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ACCESS—A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR EDINBURGH FESTIVALS

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Festivals and events have assumed a prominent place in the social and economic fabric of Edinburgh, to a point where it now enjoys a reputation as a leading festival and event destination. In Edinburgh, as in other festival destinations, most of the research and evaluation effort has been concerned with "proving" the economic benefits of individual events. The limitations of focusing on narrow economic outcomes are now widely recognized in terms of the comparability, reliability, and utility of the estimates produced. While the attention of stakeholders has been on economic benefits, the very important cultural, community, and social benefits have been overlooked. Important issues such as engagement with the arts, community, cultural, social, and stakeholder benefits and disbenefits produced have yet to be researched in any systematic way. This article offers a comprehensive research agenda for key festivals in Edinburgh and acts an introduction to this special issue. The research agenda is based on published articles (inclusive of those in this volume), existing strategies and documentation, and the editors' knowledge of and engagement with the Edinburgh festival community. The agenda will be of interest to the numerous festivals and events stakeholders in Edinburgh as well as other destinations that are seeking to understand the social and cultural, as well the economic, dimensions of festivals.

Key words: Festivals; Events; Economic benefits; Social benefits; Cultural benefits; Edinburgh

Introduction

This article introduces an agenda for researching festivals from an economic, social, and cultural perspective. It argues that the research, management, and monitoring of festivals needs to move beyond economic impacts in order to understand the complex and comprehensive set of benefits and disbenefits associated with festivals. To this end, the social and cultural benefits and disbenefits that accrue to all stakeholders in Edinburgh, Scotland are investigated. Based on a comprehensive literature review and interviews with key stakeholders a comprehensive research agenda—ACCESS—is developed, key research questions are posited, and research methods are proposed. The article begins with a review of the relevant literature concerning Edinburgh's festivals. These provide the cultural, economic, social, community, geographic, tourism, and political context for the research agenda. Then the process of developing and validating a research agenda

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for Edinburgh festivals is described and ACCESS, a research agenda for understanding the benefits of Edinburgh festivals for the arts, culture, community, economy, society, and stakeholders, is proposed.

Literature Review

In the period immediately after World War II, festivals were used as an aid to reconstruction and economic regeneration (Harvie, 2003; Waterman, 1998). Garden festivals were held in early postwar Germany to encourage the regeneration of war damaged areas (Ward, 1998). The Edinburgh International Festival was founded in 1947 with the purpose of bolstering the sense of European identity by supporting the revival of culture and the arts (Harvie, 2003). In addition, the Edinburgh festivals have brought economic benefits both to Edinburgh and the rest of Scotland and have assisted with the transition from an economy strongly dependent on heavy industries to one increasingly based on services and tourism (Harvie, 2003).

Different indicators on measuring the social impacts of festivals have been recommended, such as participation, new audiences, urban regeneration, training and employment opportunities, the effect of the festival on the city's environment, infrastructure and attractiveness, self-esteem and socialization, the change effected by arts activity, and arts in education (Edinburgh City Council, 2001). Kelly and Kelly (2000) also added the contribution made to stimulating and developing public awareness of important issues and changing people's attitudes on political, ethical, religious, or moral issues.

Chacko and Shaffer (1993) have claimed that a festival must be evaluated by its success in fostering community development. The celebratory atmosphere of many festivals, the promotion of professional and amateur artists, the promotion of educational and audience development programs, and the inclusion of free events all help to make festivals more accessible to people who might not otherwise consider attending a live arts event (Allen & Shaw, 2000). Getz (1989) defined community development as, "the enhancement of the host population's way of life, economy and environment" (p. 132). Festivals give communities the opportunity for public celebration. Community celebrations, often developed as arts, fringe and folk festivals, are representative of the many aspects of the social and cultural fabric of the community in which they are celebrated. Community celebration is a common denominator to all festivals (Arcodia & Whitford, 2002). For example, the Edinburgh Hogmanay and Mela festivals were established in order to celebrate local culture and customs. The Edinburgh Mela celebrates the traditions of the Asian culture and community. The Edinburgh Hogmanay was established in order to provide a safer, more structured approach to the traditional New Year celebrations.

