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Article

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Abstract
Festivals infuse art and culture into the physical transformation of public spaces to support economic development, social capital, and urban vibrancy. Although these impacts align with urban planning, these projects typically engage actors outside the field such as community organisations, businesses, and artists, reflecting cultural and creative economies, where different values, motivations, and practices are continually negotiated through processes of co-creation. However, institutional planning practices have not yet effectively engaged with cultural production processes to maximise the social, cultural, and economic impacts of arts-led development. To explore this potential, this research uses participatory, co-productive methodologies to analyse the Bristol Light Festival, a collaborative partnership between business interests, city staff, and creative producers. The article begins with a discussion of the often contradictory role festivals play in urban development, followed by a discussion of creative and cultural ecologies and an overview of the co-creation process. Drawing on festival participant survey and interview data, the article discusses how the festival generated new forms of belonging in the city and other impacts that are often invisible within dominant arts-led development strategies. The article concludes with a discussion of findings relating cultural ecologies and co-creation to urban planning practice.

Keywords
co-creation; co-production; festivals; networks; urban planning; value

Issue
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1. Festivals and Arts-Led Development

Festivals have long served an important role in empowering and building communities through play, exhibition, and protest. Within the planning field, however, scholarship and policymaking have largely centred on festivals' economic development impact (García, 2004). This focus reflects broader shifts towards developing creative-based economies and entrepreneurial styles of urban governance, where cities compete on a global stage for investment from residents, creative workers, firms, and visitors (Christopherson & Rightor, 2010; Florida, 2002; Harvey, 1989). Festivals are now linked to multiple economic development outcomes including enhanced city branding, boosting the night-time economy, increased tourism, job creation, and regeneration (Gibson et al., 2010; Quinn, 2010). With the ascendance of creative

economy policies, researchers also cite the role festivals play in strengthening local arts and cultural industries by catalysing temporary clusters, encouraging networking, collaboration, and innovation (Comunian, 2017b; Gibson et al., 2010; Podestà & Richards, 2018).

Key to festivals' economic development potential is the perception that festivals are inextricably tied to place (Van Aalst & van Melik, 2012). Local officials support festivals to market their "authenticity" across a range of geographic scales from neighbourhood regeneration efforts to globally recognised "festival cities" like Edinburgh (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011). However, as critics argue, such festivals are far from "distinctive," but rather are homogenised, consumer-oriented events. Light festivals, in particular, are emblematic of the festivalisation of cities. Paris, Montreal, Brussels, Rome, and nearly 100 other cities have all produced their own versions of

Nuit Blanche, reflecting the mobility of the quintessential light festival as economic development strategy (Evans, 2012; Giordano & Ong, 2017). Situating festivals within broader critiques of creative city and creative class policies, critical scholars argue that festivals sanitise urban spaces for middle-class consumption leading to gentrification (Shaw & Sullivan, 2011).

Despite these critiques, other research has focused on festivals' social and cultural impacts, which also intersect with planning interests. Festivals create opportunities for people to perform diverse and collective identities, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity (Hassanli et al., 2021; Rota & Salone, 2014; Tate, 2020). Unlike other forms of arts-based development including flagship art centres and cultural districts, festivals are temporary, often free, events. Offering cultural programming in public spaces, festivals create opportunities to interact with diverse others, promoting social inclusion (Quinn et al., 2021; Stevens & Shin, 2014). As temporary and liminal experiences, festivals have the potential to create safe spaces for risk-taking and the collective transgression of social norms. This may lead to the public expression of new collective identities and claims from marginalised voices, fostering collective action (Edensor & Andrews, 2019; Picard, 2016). Festivals also forge connections between people and places through affective, embodied, and playful experiences (Edensor, 2012). These attachments with place can promote ethical and sustainable behaviours (Alonso-Vazquez et al., 2019; Perry et al., 2020), as well as new rights to the city. As Duffy and Mair (2017, p. 4) highlight, "festival events are much more than simply a source of financial gain; rather, the processes of festivals enable notions of place, community, identity and belonging to be to some extent actively negotiated, questioned and experienced." Festivals are contested and contradictory experiences, producing spaces where urban boosterism, creative city policies, participatory cultures, affective experiences, and bodily encounters become entangled (Finkel & Platt, 2020; Weller, 2013).

Although the scholarship on festival and urban development is contested, the focus tends to be on festival impacts rather than their planning processes. This is surprising considering the ways in which urban planning has increasingly incorporated arts and creative methodologies to support both planning *processes* in addition to desired *impacts*. For example, creative placemaking and pop-up art installations are used to help communities identify challenges, visualise alternatives and develop solutions for urban development (Goldberg-Miller et al., 2020). Planners include artists to create polyvocal spaces for planning discussions by shifting power relations and enabling the articulation of more diverse perspectives, including affective and emotional considerations (Metzger, 2011; Vasudevan, 2020). Even though tensions inherent to arts and cultural planning align with long-standing debates in urban planning regarding the efficacy of participatory practices "in the face of power" (Forester,

1988), urban planning has yet to fully engage with the processes underpinning cultural production such as festivals. As a result, planning scholars and practitioners often suffer from translation issues with community arts practitioners (Chapple & Jackson, 2010; McLean, 2014). This is likely because arts-led development strategies are largely not planner-directed but rather facilitated by artists, non profits, public agencies, community-based organisations, local businesses, and educational institutions as key collaborators (Ashley, 2015; Grodach, 2010, 2011). The inclusion of different stakeholders suggests that arts-led strategies could model a more participatory and democratic approach to planning and governance (Ashley, 2021). Considering the pervasiveness of festivals in urban development, more research is needed to understand the role of cultural production methods and their implications for urban planning processes and outcomes.

