

Observing Through Participants: The Analytical and Practical Potential of Citizens' Involvement in Event Research

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ABSTRACT The research project 'Gendering Cities of Culture' investigates culture-led, urban mega-events in their potential to produce socio-cultural values through the programming of cultural activities. Specifically, I examine the production of gender equality in the celebration of the title UK City of Culture in 2017 in the northern English city of Hull. Citizens' perceptions of produced values in the mega-events are a key source of and basis for my analysis. In this study, I collaborate with a team of 'observing participants,' who are ten citizens selected in regards to gender, age, location of residence. The individuals support the investigation as they experience, explore and observe selected cultural activities on behalf of the research project. In this article, I discuss the potential and characteristics of this method informed and inspired by feminist methodologies, field-specific requirements of event research and citizen science approach.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I explore an innovative, qualitative methodological approach for event research. Applied within the research project 'Gendering Cities of Culture,' the presented approach is mutually a collaborative practice as well as a research method, which aims to document audience's perception of cultural activities such as festivals, exhibitions and performances.

In the project 'Gendering Cities of Culture,' I investigate the mega-event UK City of Culture celebrated in the northern English city of Hullⁱ in 2017. Initiated by the UK government, a city is awarded the title 'UK City of Culture' or "Badge of Authority" (Redmond 2009: 2) every four years. As the second UK City of Culture, Hull is entitled to promote, validate and celebrate its art, culture and heritage on a national scale. I consider such an event phenomenon as a platform for the production, contestation and transformation of socio-cultural values. With explicit attention to the programming practices, I examine the production of cultures of gender equality within this mega-event setting. Through the analytical focus on the politics, practices and perceptions of gender equality, I aim to understand in what way the mega-event conceptualizes gender equality, which allows me to discuss further the cultural potential of the event

phenomenon. While political and practical analytical perspectives focuses on cultural actors in their capacities as artists, curators, directors or producers, I examine perceptions of selected activities through citizens of Hull as audience of the mega-event.

For an analysis of the cultural perception of event-produced values, I developed a qualitative, ethnographic research method practiced in collaboration with so-called 'observing participants'ⁱⁱ. In what follows, after a primary introduction in event research and related methodologies, I outline the method as applied in my study. Further, I discuss the practical influences concerning feminist methodological considerations, field-specific requirements of event research, and 'citizens' science' approach, which led to the development of the method.

Contextualizing the Method: Event Research

The method discussed in this article embeds within the wider conceptual and methodological canon of event research. Three phases are crucial for the development of the research field.

Initial research interests in festivals "concerned with people and their culture," as Waldemar Cudny points out (Cudny 2016: 43) and scholars within social sciences and particularly pioneered in the field. At the beginning of the

20th century, first anthropological studies considered the festive in its ritualistic interpretation of ideologies of the celebrating community. The anthropological interest developed further in the mid-20th century, approaching the event as a phenomenon through its inherent values, world-views and community (see Pieper 1965; Duvignaud 1976, 1989; Turner 1982; Benedict 1983; Falassi 1987; Piette 1992). Consequentially to the festival boom in the 1980s and 1990s in the global north, academic attention expanded and shifted to other disciplines – marking the second phase. Rather than a disciplinary interest, event studies established as an individual research field (Cudny 2016). Uprising event practices led to strong economic and social research interestsⁱⁱⁱ. Subsequent economic perspectives on ‘events’ addressed themes including direct and indirect profits (Campbell 2011; Åkerlund and Müller 2012; Bianchini et al. 2013; Richards and Marques 2015) and place-marketing (Richards 2000; Deffner and Labrianidis 2005). In regards to the particular focus of culture-led events such as UK City of Culture, the profitability of cultural industries became an important interest in economic research (Sjøholt 1999; Tucker 2008; Liu 2014b; Ooi et al. 2014). Social dimensions of event research developed in the early 2000s, and here research focuses on the festival community with attention to event managers, tourists and citizens and concentrates on public engagement, with particular interests in audience development. (Boland 2010; Fitzpatrick 2010; Kuzgun et al. 2010; Fitjar et al. 2013; Steiner et al. 2015; Santos et al. 2016;). The social and economic research dimension continuously influences the third phase and contemporary canon of event studies. Regenerative research interests guide the current discussion. The transformation potential of events is investigated in economic, social and cultural contexts (Mooney 2004; Moulart et al. 2004; Evans 2011; Liu 2014a, 2014b; Németh 2015). Even though research in festivals departed as a social scientific analytical interest, contemporary considerations of cultural dimensions mainly focus on national and regional representations in event productions (Bunnell 2008; Sassatelli 2008; Immler and Sakers 2014; Lähdesmäki 2011, 2013; Bolland et al. 2016; McDermott et al. 2016). Academic studies of economic and social dimensions and their regenerative potentials dominate the field.