Festivals have strong place identification: a festival may help define a place. Successful festivals create a powerful sense of place, which is local, as the festival takes place in a locality or region, but which often makes an appeal to a global culture in order to attract both participants and audiences (Waterman, 1998). In addition, festivals can be a medium for the local culture to reach a global audience. For example, the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF)'s inclusion of Scottish drama and theater as an integral part of its programming has created a platform for the articulation of Scottish culture and has elevated it to an international level (Harvie, 2003).

Street art and the increasing cultural diversity of festivals are becoming more prominent and increasingly festivals provide opportunities for amateur artists (Allen & Shaw, 2000). The simultaneous participation of amateur and professional artists emphasizes the local identity of a festival and gives local artists the opportunity to showcase their work to the public (Allen & Shaw, 2000; Harvie, 2003). In fact, the larger the festival the more likely it is to feature amateur artists as larger festivals have greater capacity to program work by local groups, and promote the local culture. According to Harvie (2003), numerous Scottish theatre companies have been stimulated and sustained by the EIF and Fringe.

In addition, EIF has contributed, albeit indirectly, to the development of other theater events on Scotland and help establish a "festival culture" in Edinburgh that spans different kinds of cultural expression and participation (Harvie, 2003). In this way, it can be argued that the cultural impact of a festival can expand beyond the confines of its program and the work it features, to artistic expression elsewhere. However, it is not uncommon to hear festivals being described as "elitist" (Waterman, 1998) and by focusing on "high culture" excluding large segments of the local population. In fact, it has been argued that holding the event may reflect the desire of a small elite group to pursue its interests in the name of community development (Ritchie, 1984).

Festivals' negative cultural impacts include the import of foreign culture through the programming of foreign plays and/or theater groups and artists. This could affect local theater groups and productions, and possibly festival attendance, if the festival program is not balanced in its inclusion of local and foreign culture. Unless the festival is primarily targeted at foreign visitors, local culture and arts should feature just as prominently as foreign. The Edinburgh International Festival has often been criticized of this, but according to Harvie (2003) the festival has also been a platform for the presentation of Scottish production and theater groups to the rest of the world, as is evidenced with the recent reintroduction of Scottish Ballet into their program in 2005.

Developing the ACCESS Research Agenda

Based on the relevant literature and policy documents that were examined for Edinburgh festivals, a broad set of research questions regarding the Edinburgh festivals was developed. Questions were developed around the key themes of the ACCESS framework. Key festival stakeholders were contacted to ensure that the research agenda was relevant to their needs. Research questions were subsequently refined after input from stakeholders so that the final agenda met the needs of stakeholders as well as conforming to the need for academic rigor and objectivity. Finally, a methodology was developed to implement the research agenda, based on current approaches to festivals research.

Broadly, this agenda was labeled ACCESS and was aimed at addressing the following six aspects as they relate to Edinburgh festivals:

- **A**rts—understand the benefits for the arts community (in all forms).
- **C**ulture—understand the role of festivals in creating, promoting, and preserving heritage and culture.
- **C**ommunity—understand how festivals meet the needs of the business and wider community.
- **E**conomy—understand the net economic benefits of festivals.
- **S**ociety—understand the social benefits of festivals.
- **S**takeholders—understand the role of all stakeholders in festivals.

In-depth interviews were held with representatives from the major Edinburgh festivals (http://www.edinburghfestivals.co.uk/), public funding agencies, and government bodies. These stakeholders were also sent a copy of the proposed research agenda prior to interview. At the interview the stakeholders were asked to review the ACCESS research questions and comment on their appropriateness and applicability. A key criteria for accepting (or validating) these questions was, "Will ACCESS help us to maximize the net benefits (or minimize the disbenefits) of Edinburgh festivals for stakeholders and the wider Scottish community?" The interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique for, "making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to their context of their use" (Krippendorf, 2003, p. 18) and is frequently used in tourism research. For the content analysis of the written word the units of analysis were the interview text. These were examined for the frequency of descriptor words (verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) used in relation to the question answers. The interview transcripts were examined independently and the key descriptor words relating to ACCESS framework highlighted (Table 1).

The researchers then with substantial agreement codified the material and findings were drawn from the key words (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006.) The key words are show in Table 2.