To address the translation issue, this article introduces the concept of creative and cultural ecologies (CCEs) to reframe festivals as a form of cultural production to highlight the co-creative processes through which social, cultural, and economic agendas are negotiated. I then discuss the role of academics and co-productive research methods in the co-creation process to "hold space," address power asymmetries, and nudge decision-making to prioritise social and cultural aims despite neoliberal pressures. Using the Bristol Light Festival (BLF) as a case study, I discuss the implementation of researcher-facilitated co-creative processes, their perceived impact on festival planning members and decision-making processes, and whether the festival achieved its desired goals.

2. Cultural and Creative Ecologies: From Participation to Co-Creation?

CCE is gaining traction within the cultural policy field to counter trends that instrumentalise arts and culture for economic growth. Markusen et al. (2011, p. 8) define cultural ecology as "the complex interdependencies that shape the demand for and production of arts and cultural offerings," highlighting the network of diverse participants involved in cultural production and projects, which are "sustained by many different kinds of value" (Dovey et al., 2016). Like Markusen et al. (2011), Holden (2015) draws attention to the "complex interdependencies" between commercial, nonprofit, state, and voluntary participants that constitute CCEs. However, Holden goes further to argue that the concept of "ecology" provides a critical counterpoint to dominant creative economy and creative city narratives by emphasising the collective and communal dimensions of cultural production: "Cultural endeavour involves the making of meaning and the construction of social lives as well as (sometimes) the pursuit of profit" (Holden, 2015, p. 12).

In other words, CCEs are never entirely about cultural value nor completely reducible to neoliberal logics,

but rather involve collective processes of *negotiation* between cultural, social, economic, and other values. This speaks to the power dynamics at play during the cultural production planning process. While "mixed ecologies of cultural activity can work to produce new assemblages of distributed power and meaning making" (Bailey et al., 2019, p. 17), they will undoubtedly be inflected by power dynamics (Comunian, 2017a). However, as de Bernard et al. (2021, p. 18) further suggest, such insights can be used to develop:

> New participatory and deliberative approaches to policymaking: "ecological policymaking" (Gross et al., 2020) for cultural and creative ecosystems and beyond, developing sustained spaces for radically inclusive processes of information-sharing, deliberation and decision-making, in which human interdependence—and the interconnectedness of many kinds of cultural and creative activity—is a guiding principle.

In other words, cultural ecologies need to be intentionally held to produce inclusive processes, co-created values, and desired outcomes (Dovey et al., 2016). These insights challenge conventional approaches to analysing festival impacts on urban development as cultural production planning processes will likely shape whether a festival produces economic impact in addition to or at the expense of cultural democracy, sustainability, or another normative goal.

One approach to more participatory decision-making is co-creation, dominant in cultural and creative production (Dovey et al., 2016; Hearn et al., 2007) and gaining popularity in public administration and urban planning fields. Broadly speaking, co-creation brings providers and users together for a creative process of collaborative learning and problem-solving, often through the design of products, services, programmes, and places. Within the planning field, co-creation might include public sector staff, researchers, technical experts, social entrepreneurs, and those impacted by decision-making, to identify problems and develop solutions for urban challenges such as public service delivery, sustainability, and urban regeneration. Co-creation does not necessarily result in more inclusive, just, or sustainable outcomes, however. Depending on context and participants, co-creation will be inflected by power dynamics, different value systems, assumptions, and priorities (Leino & Puumala, 2021). As some argue, co-creation may actually align with neoliberal values with its emphasis on public-private partnerships and the devolution of public responsibilities to the private sector (Parker et al., 2015). For example, within the context of arts-led development, the inclusion of artists in creative city policy development does not necessarily result in recognition of cultural value or support of local artists (Ponzini & Rossi, 2010). However, co-creation can create space for subjugated knowledges to shape decision-making and development through agonistic participation processes, especially when coupled with participatory action research methods (Carpenter et al., 2021). As such, the inclusion of academics in co-creation processes may help to produce outcomes that better reflect diverse social and cultural needs, over neoliberal economic development.

To explore this potential, this research includes developing and facilitating a co-creation process for the 2020 BLF production team made up of business representatives, city arts and culture staff, and creative producers. Specifically, I explore how co-creation processes address competing interests and strengthen social and cultural values, goals, and outcomes despite neoliberal agendas. The research is underpinned by co-productive methods to (a) recognise and value the contribution partners make to the knowledge creation process, (b) improve research, analysis, and problem-solving (Leino & Puumala, 2021), and (c) ensure research methods are non-extractive and produce direct value for participants. Although "co-production'' and "co-creation" are sometimes used interchangeably to describe participatory methods for developing cultural goods and services, "co-production" is more commonly used for research. This article intentionally uses the term "co-production'' to apply to the research methodology and "co-creation" to refer to the facilitated activities with festival partners. This distinction highlights the *productive* role of academic research and the progressive potential of "co-creation" processes within planning practice.

3. Co-Produced Research Methodology

Co-productive research methods do not presume an a priori reality but rather acknowledge the ways in which every day communicative and other meaning-making practices shape urban life and have the potential "to collectively construct new lifeworlds" (Bell & Pahl, 2018, p. 108). Co-productive research often incorporates "beyond text" methods such as storytelling, photography, and other creative practices to address power asymmetries and knowledge hierarchies between practitioner, academic, embodied, and other forms of expertise (Beebeejaun et al., 2014). Further, co-productive research aligns with participatory action research that strives to empower research participants in analytical and decision-making processes as part of their right to participate in civic life (Beebeejaun et al., 2015).

