercultural communication and exchange than had been originally understood and that each of these situations would need a particular method of eliciting data. Therefore a phenomenological methodology was designed for the attendees, competitors and volunteers to obtain rich data on the concept of intercultural communication and exchange which included a survey and interviews. While the interviews worked well during the second visit with the competitors it was only partially successful with the volunteers and attendees, many of whom did not want to give up precious time to be interviewed whilst the festival was going on. It was noted that many volunteers and attendees were taking photographs. This coupled with

the comment by many that they would be happy to take part in an interview but not during the festival led to the development of the use of participant led photography in the third year/ visit to LIME (see fig 2).

The benefits and outcomes of the longitudinal approach adopted have been summarised visually by adapting de Certeau's (1986, p.146) model in figure 1. Each loop represents construction of knowledge and as each loop progresses so a stockpile of knowledge is built up until saturation point is reached or more generally a sufficient depth of data has been gathered for that particular study.

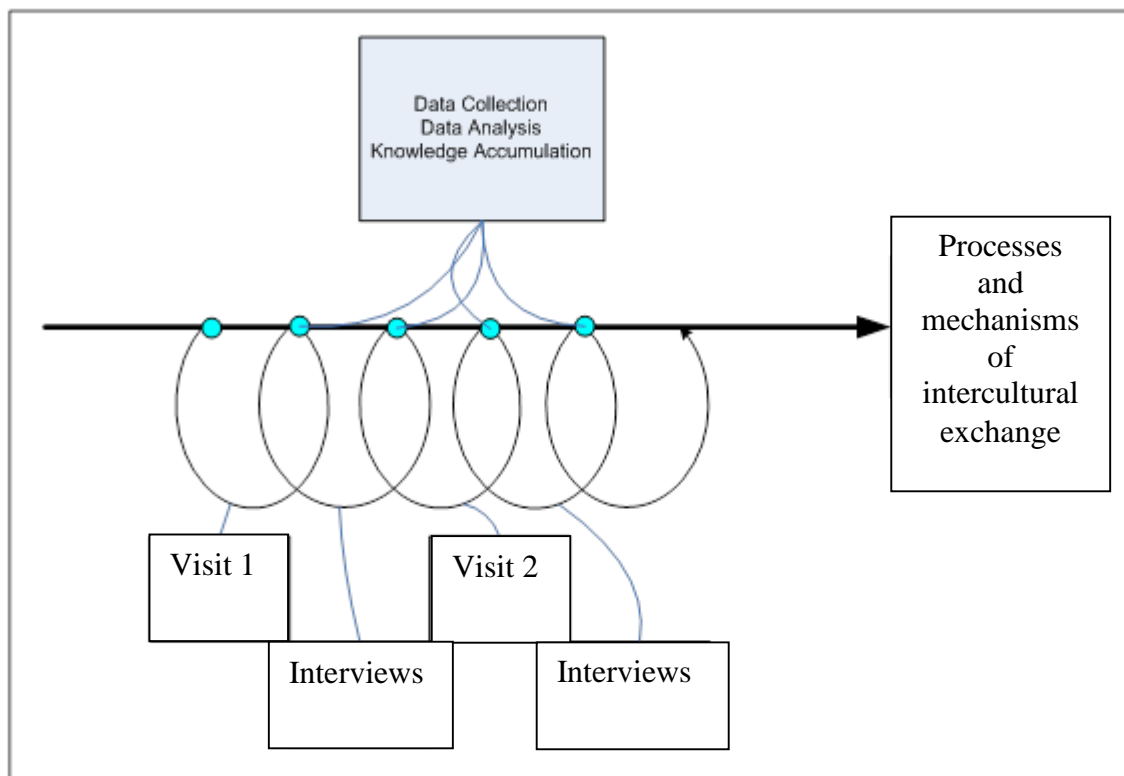


Figure 1: The data collection process, adapted from de Certeau, (1986, p. 146).

The following discussion of relevant theoretical research paradigms each phase of the data collection and the methods used will be discussed in-depth in order to justify their appropriateness and the validity of the data gathered as summarised in figure 2.