These conceptual developments influence the methodological trends in the field. Quantitative methodologies forefront the current canon of event research. In particular, survey methods dominate the field (Holloway et al. 2010). Summarized as critical event studies, scholars critically engage with the relevance, value and necessity of qualitative research (see Getz et al 2001; Morgan 2006; Shipway and Jones 2007; Frost et al. 2008; Morgan and Wright 2008; Stone 2008). In their edited volume ‘Critical Event Studies: Approaches to Research’, Ian Lamond and Louise Platt (2016) particularly foreground participatory, ethnographic and auto-ethnographic research methods for the study of events. In respect to the collaborative practice proposed and discussed in this paper, I want to highlight Rebecca Finkel and Kate Sang’s (2016) contribution concerning participatory ethnographic research approach in a community event in Edinburgh, Scotland. Departing from the convergence of the scientific and lived experience, the scholars investigate in conjunction with community members as the experts in the field of study. Highlighting the difficulties and strength of such a method, their investigation outlines the relevance of such novel approaches particularly in the field of event studies. These developments, responses and explorations contextualize the qualitative, ethnographic collaboration with observing participants for the investigation of event perception in the context of Hull UK City of Culture 2017.

METHODOLOGY

Webs of Perception

Observing participants are a team of ten citizens of Hull. The group contributes to the data collection through their observations of selected cultural activities throughout mega-event Hull UK City of Culture 2017. My primary motivation is the documentation of first-hand accounts of event experiences from the audience perspective. The word play ‘observing participants’ refers to the applied anthropological method of participative observation on the one hand. On the other hand, the title indicates the collaborative status of citizens in the research project.

The initial inspiration for the method derives from an encounter in Hull’s Freedom Festival in 2016 during my preliminary exploration of docu-

mentation techniques and strategies in the festival settings. The annual Freedom Festival spreads out through the entire city centre. As an audience member, the space looked uncontrollable and overwhelming, due to the variety of interventions as part of the three-day festival. While some spaces such as the ‘Speak Out Tent’ or the ‘Stage@TheDocks’ were clearly operated by stage managers, other supposedly informal spaces such as street corners did not appear to be managed by an identifiable individual or team. An encounter with a so-called event runner explained this seemingly uncontrollable ‘mess.’ Through audio-devices all stage managers, runners and further staff connected with each other. They created a network. Each responsible acted in an individual space but shared the happenings in the larger community of the festival committee. While these individuals performed their professional tasks, I was curious to explore similar networks of perceptions in the audience through a team of perceivers, who experience individually but share their observations collectively.

Forming the Team

The team of observing participants was established between September 2016 and January 2017 simultaneously with my preliminary exploration. I got to know all participants due to my active participation and interest in Hull’s cultural scene. First encounters with participants occurred in situations such as exhibition openings in art gallery spaces, meetings of intentional communities such as language cafes, craft groups etc. as well as the formal volunteer training for Hull2017. With attention to diversity within the team, the recruitment based on purposive sampling. Linked with feminist methodological consideration of positionality, as I explain in the next section, I departed from the premise that personal contexts shape the experiential accounts of an individual. Additionally, I wanted to respond to the diverse socio-demographic structure of the city of Hull. Therefore, I focused on the socio-demographic factors of age, gender identity and residential location for recruitment.