Co-productive research is often critiqued by more positivist-oriented scholars who express concern regarding "research capture," the loss of objectivity or lack of evidence documenting the social impact of this approach (Durose et al., 2017). Further, co-production has a tenuous relationship within the UK's higher education landscape where universities are called to evidence how they are achieving their "third mission" of social impact in addition to teaching and research effectiveness. Some argue that these trends tie academic research more closely to neoliberal economic projects through

"knowledge transfer," "knowledge exchange," and other "commercialisable IP [intellectual property]" generating activities, especially in the field of the creative economy (Dovey et al., 2016; Moreton, 2018). However, third mission activities are not monolithic but rather reflect diverse assemblages of knowledge production and social impact (Moreton, 2016) with some research-activists embracing this "third mission" to advance sustainability and justice goals specifically through participatory and co-productive methodologies (Trencher et al., 2014).

Like cultural planning processes, co-productive research is inflected by power dynamics, privileging some voices at the expense of others (Leino & Puumala, 2021). However, by engaging researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders in the knowledge creation process, co-production creates space for agonistic democratic practice and critical public engagement (Beebeejaun et al., 2015). Rather than being captured or co-opted into a seamless neoliberal framework, co-productive research projects are more likely characterised by tensions between academics, practitioners, and other policymakers. These critical differences in frameworks of understanding, communication styles, and motivations (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014) reflect the diversity of economic, social and cultural values and practices that can be "within, against, and beyond" neoliberal agendas (Bell & Pahl, 2018, p. 105). As such, co-productive research assumes these tensions as a given and intentionally engages with the messiness of cultural and creative ecologies that are inextricably entangled with multiple value systems. Instead of trying to assimilate difference, co-productive research aims to "hold space" to creatively and critically engage diverse forms of academic, professional, and everyday expertise in order to collectively produce new knowledge, policies, and programmes that further justice aims (Bartunek & Rynes, 2014; Pascoe et al., 2020).

Using this framework, I facilitated a workshop-based methodology developed in collaboration with other researchers at the Creative Ecologies Lab at the University of the West of England Bristol and the Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed. The workshop methodology responds to tensions within the arts and cultural field related to the dominance of neoliberal creative economy policies and intensified interest in data-driven cultural evaluation (Gilmore et al., 2017; Oakley, 2006). Within this context, arts and culture organisations are increasingly pressured to instrumentalise their impacts in terms of measurable indicators such as audience numbers and job creation, which may be inappropriate for their missions. The workshop methodology addresses these tensions by helping organisations to affirm core values, map assets, identify key beneficiaries, and explore impacts they hope to achieve despite neoliberal pressures. The methodology has been developed over time through its application in various planning contexts for different types of arts and cultural organisations such as Watershed Media Centre, MAYK, Spike Island,

and Kaleider Studios. Starting in early 2019, I applied this methodology which included four workshops with the BLF team. In addition, I maintained fieldnotes, conducted individual interviews with team participants, and surveyed local businesses and festival participants both on-site and after the event (see Table 1).

Workshop and meeting notes, open-ended survey questions, on-site interviews, and team member interviews were transcribed, qualitatively coded, and analysed for themes (Saldaña, 2013). Throughout the process, I wrote analytical memos to explore the impact of the co-creation process on team decision-making and negotiation processes. Using festival survey and interview data, I analysed whether the intended goals were achieved at the event.

4. Co-Creating the Bristol Light Festival

As the hometown of Banksy, Massive Attack, and arts and cultural anchors like Arnolfini and Watershed, Bristol is internationally known for both street and contemporary art, a strong music scene, as well as diverse protest, immigrant, and tech cultures. This mashing of skills, styles, and values has resulted in a vibrant art and cultural scene, which is often visible in public space through graffiti, festivals, public art, and "playable city" installations. In addition to the BLF, Bristol is home to more than 50 regular festivals, including theatre, music, film, nature, and cultural events. Festivals range in scale from neighbourhoods to international gatherings such as Sustainable Fashion Week and the Festival of the Future City. The diversity of Bristol's festival programming speaks to the tensions inherent in festival research and their role in urban development. On the one hand, Bristol's larger events undoubtedly produce economic impact by attracting participants to the city and through multiplier effects. However, Bristol is also home to festivals that are largely motivated by other values including cultural celebration, learning, and transformation to sustainable futures.

The BLF began as a collaboration between the Bristol central city BID and a creative producer who had close ties with the area's art and music scenes. BIDs, first emerging in the United States and Canada, are quasi-public organisations focused on the economic development of a defined geographic area. BIDs are largely funded by levying an additional tax on local businesses to be used only for the targeted area such as maintenance, capital improvements, marketing and other economic development strategies. One of the BID's key priorities is to increase tourism and boost the night time economy in the central city area, which led to their support of a light festival. A local creative producer who had participated in the development of major cultural events also envisioned a light festival drawing on Bristol's cultural and creative ecology including local festival production networks, playable city projects, and digital and light-based artists. A "creative producer" materialises

Table 1. Description of research methods.