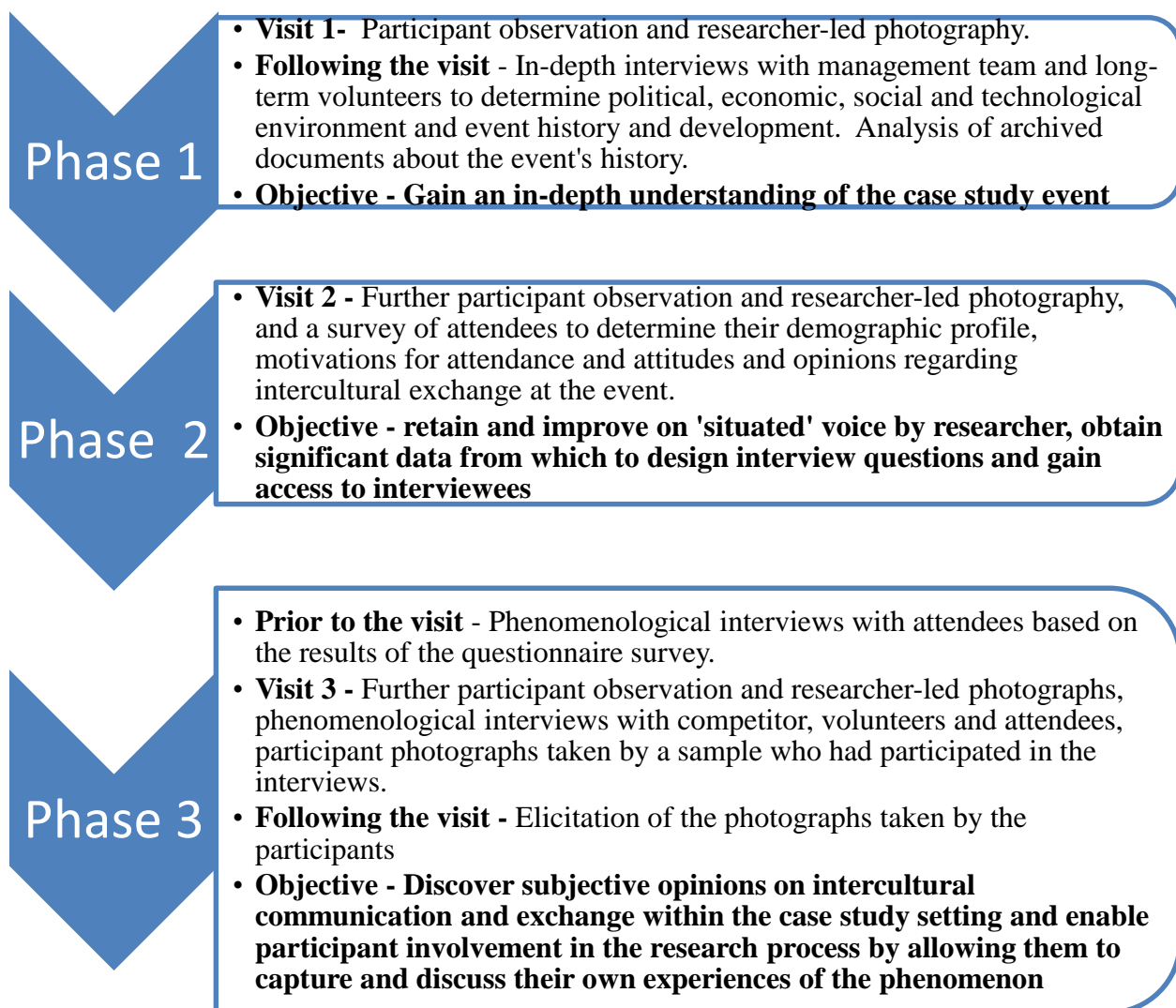


Figure 2: The multi-phase longitudinal case study approach to the measurement of intercultural communication and exchange in the event setting.