OBSERVATIONS

As the Table 1 shows, the observing participants represent a variety of age groups. The

youngest participant is 24 years old in contrast with the oldest team member of 75 years. The age group of 25 to 34 states the largest representation of one age group with four individuals, followed by two individuals in the age group of 35 to 44. All other age groups are represented by one person. In respect to gender identity, I use self-declared categories of gender identification. Two observing participants identify outside the binary gender structures, as gender-fluid or transgender. Six participants identify as female, next to two participants identifying as male. Next to the demographic factors of age and gender identities, the selection criteria of ‘location of residence’ is of major relevance, due to the urban patterns of the investigated city. Three zones of North, East and West structure the city. Postcodes categorize these different areas further and are references of identification for the population. Statistically speaking, the regional clusters relate to socio-economic classifications in regards to household income and educational level. I thus wished to involve residents of different postcodes and zones in the team of observing participants. Figure 1 visualizes the location of residence of all ten observing participants at the moment of recruitmentⁱⁱⁱ. Team members are situated in four postcode areas throughout East and West Hull. Two participants live in the postcode of HU5. Colloquially addressed as ‘The Avenues’, the district is affluent and its residents the stereotypical consumer of cultural activities in the city. Two other participants live in the working-class neighbourhood of HU9. One participant grew up and moved temporarily back to a suburban village outside of Hull. The largest group of participants are residents of the postcode of HU3, which is diverse in its socio-demographic representation.

Table 1: Age and gender of participants

<i>Participant (in alphabetical order)</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Alex	18-24	Male
Anna	25-34	Female
Daniel	25-34	Male
Emma	25-34	Female
Lisa	55-64	Female
Mathilda	25-34	Female
Rachel	45-54	Female
Robin	35-44	Gender-fluid
Rosa	65-74	Female
Sophia	35-44	Trans-Female

While associated with working class population and particularly the former fishing industries, the district currently shows a changing demographic due to the increase of migrant residents from EU or Non-EU countries.

Next to socio-demographic criteria of selection, interest in culture, art and heritage influenced the formation of the team. My primary encounter with all participants took place in the context of or in association with cultural activities. Therefore, all observing participants show a certain affiliation or interest with the given subject. However, the extents or nature of their interest varies vastly. While some participants are artists or specifically affiliated with a specific artistic or cultural genre, others have no direct relationship with arts and culture but a more general interest. Expertise, interests and curiosities are not only logistically essential but furthermore influence the individuals' experiences of cultural activities.

The initial recruitment process ended in February 2017 with a workshop preparing the participants for their first exploration of a festival in March 2017. In the workshop, we explored the individual interests and considerations of the city's developments in playful, creative manners. I, further, introduced the team to their tasks. Collectively, we explored different analogue documentation strategies including field notes and social artefacts. The workshop ended in a collective brainstorming about possible gender and equality issues in events settings.

Observing, Exploring and Documenting

Throughout 2017, the observing participants experienced, explored and observed seven selected cultural activities. All selected activities institutionally associate with Hull's celebration of the title UK City of Culture and are gender-sensitive in their format, content or setting. The selection of activities developed gradually with input, recommendations and proposals by the observing participants, third parties and myself. Dependent on the individual preferences and availability, observing participants visited the activities autonomously or collectively with the researcher and/or other participants. I shared brief information about the content and programme of each activity before through emails, but observing participants were not asked to make any other preparations prior to attending selected events. Within the first half of 2017, the observing participants explored four activities. The first observations took place March 2017 in the 'Women of the World' (WoW) festival, which promotes gender equality in a three-day festival format. Further, observing participants visited the exhibition 'SKIN: Freud, Mueck and Tunick' at the local art gallery. Described as a blockbuster show, the exhibition presented the artwork of Ron Mueck, Lucien Freud and Spencer Tunick. In June, the team observed Assemble Fest - a one-day, theatre festival, which brings emerging performances and performers into the neighbourhood of HU5 by using unusual venues such



Fig. 1. Location of residence of participants

as bars, cafes, shops and community centres. Subsequent observations were conducted at UK Pride in July 2017 and the following weeklong celebration of the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalization of homosexuality in the UK.

After the observation of a cultural activity, I would meet up with each participant for a one on one conversation. I worked with a prepared interview schedule for each cultural activity but allowed the conversation to be steered by the participant. With questions concerning the core value communicated through the artistic practice and potential learning processes of the individual, I facilitated critical reflections and considerations of the personal perceptions, experiences and observations. The follow-up conversations were audio recorded and later transcribed for further analysis.