Methods	Description
Four workshops with BLF Team (five to seven members)	1. Visualisation and storytelling 2. Asset and value mapping 3. Co-creating shared values and goals 4. Co-creating the evaluation framework
Researcher meeting and participant observation notes	I maintained notes reflecting on workshops and 12 team production meetings documenting processes, conflicts, collaborations, negotiations, and outcomes.
On-site festival survey (N = 213)	Questions included where participants lived, demographics (age, gender, nationality, physical ability); motivation for attending the festival; familiarity with the installation site; assessment of installation; and impact of the festival on the site/space, city centre, and city pride. Surveyed participants were invited to describe the festival using three words.
On-site festival interview (N = 53)	In addition to on-site survey questions, participants were invited to respond to open-ended questions qualifying their assessments of the installation, site, and event overall by describing their experiences, as well as any comments not addressed by the survey.
Post-event participant survey (N = 72)	Questions included home postcode and demographic information; how often they visit the city centre; whether they participated in any other activities like eating out during the event; estimated spending during the event; whether they experience something new and learned about artists; and overall assessment of installations, installation sites, event, and city centre.
Post-event business survey (N = 55)	In addition to questions assessing their personal experience of the installations, event, and impact on the city centre, business representatives were asked about the impact of the event on their business in terms of foot traffic, diversifying customers, publicity, and sales. Businesses were also asked to reflect on their relationship with the Business Improvement District (BID).
Post-event interview with festival team members (N = 5)	After the festival, I conducted individual interviews with team members asking them to reflect on the event itself as well as the co-creation process, including changing roles and responsibilities, desired outcomes, any tensions between members, how tensions were managed, the contribution of different members, and individual and team learning.

conceptual ideas into actual cultural and creative events such as concerts, plays, exhibitions, performances, and festivals. In addition to curation and production, creative producers are often key intermediaries in CCEs, acting "as brokers, forging collaborations and relationships, connecting parts of the network together, putting people in touch with resources" (Foster et al., 2020, p. 9). Recognising that without more diverse participation in the cultural production process, the producer was concerned that the BLF would likely prioritise economic development over other goals. Subsequently, the creative producer facilitated meetings between the BID and the City of Bristol's Arts and Events Department in addition to the University of the West of England Bristol's Creative Economies Lab. I was specifically asked to develop and facilitate a co-creative process for planning, implementing, and evaluating the light festival to produce a strong partnership and ensure the priorities of artists, cultural, and community organisations, and the public sector were represented in decision-making.

The first workshop in the co-creative process asked participants to draw on their senses to envision what a successful event would look like from their individual perspectives. Participants then shared visions in a storytelling format which began to highlight diverse agendas and desires reflected in the team (Table 2). Creative producers saw the light festival as an opportunity to engage audiences. More importantly, however, the festival enabled artists to work in high-profile places, increase their visibility, and network with other professionals. Bristol City Arts and Events staff members recognised a wider range of potential impacts including a more

connected, vibrant city centre that would welcome and include diverse participants in new cultural experiences. They also understood the benefits for artists and the festival's economic development potential. However, the social impacts, specifically feelings of safety, inclusion, and belonging, were the highest priorities. City staff also envisioned a sustainable event, specifically mentioning the challenges of event consumption and waste. BID representatives desired an event that would increase city connectivity. However, their main priority was to support economic development, by boosting the nighttime economy and linking installations to city centre branding efforts.

The team then participated in a process of asset and value mapping to make visible their embeddedness in CCEs and the diverse web of relationships connecting resources, organisations, knowledge, and skill sets that could be activated through the partnership.

During the early stages of the process, some team members expressed that they felt mapping their network relationships could lead to transactive and even extractive relationships. However, later stages, which included the co-creation of shared values, strengthened trust between members and created an important touchstone during subsequent decision-making. At this point, I asked team members to individually write summative words or short phrases that crystallised the values underpinning their CCEs on sticky notes. These notes were then posted directly to the asset maps. I then asked team members to work as a group to cluster similar values together to identify emerging core values they shared as a team. In this way, I was able to engage participants directly in the analytical coding process (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010) while also building trust in the partnership. Through the co-creative process, the team identified seven core values that would frame their decision-making processes

Table 2. Festival team visions and priorities.

Team member	Spatial	Social	Cultural	Economic	Environmental
Creative producers/artists	Excitement to work in other parts of the city	People are engaged and joyful	Opportunity to work with different artists	Great opportunity to platform work Increase legitimacy and visibility	Sustainable
City Arts and Events staff	Street is full Everything feels connected and engaged People experiencing new places	Diversity of attendees—Families, singles, young, and old People feel safe People feel like they belong, have ownership Evokes feelings of happiness, excitement, curiosity, inquisitive	Attracting people to experience new cultural activities Artists doing experimental, interesting things in new places	Businesses are buzzing Branding for the city	Green and sustainable event
BID	Links city centre to rest of the city Active and animated	Attracts people at different times Working with new partners		Brands the city centre through clear visual representation Celebrating Bristol successes Businesses benefit Keeps people in the city centre after work	

and goals (Table 3). As a result of the activity, the BID, who had often dominated decision-making on festival production decisions, relinquished some control and entrusted city arts and events staff members to draft job advertisements for additional creative producers, recognising their connections with the art and culture sector and the need to bring additional skill sets to the team such as curatorial expertise for public spaces, technology, artist networks, and festival event production support.

Through a process of negotiation, the team identified high-priority public spaces, potential artists, and appropriate installations best able to produce desired outcomes. During this stage, significant tensions emerged such as whether to privilege high aesthetic quality at the expense of broad cultural accessibility, public benefit versus benefit for BID members, and whether other neighbourhoods outside the city centre should be engaged through additional festival programming. The creative producers were most interested in creating innovative and culturally transformative experiences using the city as a playground. They also wanted to platform artists and Bristol's creative and cultural scene to a more global audience. Arts and culture city staff members were more focused on cultural democracy and expanding access to the arts to all areas of the city. BID representatives continually narrowed their attention to economic impact, safety, and other impacts "benefitting levy payers."