Phase 1

Participant observation and visual methods as auto- ethnographic techniques

Ethnography is an approach with growing credence within event research. Recent work on event methodologies (Holloway et al., 2010, Getz, 2012, MacKellar. 2013, Jaimangal-Jones, 2013) highlight its appropriateness in this setting. Holloway et al. (2010) offer a succinct rationale for the utilisation of ethnographic research at events;

firstly it ‘prioritises the perspective of the members of the social group being studied’ (p. 76), which is vital in terms of analysing the event experience from the multi-stakeholder perspective. Secondly ethnography requires the researcher to be ‘immersed’ in the field and stay in the field for the duration of the event, maximising opportunities for observation and reflexivity, which in turn permits greater spontaneity and flexibility in terms of the timing and types of data collected. Thirdly, ethnography allows inductive research to take place – where researcher begins with an open mind, but with no set idea of how the research process will unfold in its entirety at the outset. This gives the potential for more unexpected and original findings as the methods applied are adjusted in relation to the initial findings depending on the avenues which open up for exploration, as happened in this instance

Yin (2009) argues that a mixed-method approach to case study research is key as it allows multiple measurements of a particular phenomenon. Also, from the perspective of the stakeholder approach, it could be said that case studies can only be fully understood if each stakeholder is considered in the research process and this inevitably requires different methodological techniques, depending on factors such as time, availability, levels of involvement, knowledge and understanding. Ethnographic approaches were utilised for the purpose of securing situated voice and full understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, intercultural communication and exchange at LIME. Ethnography can involve many forms of data collection including diaries, participant observation, interviews, and visual methods. The latter three were identified as the most likely to achieve the objectives of, what turned out to be, the first phase of research –to pinpoint the multiple areas in which incidences of intercultural communication and exchange took place and the various types of exchange.

This reflects Spradley's (1980) continuum of involvement in terms participant observation as a method of data collection as follows: complete, active, moderate, passive, and non-participation. The researcher should carefully consider within which category they fall, however the reality is that they will experience differing degrees of participation and observation throughout the research process (Jaimangal-Jones, 2013). In the study in question, the researcher was moderately – to actively involved; they attended the event as a paying customer but also had access to certain areas of the event that other attendees did not, giving more opportunities for observation from an 'insider's' perspective.

MacKellar (2013) points out that participant observation in the event setting can achieve insights that quantitative surveys invariably cannot. The greatest potential for participant observation in event settings is in examining the social dynamics of audiences and the reasons for their behaviour (MacKellar, 2013). However, as with most methodologies, there are failings that must be considered. The most prominent of these is its reliability due to the role of the researcher and the fact that the results are very specific to the cultural setting in question. One way of addressing this is to bring structure to the participant observation process, using a systematic approach. The use of researcher-led photographs of particular incidences of intercultural exchange in certain areas of the event and its environs at specific times helped address this issue, as well as utilising a dictaphone to record exactly what was happening at the time the photograph was taken, for example the atmosphere, signs and symbols, proxemics, sights and sounds. As detailed by Jaimangal-Jones (2013) this fulfils one of the requirements of the participant observer; the need to take a 'wide-angle lense' approach. Another criticism of participant observation is the potential for researcher bias, given the

centrality of the researcher in collecting the data. This is somewhat unavoidable in most situations but can be overcome to a certain extent by incorporating multiple stakeholder perspectives and ensuring the participants 'voice' is prioritised in the research findings. In this research this was achieved through utilising other's descriptions and observations via the participant-led photography.

Reflexivity is another essential consideration in conducting ethnographic research, thus it was important that this approach was reflexive on the part of the researcher and researched. Reflexive ethnography has been described by Davies (1999) as the material of rich description which recognises that 'human agents are neither passive products of social structures (as per empiricism) nor entirely their creators (as per interpretivism) but are placed in an iterative and naturally reflexive feedback relationship to them' (p.18-19). Davies supports the use of the visual in reflexive ethnographic studies as 'visual representations... are granted a greater degree of trust, thus confidence in their validity is ... attained more readily than in the ... written word' (p.118). Pink (2007) also recognises their increased use in postmodern sociological research commenting that 'photography, video and hypermedia are becoming increasingly incorporated into the work of ethnographers – as cultural texts, as representations of ethnographic knowledge, and as sites of cultural production, social interaction and individual experience' (p.1).