Findings

Initially, there was some concern among stakeholders that the ACCESS research agenda was duplicating an initiative by Edinburgh festivals to strategize collectively on where and how to position Edinburgh festivals out to the year 2015 as the world's leading festivals. This initiative was dubbed "Thundering Hooves" (Scottish Arts Council, 2006) in reference to the increasingly intense level of competition among festival destinations that are following the lead of Edinburgh and threatening to overtake its position as the preeminent festivals destination. These fears of duplication were allayed by explaining that "Thundering Hooves" is very much a strategizing, forward-looking exercise, while the proposed research agenda was reflective. In that way, the two exercises are complimentary, and address the fundamentally different questions of, "how did we get here?" and "where do we go from here?"

There was also some concern from one stakeholder regarding the question of elitism and the EIF. During a conference held by Napier University in July 2005,

Table 1
ACCESS Keyword Compilation

Arts	Culture	Community	Economy	Society	Stakeholders
Purpose	Rights and entitlements	Festival	Breadth	Underresearched	Relationships
Quality	Product	All stakeholders	Protection	Need to measure	Infrastructure
Infrastructure	International	Performers	Value of/to	Difficult to qualify/quantify	Networks/partnerships
Festival development	Access (public)	Audience	Agencies	Participation	Roles
Market reach	Contemporary	Residents	Funding	Cost–benefit	Cooperation
City access	Education	Business	Benefits (direct/indirect)	Inclusion	Communication
Social inclusion	Perception	Cooperation (formal)	Opportunity	Feel good	Facilities
Education	Impact(s)	Cooperation (informal)	Resources	Opportunity of experience	Information overload
Competition	Image and place	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Facilitation
Cultural responsibility	Organizational distinctiveness	Disbenefits	Growth	Authenticity	Organizational structure
Performer attraction	Income	Diversity	Cyclical	Catalyst	Priorities
Exposure	(As) capital	And development	Subsidy versus market	Quality of experience	Purpose
Economic	Enabler	Support	Local	Appeal	Independence
Funding	Authenticity	Local enterprise	Measurement	Cohesion	Funding
Audience	Partnerships	Social inclusion	Dispersal	Conflicting priorities	Responsibilities
Community	Visitor experience	Level of involvement	And organizational structure	Negatives	Leadership
Critical mass	Distinctiveness	Facilitation	Priorities	Competition	Skills
History	And regeneration	Local engagement	Funding and sponsorship	Funding	Strength
Visitor experience	Conduit (for Scotland)	Rights	Competivity	Driver	Visibility
	Social accounting	History	As driver (for various)	Infrastructure	Latent strength
	And funding	Fatigue	Investment	Local engagement	Evolution
	Cost	Impacts upon	Vested interests	Festival distinctions	Process(es)
		Capacity	Services	Brand and identity	Involvement
		Priorities	Business	Function	Complexity
		Integration	Entrepreneurship	Social accountability	
		Breadth			
		Education			

where the research agenda was presented, a discussion around the need for the EIF to program the best international talent that it could secure was conducted. It was agreed that this type of programming, though apparently elitist, was necessary if the EIF was to maintain its position as a leading performing arts festival. As a consequence, two proposed research questions of, "To what extent are Edinburgh festivals elitist?" and "Are Edinburgh festivals too focused on high art?" were changed to, "How do Edinburgh's festivals maintain their position as leaders in the performing, literary, and visual arts?"

In order to validate and refine the ACCESS research agenda a range of Edinburgh festival stakeholders were interviewed. For the purposes of incorporating their views of the research agenda their responses and suggestions are presented under the ACCESS headings

Table 2
ACCESS Keywords Focus

Infrastructure
Funding
Cooperation
Facilitation
Priorities
Purpose
Organizational structure
Education
Competition
Social inclusion
Visitor experience
Rights and entitlements
Costs
Authenticity
Benefits
Local engagements
Measurement

below. The responses are then used to refine the research agenda and make it more applicable and relevant to the research needs of stakeholders. A brief discussion of appropriate research methods follows the research agenda refinement based on the contributions to this special issue as a starting point for implementing the research agenda.

Arts and Festivals Research

This first section of the ACCESS research agenda addressed the benefits of festivals for the Arts community in all forms. There is a need to define the scope of arts festivals as well as the role of Edinburgh as a hub for arts festivals. Should all art forms and all types of arts festivals be accommodated in Edinburgh? Obviously, this will have implications for venue capacity, programming, and performance quality. There is a suggestion that arts festivals need to consider audience preferences as well as the needs of performers and artists. Artistic provision also has implications for funding and further investment in festival infrastructure, so must be strategic and sustainable. However, new venues must be fully utilized in order to justify initial investment and provide a return on investment. This generates the need to develop new arts events based on other visual art forms. The timing of any new events is an issue due to capacity constraints in the peak tourism seasons (summer and winter), as is the risk of staging too many arts festivals and creating "festival fatigue" in the arts and festival communities.