However, conflicts were negotiated by continually referring back to the values framework. For example, referencing the value of social, economic, and cultural impact, I asked team members to explore what each value would look like in practice at each installation site. Interestingly, some team members articulated visions that were previously shared by other participants. For example, BID representatives expressed a desire to see people playing and expressing joy. Creative producers spoke about increasing connectivity between sites and inviting people to new areas of the city. By the end of the process, the team prioritised several goals including diversifying visitors to the city centre, reducing unfamiliarity in parts of the city centre, activating public spaces, showcasing and engaging local creative enterprises and organisations, strengthening local pride, diversifying cultural engagement, and increasing economic

activity, which reflected different priorities of each team member, and yet were shared collectively as a team.

The next phase of the co-creation process focused on developing appropriate evaluation methods and indicators for desired impacts. The methodology included surveying participants and businesses regarding their attachments to place, cultural, and urban experiences, in addition to conventional indicators like event spending. The methodology also included participant observation of how people experienced the light installations in public spaces which included pieces such as the illuminated sonic seesaws of *Wave-Field* (Lateral Office et al., 2020), *Neighbours* (Bingle et al., 2020), a reinterpretation of Banksy's (2006–) *Well Hung Lover* by local street artists, Tine Bech's (2020) *Pink Enchantment*, immersive pink smoke floating across an expansive bridge, and Olivier Ratsi's (2020) *Frame Perspective*, featuring a series of gently pulsating red frames. For each installation, the team discussed potential qualitative experiences, which included playfulness, joy, and thought-provoking and meditative experiences, highlighting the importance of cultural value in their evaluation framework.

5. Festival Impacts

Over the course of four days, the BLF attracted 100,000 people, exceeding the team's expectations. Surveys and on-site interviews suggest that the festival achieved its intended goals including increased economic spending, diversifying and attracting visitors to new parts of the city, improving perceptions of the city centre, and increasing civic pride of place. Additionally, the festival generated social and cultural impacts including improved feelings of safety, diverse social interactions, and positive affects related to new cultural experiences in urban spaces. In terms of economic benefit, 75% of participants reported that they participated in additional activities while attending the festival such as eating or drinking out in restaurants and pubs, attending other events, and shopping, with an average reported spending of £58.75 per person. Approximately half of the surveyed businesses felt that the festival diversified patrons, increased foot traffic, and improved sales (Figure 1). A larger percentage of businesses felt that the light festival improved

Table 3. Co-created values.

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Accountability	Using sound knowledge, transparent processes, and open communication
Collaborative	Recognising the strength in connecting and working with diverse partners
Engaged	Effectively responding to the needs of our partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders
Impact	Creating economic growth, social impact, and cultural value
Place	Building on local strengths, create safe and interactive places that instil a sense of pride
Innovative	Using creative processes to co-produce high-quality experiences
Legacy	Creating a sustainable partnership by learning from experiences and communicating successes
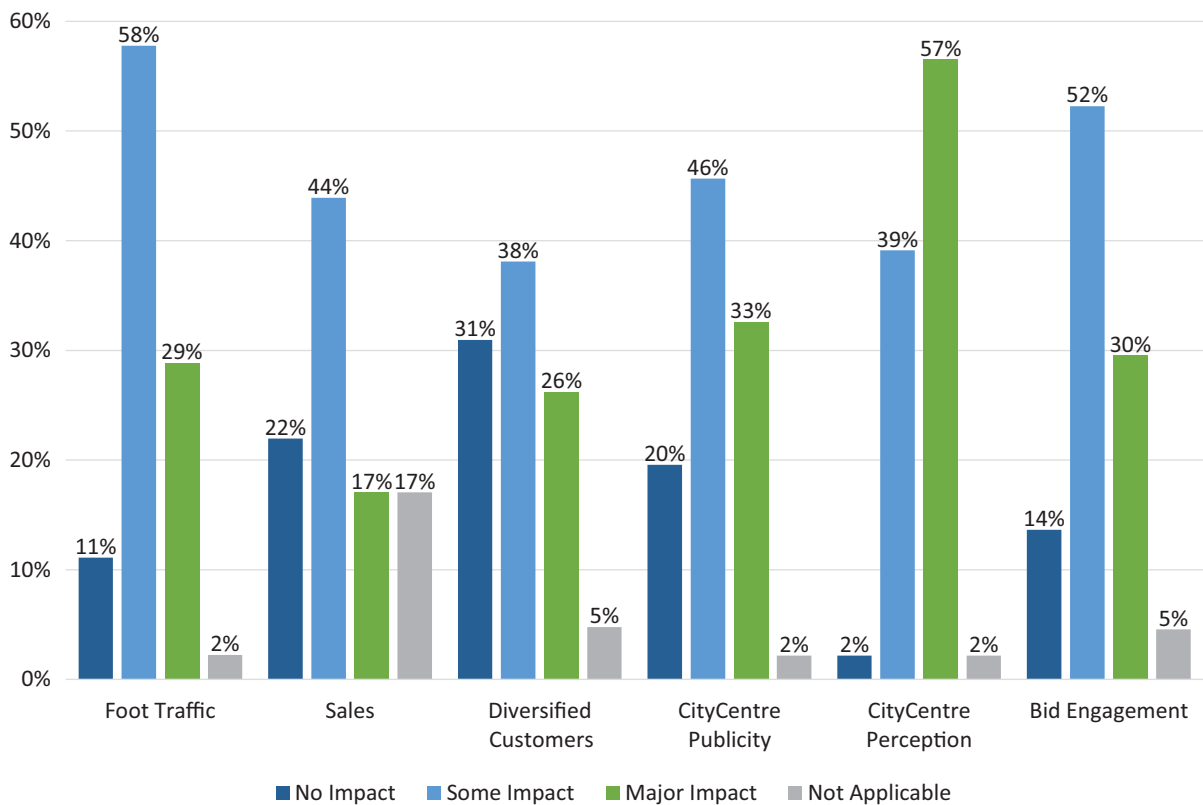
Figure 1. Perceptions of economic impact by city-centre businesses.

the perception of the city centre, a finding reinforced by the participant survey. Additionally, according to team members, the festival production crew and suppliers were all locally sourced, supporting existing research regarding the relationship between festivals and local economies (Freire-Gibb & Lorentzen, 2011; Hassink & Lee, 2018).