. The participant observation that took place in the first visit/ observation was an initial investigation and included structured field notes which recorded incidences of intercultural communication and exchange, when and where they occurred and with or between whom. These field notes were complimented by a photographic diary of incidences as well as signs and symbols relating to intercultural exchange; a total of 50

photographs were taken using a digital camera. Following the visit the field notes and visual images were collated to give the researcher a better understanding of this social phenomenon at LIME. These initial findings helped formulate some basic themes to cover in the in-depth interviews with the organisers, contributed to the design of the questionnaire survey that was carried out in the second visit and provided a structure to carry out further participant observation including photographic evidence in phase 2.

At this stage a distinction was drawn between ‘processes’ and ‘mechanisms’ of intercultural exchange. Processes were seen to be more organic and evolutionary, naturally occurring incidences of verbal and non-verbal communication including conversations, body language, physical appearance and ritualistic behaviour. Mechanisms on the other hand were considered to be techniques and methods for specific encouragement of exchange about different cultures within the event, for example signs placed around the site and its environs, marketing materials and event programmes, and addresses to the audience regarding specific acts or performances. These distinctions were followed in designing the rest of the research methodology.

In-depth interviews with event organisers

Ethnographic approaches often involve interviews with key informants (Jaimangal-Jones 2013) and following the first attendance, the researcher felt it necessary to more fully understand the event through interviews with a number of members of the organisation in order to gain knowledge of the history of the event as well as the political, economic and social environments in which the event operates. These interviews were also designed to discover the objectives of the event and the opinion of the participants on intercultural exchange and communication therein, drawing out ‘stories’ from various players within the organisation. A total of 5 semi-structured

interviews were undertaken in the LIME offices with administrative and managerial staff involved in marketing fundraising and general organisation. The interviews allowed the respondents to direct the conversations, resulting in rich data which when analysed thematically highlighted many stories and past incidences of intercultural exchange at the event. There was a lot of emphasis upon how the event has changed in terms of opportunities for intercultural communication and exchange over the years which identified significant themes for more focused investigation in phase 2 as well as more effective questionnaire design. A further outcome of these interviews was that as participant observer the researcher was able to gain a more 'situated voice' within the event and a greater depth of understanding of the key stakeholders and their roles in facilitating intercultural exchange and communication through various processes and mechanisms.

The researcher was also given access to the archives of documentation from previous years, including newspapers dating back to the 1940s and other 'newsletters' which were subsequently analysed in relation to the history and development of the event as a form of document analysis. This part of phase 1 provided extremely rich data to add to the 'stockpile of knowledge' from which to begin the phenomenological phase of research in phase 2.

Phase 2

Building on the preliminary field notes, photographic evidence from visit 1, the interviews and archive material the researcher developed a more clearly focussed understanding of where and when the incidences of intercultural communication and exchange took place and the processes and mechanisms through which it happens. This

informed the development of the questionnaires and areas of researcher led research identified for Phase 2. 84 photographs were taken during this visit, with accompanying field notes, in order to record the phenomenon in particular areas within the event setting and specific aspects of the event (for example the parade that takes place on the first Tuesday, the 'Amphitheatre Stage', trade stands, walkways, Llangollen town); to discover whether intercultural exchange and communication occurred more or less in these locations; through which processes and mechanisms, and to what depth. Figures 3 and 4 are examples of these photographs.



Figure 3: Visual representation of intercultural exchange in the Amphitheatre Stage

This is an example of an arena within the event which historically has been well known for its audience involvement. The process of intercultural exchange occurs as the attendees learn a dance from another culture, a non-verbal ritualistic communication.