The right mix of performing, visual, and literary arts is important, as is the relationship between arts and major sporting events such as the Olympics and Commonwealth Games. There is a notion that more visual arts should be included in the EIF, which are mainly performance arts based because they have higher visibility and therefore accessibility for the local community. For example, the Cow Parade in Edinburgh (a charity event) created a sense of fun and creativity in Edinburgh over the Summer of 2006, through a highly visual and accessible public art form (http://edinburgh.cowparade.com/, accessed December 9, 2006).

Arts festivals define Edinburgh so high quality is essential as is the need to preserve the uniqueness of the artistic offerings. The collective nature of arts communities can mitigate against the maintenance of USPs and competitive advantage, and festival organization may be considered secondary compared to the artistic development itself. Juxtaposed against this arts ethos is the competition between arts festival organizers to attract the best artists, who may bear no affiliation to a particular festival or locality, even if that festival provided the showcase for takeoff of their work. Hence there is a greater need for festival stakeholders to understand the arts and the needs of artists. Some form of support or subsidy of performers expenses (e.g., accommodation in Edinburgh) may act as an incentive to create greater loyalty to Edinburgh festivals and repeat performances if desired.

There is a high degree of dependency in the relationship between the arts and festivals. Arts have the ability to define contemporary culture, but arts festivals are in a unique position to define direction and content of the art that reaches an audience. Clearly there is a need to further understand the nexus and needs of both arts and festival stakeholders in Edinburgh and the extent to which their aims and ideals converge.

These responses address the revised research questions of, "How do Edinburgh's festivals maintain their position as leaders in the performing, literary and visual arts?" Underlying this question is the politics of festivals and the positioning of Edinburgh as a city of high art and culture. Reid (2006) found some level of criticism of the "elitist" nature of Edinburgh's image as a result of public funding for the hosting of the MTV Europe Music Awards in 2003 (actually held in Leith with a live open air broadcast and concert in Princes Street Gardens in the heart of the city). Reid's insights raise questions of conservative control over city imaging, social inclusion, and exclusion and the future direction of festivals and events development in Edinburgh and the surrounding burghs.

Culture and Festivals Research

This second aspect of ACCESS sought to understand the role of festivals in creating, promoting, and preserving heritage and culture. There was some obvious overlap with the first agenda because arts were considered as defining contemporary culture. The relative mix of local Scottish culture and other cultural content at festivals was considered important. Developing an appropriate audience for the cultural content of festival programs is also important, especially if the purpose is to promote and preserve local culture. Although, it was also considered that Edinburgh's relationship with cul-

ture must be seen to be dynamic, live, and current, not static.

Prentice and Andersen (2003) have examined Edinburgh festivals in the context of cultural tourism and the successful transition of Edinburgh's image from traditional rural landscape to an international tourism destination. The market for "consumption" of Edinburgh festival experiences was categorized in three styles; consuming Edinburgh as a tourism/historic city, consuming Scottish performing arts, and consuming international performing arts. From the tourist's perspective, all three styles of consumption may overlap, with the first being a non-place- and non-festival-specific form of consumption and the last two being specific to the program and venues for festival performances. Segmentation based on a sample of over 400 visitors to Edinburgh in 2003 indicated that imagery of traditional Scottish culture persists in the minds of visitors, but festival experiences provide for consumption of contemporary culture. The role of festivals and culture in transforming tourism imagery requires greater research according to Prentice and Andersen (2003), if it is to inform the modeling and marketing of tourism to Edinburgh.

Community and Festivals Research

The aim of this third aspect of the agenda is to understand how festivals meet the needs of the business and wider community. Part of the importance of festival's role in building sense of community is in retaining local support as then the local community has a vested interested in the success of the festival. However, the "community" of Edinburgh is broad and involves local residents, businesses, and the festival community itself. The issues is that the festival community may not be resident, and include performers, funding agencies and suppliers that all have an interest in the success of the festival and will benefit from the same. The festival community can extend to online and other media forms so that festival community networks may be continually expanding. Thus, the scope of community and festival research presents particular problems with respect to definition and identification.