DISCUSSION

I developed the outlined method in respect to the three determining components of content, field and subjects. Firstly, the research content's focus on gender equality requires an appropriate research methodology, which considers feminist values in practice. The collaborative work with observing participants allows me to commit to feminist principles of knowledge production with particular consideration of positionality and horizontal relationships. Secondly, the method responds to the complex research field and the circumstances in cultural activities. Flexible adaptation to activities as diverse as festivals, performances and exhibitions was an essential component in the development of the collaborative method. The third component concerns with the individuals involved in the investigation. Combining feminist methodological perspectives as well as the field-specific circumstances, a critical consideration of the observing participants' positions for the research project is required. Based on a 'citizen science' (Bonney et al. 2009; Hand 2010) approach, which I elucidate further below, I argue for a conceptualization of observing participants as collaborators.

Gender Equality in Practice: Feminist Methodological Approach

The collaborative work with observing participants derives from critical questionings of scientific practice and content. The interest in

gender equality occupies not only analytical and theoretical approaches, but also practical, methodological considerations. Due to the content of analysis, methodological interests need to correspond with the principles of gender equality. The analytical focus thus directs the research practice.

For this reason, I turn to classical feminist readings of Donna Haraway (1988), Sandra Harding (1987) and Maria Mies (1983). Their radical thoughts stem from the continuous challenge to knowledge production. Core to this challenge is the redefinition of the value-free, truth-seeking objectivity, which marks the positivist ideal of knowledge production. Through feminist methodological approach, I consider event research beyond positivist ideals. In particular, I apply Harding's 'strong objectivity,' which suggests a strategy of "maximizing objectivity in social research [...] not [through] total value neutrality, but instead, [through] a commitment of the research to certain values" (Harding in Hirsch and Olson 1995). Rather than aspiring to a reduction of influencing factors for the aim of purported objectivity, I embed my research practice in reflective, accountable processes. I respond with Harding's (1987) suggestion of the commitment to certain values as embedding a gender equal approach. In practice, my approach cannot be conceptualized as feminist research practice per se, as I agree with Harding's (1987) claim that a feminist method does not exist, rather we look to a feminist methodological approach to research methods. How we 'do' the method can itself, then, 'be' feminist, and, indeed, my collaboration with observing participants allows me to commit to feminist principles of research practice and knowledge production.

Two principles are particularly valuable for the development and implementation of the method.

Firstly, the collaborative work with observing participants allows me to incorporate feminist considerations of positionalities. According to Haraway (1988), such considerations require close attention and awareness of the situatedness of individuals. In the collaborative practice with observing participants, individual positions are crucial. On the one hand, categorical positionalities such as age, gender and residential location are key factors for the selection of the team. On the other hand, each observing

participants' positionality shapes the task of observation through their situated perceptions (Haraway 1988; Abu-Lughod 1990). In March 2017, Rosa, a 75-year-old, female observing participant, shared with me the following observation, which exemplifies the potential and relevance of positionality for the research method. She followed my invitation to explore the 'Women of the World' festival for research purposes. Described as a festival "of equality in all its forms", the Women of the World festival offered a variety of talks, debates, film screenings, music performances over the course of three days (Hull2017 Ltd. 2017). Rosa visited the festival on the final day and attended among other activities a comedy performance by a well-known, UK-based, female comedian. Rosa explained that she experienced the performance in general as thought provoking in an entertaining and humorous way. However, the subject of comedy called her attention, as various jokes referred to the female ageing processes and particular the phase of menopause. Without recalling the exact phrases, she experienced a discomfort in reference to her own positionality. In response to age and gender, Rosa perceived the performance as a provocation towards her own positionality, which influenced her observation of the event. The research practice urges me to consider that positionality defines perception. Each individual positionality shapes the perception of the entire group and enriches therefore the contribution to the data collection.