Unlike the aspirations of most light festivals in global cities which aim to draw tourists, 85% of surveyed festival attendees lived or worked in Bristol. However, the festival attracted a more diverse scene. Bristol city centre's nighttime economy has the reputation of catering towards young adults. Although this demographic, 21–34, was well represented, over 30% of attendees were 45 or older. Further, close to half of the participants surveyed reported that they were visiting the festival with family members, partners, or spouses. The diversity of participants, particularly families, was noted in the interviews: "The festival breathed more diversity into the regular demographic of nighttime footfall"; "It was great to see so many families in a safe space and enjoying the experience"; "I have never seen so many families out and about in the dark on a Sunday evening!"

Figure 2 shows that less than half of survey participants felt that the festival introduced them to a new place in Bristol. However, on-site interviews suggest that the festival did attract people to unfamiliar parts of the city. For example, nearly half of those interviewed had never or rarely visited Castle Park, due to perceived safety concerns: "I would not have walked these routes

alone in the dark"; "I've never been to the bandstand. I've avoided Castle Park because it's dodgy but feel safe tonight"; "We walked a few different streets and have never been through Castle Park"; "It's especially good to have stuff in Castle Park as it links up different parts of Bristol I often avoid walking through at night."

Although these findings may indicate that the festival "sanitised" city centre spaces for middle-class consumption, survey and on-site interviews suggest that attendees were not avid consumers of art and culture. Over 70% of survey respondents shared that the festival was unlike other city events and was a new cultural experience. Fifty per cent of surveyed participants felt that the festival enabled them to experience the city centre in qualitatively different ways. These new experiences were often described using affective language such as "mesmerising," "euphoric," "dreamlike," "playful," and "joyful." As participants shared: "The city centre often gets a bad reputation as a place you don't want to be at during the weekend, but this festival showed it can be a wonderful and magical place"; "To experience a city at night—to purposely view something—opens your eyes and enables you to see a city [in] a different way"; "It made me look at familiar places again."

These affective experiences enhanced pride of place with 80% of those surveyed indicating that the festival created a positive reflection of the city. Participants shared comments such as, "It made me proud to be Bristolian"; "Festivals like this make it so worthwhile living in Bristol"; "The neighbours' display was truly
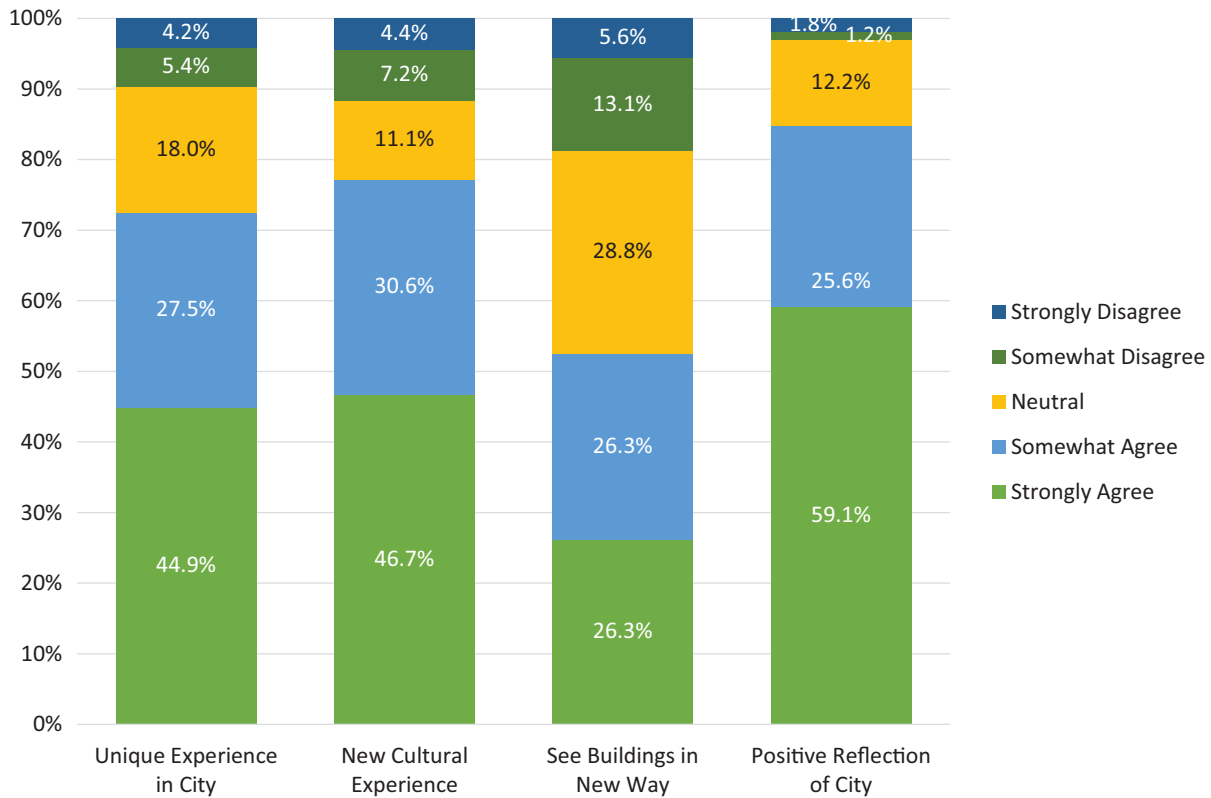
Figure 2. Festival participant experience survey.