Where community can be readily identified, benefits are readily identifiable. For example, Mela stands out as home grown community festival that celebrates the Asian cultures in Edinburgh. The role of festivals in community cohesion and development is considered important and the facilitation of this is considered to be the responsibility of the City Council. Community input into all aspects of festival development is another role of City Council.

Carlsen and Taylor (2002) have demonstrated how community programs associated with sporting events can contribute to community development and cohesion, in the case of the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games, the same can be said of Edinburgh's arts festivals.

Economy and Festivals Research

This fourth area of the ACCESS research agenda aimed to understand the net economic benefits of festivals. There is a general expectation that the entire economy of Edinburgh will benefit from successful festivals, although the quantification and distribution of these benefits is not well understood. The recent economic impact study of the year round festivals concluded that Edinburgh's festivals generated an output of just under £170 million; £40 million in new income and support for 3,200 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in a year in Edinburgh. Direct economic benefits to the service sector are evident as the annual influx of visitors fill hotels, apartments, restaurants, and performance venues, but the indirect and induced economic benefits depend on the structure and self-sufficiency of the Edinburgh economy. There is an opinion that the economic growth in Edinburgh since World War II has fostered self-sufficiency and ensured a local supply of resources, personnel, and inputs. If this is the case, the economic benefits are not only retained but are also distributed across all sectors of the economy: primary, secondary, and tertiary. These multiplier effects are of interest to all stakeholders, especially as they occur on a regular basis and have become an integral part of economic life in Edinburgh. Furthermore, when the links between a buoyant economy and cultural and societal benefits are identified, then a clearer understanding of the role of festivals in Edinburgh is developed. One clear link is the influx of specialists in development and delivery of festivals and events, enhancing their "cultural product" and quality as well as bringing a diversity of skills and ideas to the city.

However, there are disbenefits associated with festivals and events as well that must be acknowledged and taken into account. Peak demand for accommodation for festivals has driven up rents and hotel room rates in

Edinburgh to a point where it is inaccessible for many months of the year. Aligned to this are the congestion, overcrowding, and price inflation associated with peak demand, all of which have an economic and social cost attached. Likewise, there are environmental costs and benefits that need to be taken into account in any comprehensive assessment of the net benefits of festivals.

In summary, the validation of this component of the research agenda will involve researchers looking beyond the immediate, tangible, direct economic benefits of festivals to consider the intangible economic and social costs and benefits before arriving at any conclusions about the net benefits of festivals. Furthermore, the distribution of these benefits and costs must also be examined to ensure that they are spread over a wide cross-section of the economy and society.

Society and Festivals Research

Closely aligned to the economy, the social aspects of festivals in Edinburgh are seen to be equally important when addressing the ACCESS research agenda. Here, questions of social benefits, inclusion, and cohesion come to the fore. These are manifest in the form of civic pride, quality of life, outreach programs, education, celebration, altruism, and volunteerism, all of which have been identified as being increasingly important to festival organizers, especially the Mela and Fringe festivals. The notion that festivals contribute to the development of "social capital" with respect to regeneration of urban areas through increased investment in the cultural and creative characteristics inherent in these areas is also of relevance. Indeed, funding agencies consider these social dimensions as being highly important when considering applications for financial support. There is also a boundary issue in this component of the research agenda as well, in that festivals via the media have a global reach so that images of social cohesion and regeneration may raise expectations in other parts of the world, in a sort of social "demonstration effect."

The scope of social benefits associated with festivals has yet to be defined in Edinburgh. A number of stakeholders have recognized that these benefits are notoriously difficult to identify and quantify, embedded as they are in the social milieu of a dynamic and growing city, country, and region. Many social forces are at work so the isolation and attribution of festival-specific social benefits and disbenefits is a complex task for researchers, but one that is necessary for making informed decisions on funding and support. Furthermore the programming of socially inclusive events is fraught with risk and a number of respondents raised the issue of potential mismatch between suburban audiences and world-class performances that can occur at festivals. To further complicate the issue, many social benefits that flow are intangible and to some degree serendipitous and are not only difficult to program, but also to measure and monitor in any meaningful way. Social benefits may not only vary from festival to festival, but between from program-specific elements within individual festivals, making any generalization or extrapolation of social benefits a major challenge within the ACCESS research agenda.