Figure 4: Visual representation of intercultural communication at a trade stand

Many of the trade stands on the site had an international theme, providing information, for example, regarding international charity organisations and routes into languages. In fig 4 a group of German competitors are talking to one of the staff on a trade stand. This is an example of verbal communication occurs in ‘pockets’ around the event, but is also indicative of many of the conversations observed which tended to be practical and short in nature as opposed to deep and meaningful.

Questionnaire with attendees

The second visit also involved a survey with event attendees. The use of a survey within a case study is relatively commonplace and is justified in this instance by the fact that attendees are a major stakeholder in any event; are the largest stakeholder group in this event and therefore their voice incorporates the views and perspectives of a significant population into the research. Additionally motivational and demographic data help to comprehend the nature of the attendee which can then be triangulated with results from other phases of the research. The questionnaire survey was distributed for self-completion at the event in visit 2 and 126 were completed. Questions were asked

on issues such as motivations to attend, thoughts and opinions on opportunities to engage with people from different cultures, areas of the event and its environs that were thought to be more conducive to engaging with people from other cultures and processes and mechanisms through which intercultural communication and exchange takes place such as the dance seen in fig. 3. The major reason for using a questionnaire was due to the temporal nature of events, they allow little time for in-depth qualitative techniques of investigation during the event itself (Pol and Pak, 1994). The questionnaires were also seen as a means to establish a rapport with participants, to recruit potential participants for post-event interviews at which they would be asked to use their photographs to support their comments. However although some initially agreed it proved impossible to actually set up any interviews after the event and no photographs were ever received by the researcher. While the results of the questionnaires were analysed in a conventional fashion and provided a good basis for follow up interviews it was realised that the participant led-photographic research element would have to be changed.

Initiating Phase 3-Phenomenological interviews with attendees and volunteers

Either prior to visit 3 or right at the beginning of the event interviews were conducted with attendees and event volunteers either over the telephone or face to face. Both groups were approached from contacts made during the questionnaire survey in phase 2. All those approached were asked if they would participate in a pre-event interview whose topic had been developed from the questionnaires. During this interview they were also asked if they would take photographs on a disposable camera supplied by the researcher and then participate in a post event interview to discuss the inter-cultural activities they had photographed. The pre interview included a discussion about the

types of photographs to be taken, ie avoiding children, other vulnerable groups and private spaces, and the participants were asked not to have the films processed thus preventing them from taking photographs which could then be used inappropriately in another forum.

While the 2 of the attendees contacted in this way were not attending the event again their interviews gave an insight into how they perceived intercultural communication and exchange at the event. They also highlighted the fact that those who had attended many times before were able to reflect more deeply than those who had only been once or twice. Therefore further regular attendees and volunteers were sought so that the participant led-photography study would have sufficient depth. A total of five interviews with attendees were conducted, with three participating fully in phase 3, the photographic research, pre and post interviews. Three volunteers were recruited to carry out interviews with, but due to time constraints only one was able to do so, however all three took photographs and returned their cameras to the researcher. The interviews were phenomenological in nature in that they formed a deep enquiry into the subject of intercultural exchange and communication from the participants' point of view, asking them what their life-world view of this phenomenon is and having them share their perspective on it (Fox, Gouthro, Morakabati and Brackstone, 2014). It has only recently been accepted that phenomenology is an appropriate paradigm for the use in events research; the basis for this acknowledgement lies in its ability to 'enlarge and deepen understanding of the range of immediate experiences' (Ziakas and Boukas, 2012, p. 57). Therefore phenomenology is effective in measuring many aspects of the event 'experience' as it helps assign meanings to and deduce meanings from these experiences from the participants' perspective. The interviews in phase 3 were also

designed to draw out stories and experiences of intercultural exchange and communication and the processes and mechanisms through which they take place and for each participant to consider what intercultural exchange and communication at the event meant to them, as the first stage of the phenomenological approach.

Phase 3

Participant-led photographs (attendees and volunteers) and elicitation of the photographs in an interview setting.