The commitment to positionalities entangles with applied practice of horizontal relationships and reconsiders and counters the hierarchical conceptualization of the research and the researched. Brooks and Hesse-Biber (2007) point out that the positivist ideal for objectivity requires a separation of the 'knower' and the 'knowable'. Feminist methodological thinkers question the utility and above all the ethics of such a research practice, which relies on a hierarchical active/passive duality (Harding 1993; Preissle 2006; Hekman 2007). I challenge these hierarchical conceptualizations of western scientific knowledge production. Firstly, I am myself part of the team of observing participants. In consequence, I avoid any form of hierarchical ranking of observations, as the focus lies on individual, situated experiences. Secondly, general respect, appreciation and gratitude towards each person builds the basis of such horizontal

relationship. Furthermore, all participants share personal relationships with each other beyond our semi-professional association. The collaborative relationships developed into friendships due to continuous encounters and shared experiences as a research team. Consequently, the personal connection influences the professional collaboration and creates a relationship beyond the binary of the researcher and researched.

Festival, Performances or Exhibitions: Field-specific Requirements and the Need for Teamwork

Next to the analytical and practical focus on feminist approaches, the field and its inherent requirements lends itself to methodological experimentations. The collaborative practice with observing participants derives from three crucial conditions of the researched field.

The field is defined through an event framework. In general, the UK City of Culture conceptualizes as a mega-event. In particular, the individually researched cultural activities are delivered as events. Event researcher Donald Getz (2008) describes an event as a highly complex social and cultural phenomenon. Independently of the sportive, artistic, political or religious purposes, a multiplicity of factors influence, intersect and create the event scene. Conditions such as space, time, activity, objectives and audience construct a unique reality, as Holloway et al. (2010) summarize. Such constructed realities sets ideal circumstances for anthropological research, with the logistical conditions of events demanding flexibility and adaptability from the methods in practice. The event is complex and implies multiplicities of situations, settings and circumstances. In consequence, I chose analogue' participative observation as the core method for the data collection. Rich data quality, high flexibility in usage and immediacy are convincing advantages for the application in the event setting. A participative observer can effectively adjust to given situations and react to sudden changes (Holloway et al. 2010).

Next to the event setting and its logistical as well as methodological consequences, the interest in perceptive accounts of events requires further experimentation. Referring to Holloway et al. (2010) consideration, my interest lies in social and emotional aspects of events. Such interest relates to Getz's (2010) suggestion that

a core influence in the event phenomenon is the festival experience. Getz further argues that events are an interaction between people, settings, programmes and management structures. In this vast net of factors, event experience cannot be designed or planned. Here perception is key – experiences occur in the moment of happening, and the participatory element of the selected method responds to such immediate, experience-based conditions. The event demands each participant to be an “experiencing person” (Becker 1992) and observing participants perceive an event as audience members, participants and as observers.

The third and final field-specific requirement considers the collective experience of events. While I argued before for the individual positionality of each observing participant in response to the feminist methodological commitment, it is necessary to conceptualize perception not only as a singular account. An audience member experiences, participates and observes as individual. However, the audience member is not just a singular entity but shares perceptions with a vast amount of people (Getz 2008). Inspired by the event runner at Hull’s Freedom Festival 2016, I see the importance of combining a variety of perspectives, considering their mutual influences and addressing the web of experiences and perceptions in an event. The collaboration with a team of observing participants grasps the collectively created reality, without losing individual perceptions.

Contributions to Science: Observing Participants as Citizen Scientists

In this third and final pillar, I argue for a conceptualization of observing participants as citizen scientists. The collaborative nature of the participation in the research, as well as the value of their contribution to the data collection, lead me to such conclusions.

The consideration of participants as citizen scientists has multiple roots, as the two scholars Rick Bonney et al. (2009) and Alan Irwin (1995) referred independently to the same term in the mid-1990s. The two references, their associated scientific movement and practical research approach ground in common reflections. However, the approaches differentiate in respect to the philosophical and practical conceptualiza-

tion of the interests in, motivations for and focus of citizen sciences.