Stakeholders and Festivals Research

The proliferation and growth in festivals has led to a concomitant increase in the number and diversity of stakeholders in Edinburgh. This can be viewed as both a virtue and a burden for the festival community. Research into the roles, responsibilities, and needs of all stakeholders is only a starting point in understanding their importance and the way in which they interact and function to ensure desirable outcomes from festivals. This will involve investigation of the complex networks that have emerged historically in Edinburgh and the way in which communication, integration, and understanding occurs within and between stakeholders. At an even more deeper level, the motivations and expectations of individual stakeholders needs to be identified and the degree to which these converge or diverge between the individual stakeholders in each festival and across festivals needs to be tested. When the scope of this research is extended beyond "direct" stakeholders, to include audiences (both live and media) and the wider Scottish society the scale of the research task becomes even larger. According to stakeholders, it is important to include all who have both an economic as well as a non-economic stake in the festivals in the research agenda. Indeed, the understanding of stakeholders, facilitation of improved communication, and dissemination of information are seen as critical to the future success of Edinburgh festivals.

Research Methods for ACCESS

While the agenda brought forward here is in the context of Edinburgh, both the process of developing the

agenda and the areas of focus elicited can be seen as having efficacy in the wider context of festivals and events. There are a number of quantitative and qualitative research approaches that have been used to investigate the social and cultural dimensions of festivals that could be employed in conducting the ACCESS research agenda. Some of these feature in this special issue of *Event Management* and are summarized below.

Hede (2007) aimed to develop a management tool that will assist special event practitioners to apply a Triple Bottom Line (TBL)-based approach to the special events planning. Stakeholder Theory was used to develop the management tool, within the context of the special events. Moscardo (2007) seeks to broaden our understanding of the factors and processes that support festival and event contributions to broader regional development by analyzing a sample of 36 case studies of festivals and events in regional destinations. The methodology is an inductive approach consistent with general guidelines for using case studies to build theory. Moscardo's own conceptual model to describe regional tourism development processes is applied to case studies of events and festivals.

Richards (2007) sets out to analyze the views of policy makers, local residents, and tourists on the perceived cultural content and authenticity of the event. This case study is undertaken at la Mercé, the major annual fiesta in Barcelona. As reference and comparison on authenticity, Chhabra, Healy, and Silly, (2003) studied the perceived authenticity of Highland Games staged in the US, and found that visitors generally saw them as "authentic," even though the games involved a high degree of staging and took place far away from their original cultural roots in Scotland.

Small's research (2007) employed a case study approach to examine the social impacts of community festivals using two Australian community based festivals in Western Australia. Factor analysis using SPSS 12.0 was applied to a 41-item Social Impact Perception (SIP) scale. McMorland and MacTaggert (2007) used cluster analysis to identify homogeneous groups with similar motivations for attending Traditional Scottish Music Events.

Singh, Racherla, and Hu (2007) review the theoretical background of ontology and knowledge mapping, and present the procedures constructing ontology for the domain of safety and security in event management. Falkheimer (2007) assesses the media effects of the America's Cup preregatta in Malmö 2005, determining the effect at regional, national, and international levels.

Reid (2007) examines the social consequences of rural events for those subjected to the phenomena, the event stakeholders and identifies social consequences not previously identified within the literature. A qualitative research methodology was used to collect data.

Conclusion

In conclusion, research into the benefits and disbenefits of Edinburgh festivals needs to extend beyond economics to include the social benefits and disbenefits of the festivals. The community benefits and disbenefits of festivals are noted as forces that can shape local cultural production and consumption. The educational and outreach programs and the contribution of the festivals in fighting social exclusion are indicators of this importance and are now used as criteria in assessing the formation and funding of festivals. However, there appears to be a need for a comprehensive evaluation of festival benefits and dis-benefits in order to inform stakeholders as to the discrete and cumulative net benefits that accrue to Edinburgh.

A review of the relevant literature indicates that our understanding of the broader economic, social, and cultural benefits and disbenefits of festivals is sound. However, knowledge of the specific benefits and disbenefits, in the case of Edinburgh's festivals is limited. This article has argued that to develop this knowledge would lead to maximization of net benefits in the short term and socially and economically sustainable festivals in the long term. A proposed research agenda—ACCESS—is recommended and validated as one way of developing the Edinburgh festivals knowledge base leading to the cultural, social, and economic benefits so often cited in the literature, but not often investigated in practice.

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