Given the visual nature of events and the role of the spectacle within the event experience, it is notable that the presence and use of images within events research has been largely absent to date. In formulating this framework for analysing and understanding process of intercultural exchange and interaction the use of images was seen as a valuable means for participants to register and record areas of significance, which could then be discussed with the researcher at a later date through in-depth interviews. According to Ziakas and Boukas (2012), there are three different types of phenomenological research, empirical phenomenology, existential phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology. This study utilised the former, in that it concentrates on precise descriptions of human experiences, collecting data from several people who have experienced the phenomenon and then combining the data into themes to form a structural description of these experiences in terms of conditions, situation and context. Thus by collecting the data through interviewing with the use of participant-led photography led to greater involvement of the participants in the research and helped them tell their own stories through visual representations. Visual methods and phenomenology are not commonly linked together, however there is considerable overlap between both theories terms of capturing and understanding the event

experience. The measurement of intercultural communication and exchange presents many challenges as there are various meanings attached to it and impact will always be individual, based in subjects' lived experience and their interpretation of the symbolic interactions occurring within any given context (Blumer 1969). Therefore visual representations of the transmissions are a useful tool, provided that anonymity of subjects is maintained where ethical considerations dictate. Each participant was asked to take up to 27 photographs (as many as the disposable camera would allow) of what they considered to be intercultural exchange or communication at the event over the 6 days. Encouragement was given to select as many areas within the event setting and also in the town of Llangollen as possible and to consider not just verbal communication but other aspects such as signs and symbols, physical appearance, body language. At the same time as making these suggestions, it was also explained that paramount to the exercise was that each participant take photographs of what they personally considered to fall into the categories of intercultural communication and exchange. The photographs could then be discussed more fully in the elicitation interviews following the event.

Photo-elicitation in the interview setting is said to be a very effective way to 'get close to the participants and to discover the subject's own categorisations and definitions of his/her life-world' (Cederholm, 2012, p. 92; Pink 2008). This can be achieved through a process of individual reflexivity on the part of the participant which is encouraged throughout the interview assisted by the generation of comfortable spaces and establishment of trust between researcher and participant (Scarles, 2012). Visual materials produced and collected by research participants for the purpose of research was originally termed 'autodriving' by Heisly and Levy (1991, cited in Matteucci,

2014), whereby the participants see their own behaviour and ‘drive’ the interview themselves, a distinct advantage for making sense of experiences and reducing the potential for interviewer bias and ethnocentricity.

There are also other advantages to this technique firstly as presented by Selstad (2007), that ‘the tourist... is in a constant state of transition, both through movement and experience...[and therefore].. learning is accomplished once the experience has been completed’ (p. 28), suggesting that what the visitor has experienced should be ascertained following, not during, their visit. This was also noted by Jaimangal-Jones (2013) who followed up participant observation at events with in-depth interviews and focus groups post event, at which point participants had time to reflect on the value and meaning of their experiences. Secondly, Haldrup and Larsen (2006) point out that ‘in much literature, the camerawork of tourists is too easily and too quickly seen as passive, superficial and disembodied, a discursively prefigured activity of ‘quotation’ (p. 282) and therefore the photographer is not seen as an active element in the relation of experience. The truth is that the event attendee as photographer is potentially an ethnologist in their own right meaning that they sense a greater feeling of ‘being in the driver’s seat’ and taking part ownership of the research (Westwood, 2007). The problem of objectivity versus subjectivity in the use of photography is further explored by Garlick (2002) – he sees this as a dichotomy because, whereas in some senses, the photographer in the event setting can be seen as an actor or participant in the situation, the camera also puts a distance between the participant and the actual lived experience. At the same time as the camera being a ‘universal communicator’ (Yeh, 2009, p.200), it also becomes a barrier to communication. Photo-elicitation in an interview setting can

be said to revive what experiences the attendees had and put them into context of the phenomenon being studied.