entertaining and built up on the Banksy's mural—I'm not sure it could be more Bristolian than this!"; and "This was Bristol at its best." The survey and interview findings with festival participants support existing research that festivals, even those with commercial interests, create opportunities for new cultural experiences, creating both tangible and more intangible impacts, connecting people to place through affective and embodied experiences. As one creative producer explained:

> We're using the city as a playground….You know, it's about giving people memories about their city that are different to the everyday memories they have. And that's what lifts our souls, stops us being isolated, increases wellbeing. It's not going out and buying a new dress or the latest iPad, you know, it's those memories where you remember complete and utter joy because you saw for 10 minutes people laughing their heads off on seesaws in a square in a city centre.

6. Discussion: Learning From Co-Creation

In addition to manifesting desired social, cultural, and economic impacts, the festival produced a shared understanding of the benefits associated with co-creation processes, and subsequently an effective partnership. Team members articulated common themes including the importance of collaborating with local participants, how good outcomes emerge by negotiating through chal-

lenges, and the value of mutual learning. The case study also highlights the distinctive role artists and creative producers play in co-creating the city.

Initially, BID representatives contemplated hiring a professional events team to produce the festival, but were convinced by arts and events city staff to work with local producers. By the end of the process, all team members affirmed the importance of collaborating with partners to produce an authentic sense of place and ensure benefits land in the city.

> Ultimately, if we want to do placemaking in the place where you are, then use people who love the place in the first place. (BID representative)

> Working with local individuals was really important given the success of some of the Bristol pieces….They wouldn't have happened if we hadn't done it with local creative directors. They knew the city, they know what makes it tick and what people are going to love and what is going to make it really Bristol, which is what we really wanted it to be as well. (BID representative)

> You have to have something that resonates with local people. You can't just do a Canary Wharf like this. Well, you could, but we wouldn't want to do a Canary Wharf Light Festival, which has no references to anywhere. You could be anywhere in the world. (Creative producer)

Through the co-creation process, team members also recognised the importance of diverse participants in the planning and implementation process in terms of access to expertise, skill sets, networks, and resources. As one BID representative remarked,

> Delivering something that's so large scale in the public realm needs lots of different individuals' experience of doing that. It can't just be down to one person, which it was at that point. We started to look at what we actually need in partnership. It's going to need lots of different minds around the table to make this actually work and deliver the things that we want it to. Without that, I don't think it would have become what it was. The partnership between Bristol City Council and the BID opened access to all these creative minds and event planners that we wouldn't have known otherwise and we probably wouldn't have found the creative directors if it hadn't been for the partnership with the council.

This network of business interests, public sector representatives, and creative producers reflect the different kinds of stakeholders that make up cultural and creative ecologies, increasing access to a wider range of resources and connections. For creative producers, working with the BID created more resiliency and support for their vision, compared to traditional arts and cultural events that are often grant-funded and limited in capacity. From the BID's perspective, the creative producers were invaluable for identifying the right artists for particular spaces, responding to site-specific installation challenges, as well as professionally producing the event. Arts and events city staff members were able to effectively engage with neighbourhoods impacted by the installations as well as secure necessary site permissions. The BID's value, although certainly financial, also included access to a broader range of partners with different backgrounds, leading to new ideas, expertise in other fields such as sustainability as well as vital administrative support and capacity. As one creative producer explained:

> The thing that I thought was an absolute unique selling point about this particular project was that it was funded by the BID. It wasn't led by a cultural organisation within the city, which enabled a kind of non-competitive approach to anyone taking part….It wasn't, you know, an arts organisation struggling for their position in the sector. And all the politics were removed. So, for me, I just thought that is absolute gold dust, to be able to work across the sector from business to arts, to voluntary—like, the whole spectrum, and bring in partners from all areas.

This response suggests that creative producers felt that the value of economic growth espoused by the BID, and critiqued in creative economy literature, could actually produce cultural benefits in this specific context.

For the BID, desired economic impacts required continued investment and commitment to funding the festival for three years. For creative producers accustomed to the precarity of gig-based cultural work, this commitment equated to stable employment, an opportunity to expand networks and further develop creative ideas. That stability meant that creatives, arts, and culture organisations could work more collaboratively than competitively in a field where public arts funding continues to contract. Interestingly, this was a key moment of learning for a BID representative who, through the process, developed a stronger appreciation for local artists and their needs:

> The bit that struck with me was Bristol has got an awful lot of artistic talent, particularly in the lighting area, that have never been able to exhibit in their home city. That is not right, is it? I suppose what the BID brought to [the project], and I wasn't really aware that it was remarkable in that sense, was that I had said from the beginning, "We'll do this for three years and this is the budget." I think it was a conversation with [the creative producer] that brought it home, that, actually, that just isn't the way the world works currently. Maybe that is naivety or being new to the world. I don't get why that is. Why would you not allow something to develop over a period of time?