In this instance the depth of information added through this technique can be exemplified using figures 4 and 5. The researcher taking the photograph in figure 4 observed the intercultural exchange between the German dancers and the trade stand representative as being short and not particularly in-depth. However Volunteer 1 had also taken a similar photograph at another trade stand and when asked to comment in the interview, their comment was that “the visitors were eastern European of some sort, and they were chatting with the guy in the tent for quite a while”, suggesting that the interactions were of a deeper nature in this instance. Without the attendees comments the researchers’ observations would have been partial and incomplete.



Figure 5: A photograph taken by volunteer participant of intercultural communication at a trade stand

The results from this phase of the research were triangulated with the comments made in the phenomenological interviews, the researcher’s own photographic evidence and field notes, the results from the questionnaire survey and the comments made by event

organisers. This process supported the validity of the process and therefore the data provided by all participants on intercultural exchanges and communication at LIME

Conclusion

The methodological approaches described in this paper were designed to measure the phenomenon of intercultural exchange and communication at cultural festivals and were implemented at the case study event, Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod. In doing so the paper seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature surrounding the implementation of ethnographic approaches to events research, by applying ethnographic methods to a multi-stakeholder case study. The focus of the research also addresses another under explored aspect of events in terms of the evaluation of the social impacts of events from the perspective of the attendee. Events are often designed with the intention of facilitating intercultural understanding and exchange; however the extent to which such aspects are meaningfully evaluated is debatable. This paper proposes a set of methods, which can be tailored in a flexible manner, to gain insights into the experiences of a range of event stakeholders, leading to the design of more meaningful events for all concerned.

Returning to the developments and recent trends in event studies research, as proposed in the introduction, it can be seen that this approach deals with two key issues. First it considers each of the major stakeholders that are involved in the event in terms of the phenomenon under investigation – organisers, attendees, volunteers and competitors. Such an approach facilitates a more holistic understanding of events as social spaces, experience-scapes and performance stages. Events are complex temporal spaces which exist for finite moments in time, yet hold huge social and cultural significance for those

involved in their construction and consumption. This paper argues that to truly gain an insight into participant experiences of them we must be open minded and adaptable in our methodological approaches. Second the research deals with a particular social impact and aspect of events – interaction between cultural groups. Social impacts are often considered in terms of the impacts upon communities where events take place in terms of community cohesion, positive image, pride and so forth but focus much less on the interactions between cultural groups and the transference of cultural knowledge and understanding within events. Through investigating such process we can better understand how events can be designed and programmed to encourage and facilitate such exchanges and with increasing accountability surrounding achievement of event objectives such methodological approaches are also timely.

In terms of advancing our understanding of event experiences this paper has also demonstrated how a longitudinal multi-stakeholder approach to event analysis positions the researcher in a privileged location by providing invaluable perceptions from many varying points of view, enabling richer data analysis and greater understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Going back to Shenton's (2004) four categories of trustworthy research, this adds credibility to the research in that it demonstrates that a true picture has been built up of the phenomenon. The transferability of much qualitative research i.e. whether the findings can be applied to another setting is contested, as every event is unique, however the common characteristics and components of events within a given typology and the nature of the audiences they attract permit a degree of transferability of research findings between similar events. To complement this the dependability of the study (i.e. the extent to which it can be repeated) has been considered strongly in the evolution of the methodology: through the

rigour of design and analysis including triangulation of each phase of the data collection; the systematic approach to participant observation: the use of multiple surveys to gain demographic and motivational data amongst attendees and volunteers; the use of visual material to supplement field notes and. If the research design were to be taken to other cultural events, the nature of the stakeholders that are interviewed may vary slightly, but otherwise the methodology can be repeated to study the same phenomenon.

Finally, the confirmability – a demonstration that findings have emerged from the data and not from the researcher's own predispositions - has been dealt with by involving a variety of stakeholders in the data collection process, and giving the participants at the event a chance to be fully immersed in the research, including elicitation of photographs belonging to the participants in the interview setting.

However this paper has also demonstrated the difficulties of using visual research methods. In order to provide a strong and authentic voice there is great dependence upon the co-operation of others. This co-operation is not easily gained and for true depth of understanding to be developed may take a great deal of time to be completed, a luxury not always available to all researchers or research projects.

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