Although the partnership recognised mutual benefits, the politics were certainly "not removed" as suggested by one of the creative producers. BID representatives dominated early decision-making processes. Conflicts between members emerged in terms of how to negotiate different priorities and agendas, which at one point meant that the partnership almost disbanded when the BID made a unilateral decision regarding staffing without consulting the other partners. However, the research does suggest that the co-creative process proved useful to identify areas of shared mutual interest and strengthen relationships between participants. As one city art and event staff member explained:

> After having the discussion around shared principles and objectives…I really understood where the BID was coming from, what their objectives are and what they want from it. I don't think, until that point, we'd really understood that. Then we also said what our objectives are. One of our objectives was to build a relationship with them. I think that, then, unlocked [things] and built our relationship a bit.

This does not mean that the co-productive research methodology created a radically inclusive process, vacated power from decision-making processes, or overcame neoliberal development agendas. Members of this small team, representing city centre business, municipal government, and creative interests all possessed high social, cultural, and human capital. This meant

that participants felt fairly comfortable challenging one another and advocating for their positions. The process also did not engage the full range of participants who could have been assembled into CCEs to co-create the BLF—e.g., radical artists, voluntary run arts organisations, rough sleepers in Castle Park—which would have required greater attention to exclusionary dynamics in the co-creative process. However, the approach does demonstrate the co-presence of different value systems that are inherent to CCEs, and, as such, how cultural development projects are full of contingencies that can be cultivated into something more critical, inclusive, and equitable. In other words, through co-productive research, academics have the potential to shape what would otherwise be overtly neoliberal initiatives, into more nuanced and socially impactful projects. In the case of BLF, the resulting event generated economic impacts. However, this was only one goal among many that was generated through the process of co-creation suggesting that festivals can address a much wider range of urban challenges related to cultural access, social inclusion, and area regeneration.

7. Conclusion

Despite long-standing connections to strengthening community and cultural life, festivals have become a mainstay strategy for city branding, increasing tourism, regeneration, and other economic development objectives. Like other arts-led development initiatives, this shift in how city planners and policymakers understand the value of festivals reflects broader concerns regarding the instrumentalisation of culture and arts-led gentrification, often as a result of creative city policies. However, the theoretical framework of CCEs enables a more nuanced understanding of festivals and their value within the context of urban planning. By applying CCE insights to the BLF, this article addresses translation issues between planning and the arts, highlights the broader range of social, cultural, and spatial impacts produced through art and cultural programming, and provides support for integrating co-creation methods within planning processes.

CCE scholars argue that because cultural production is entangled with the arts, the "public" (audiences, spaces, funding), businesses, communities, and other stakeholders, these projects require active negotiation processes, which lead to a wider range of social, cultural, and spatial impacts that are not reducible to neoliberal logics (Holden, 2015). For example, in the case of BLF, values such as "play," "joy," and "belonging" were central to programming and evaluation decisions in addition to public space activation and economic development goals. However, these kinds of cultural and social values are often invisible in urban planning narratives despite their clear connections to quality of life and well-being concerns (Oakley & Ward, 2018). This disconnect between planning and art fields is likely tied to trans-

lation issues and methodological differences (Chapple & Jackson, 2010).

Cultural production is often underpinned by co-creative processes (Dovey et al., 2016), which differ from conventional planning participation methods. Co-creation processes not only ask participants to identify challenges and provide feedback but also draw on participants' diverse knowledges, networks, and resources to actively design programmes and evaluative strategies. In the case of BLF, co-creation enabled the team to identify shared values which subsequently shaped project goals, strategies, and indicators. Values included a commitment to collaboration and creating multiple forms of value such as transformative experiences for participants, playable urban spaces as well as enhanced economic activity. By including evaluation strategies in the co-creation process, BLF team members were challenged to identify who should benefit from the festival, discuss *how* they would know people would benefit, and develop appropriate indicators. This approach ensured that desired cultural and social impacts would be explicitly addressed in programming decisions and effectively evaluated. Evaluation is often absent in planning participation where attention is focused on effective processes versus measuring outcomes potentially leading to unjust outcomes (Fainstein, 2005). As such, co-creation processes offer the potential for planning processes that align visions with collectively discerned normative values.

The case study does not suggest that co-creative processes are inherently more equitable as negotiation processes are always inflected with power dynamics. However, co-creation may offer more inclusive and participatory approaches to decision-making by enabling a project identity to emerge that does not require "consensus'' but rather a collective commitment to participating according to shared values. As the BLF case study demonstrates, co-creation methods allowed for the articulation of differences and tensions to emerge while also enabling mutual learning and understanding. More aligned with agonism, co-creation is therefore distinct from more communicative and deliberative forms of planning that presume consensus building through negotiation between individual actors (Purcell, 2009). Considering long-standing critiques of the relationship between communicative planning and its capture by neoliberalism, more agonistic approaches associated with co-creation may be more productive for acknowledging and facilitating negotiation across competing agendas.

Although the research supports the value of co-creation in arts-led development and planning processes more broadly, the research does highlight significant challenges. BLF was co-created by a limited number of participants holding privileged positions and members were not representative of all festival beneficiaries. As such, even though tensions emerged during the process, participants felt comfortable voicing concerns

and challenging one another. Different power dynamics would undoubtedly influence these interactions and potentially marginalise other participants. Further, as the co-productive research methodology was developed in collaboration with arts and cultural organisations, there has been a limited application to other fields; the workshops should be tested with a wider range of participants across different planning domains. However, these limitations point to promising research directions that further explore the relationship between planning and the arts. By linking the concept of CCEs with processes of co-creation, the article reframes the value of festivals within the context of urban planning and explores new approaches to planning processes. More critical research is needed on structural power dynamics shaping cultural and creative ecologies and their relationship to urban development, as well as how co-creative methodologies emerging from cultural production can be integrated within urban planning more broadly to support more just development outcomes.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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