In his foundational text *Citizen Science: A Study of People, Expertise and Sustainable Development*, Irwin (1995) raises awareness for the necessary democratization of science and encourages citizens to claim back knowledge production. He questions the utility and ethics of institutionalized science in respect to the dichotomy of the expert and amateur. I see strong similarities between Irwin’s (1995) account and the formerly discussed feminist science critique and acknowledge the related call for redefinitions of knowledge productions. However, Bonney’s et al. (2009) practices of citizen sciences inform my understanding of the collaborative practice with observing participants more. Bonney et al. (2009) express the need, desire and possibility to work with non-academic volunteers in investigation projects. His practice-driven arguments highlight the potential underlying such public engagements in scientific research. Following his explanations, citizen scientists form part of the research in a variety of ways. Collaborations might be basic documentation tasks, lead into collective analysis or collaboration in dissemination. The collaboration with observing participants primarily addresses data collection through observations in cultural activities. However, due to their subjective nature, the collected observations influence the reflective, analytical process.

Bonney’s (2009) approach kick-started a movement of citizen sciences with a variety of projects and public engagements particularly in natural scientific disciplines. For Biology and Geology, citizen scientists enable extraordinary developments of large-scale projects with immense data collections gathered by the non-academic volunteers. For this reason, the main body of literature emerges from the natural sciences and only in a few cases, have social scientific research projects included citizen scientists. Within social sciences, lines of participation and collaboration blur, as social scientists Kingsley Purdam and Liz Richardson (n.d.) argue. Due to the consistent research of society and engagement with the public in social scientific investigations, the position of the citizen scientist cannot be defined as clearly as in other disciplines. However, Purham (2014) points out that citizen social scientists go beyond the voluntary participation in the research study in form

of an interview, focus group or survey. According to Purdam (2014) and in my own collaborative practice, citizen scientists/ observing participants are much more deeply involved in and dedicated to the research project. The observing participant as citizen scientist is creating, collecting and reflecting upon the data, becomes a crucial part of the data gathering process and in consequence an essential component of the investigation.

With this conceptualization of observing participants as citizen scientists, I thoughtfully engage with the advantages and potential disadvantages. Here I apply a critical gaze to this collaborative practice with observing participants for three reasons:

Firstly, natural scientific scholars debated the data quality in citizen science projects (Cohn 2008; Riesch and Potter 2014; Kullenberg and Kasperowski 2016). I anticipated similar concerns during the planning phase. However, as positivist ideals of data quality do not apply to this research project, I estimate the quality of data on other scales. The required data from observing participants seeks for individual perceptions. Therefore, its quality derives from a subjective accounts rather than objective claims. Every reflection, thought and observation contributes and increases the quality of the data collection.

Secondly, I am aware that observing participants collaborate on a voluntary basis, which is discussed as a potential for exploitation of their unpaid labour in related literature (Clark et al. 2009; Conrad and Hilchey 2011). I am highly attentive to the question of compensation in my own collaborative practice. Counteracting potentially exploitative structures, I compensate the work of observing participants in material terms. Even though, direct monetary payment is not given, expenses incurred and tickets are paid for by the research project. Additionally, if logistically possible, I provide food or drinks during the event and follow-up conversations. This guarantees no additional costs for observing participants, while supporting the research project. Next to these forms of material compensation, observing participants described a second, intangible compensation through increased motivation and purpose to join cultural activities. As I organize tickets, visiting schedules and provide a network, observing participants experience a hassle-free attendance and expressed

such experience as an intangible valorisation of their task.

Thirdly, the collaborative practice holds educational potential through public engagement (Silvertown 2009). Participants point out that their task of conscious observation and critical reflections on event-culture, gender and equality has raised their awareness to the investigated issues. Exploring, observing and judging festivals in response to their gender sensitivity as well as the follow-up questions enhanced observing participants' awareness and knowledge concerning gender equality, LGBT rights, and gender relations.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I outlined the research method and collaborative practice applied in the context of the research project 'Gendering Cities of Culture.' The collaboration with observing participants was developed and is currently applied within event research concerning the UK City of Culture mega-event in 2017 in Hull. The intention of the practice lies in the documentation of subjective, experiential accounts of audience members in cultural activities. In collaboration with ten citizens of Hull, I explore perceptions of produced values in selected festivals, exhibitions and performances through the ethnographic method of participative observation.

Departing from shifting disciplinary attention in the current canons of Event Studies, I defend the suggested collaborative method in respect to three dominant influences considering the content, field and collaborators of the investigation.

Methodological commitments to feminist research practice responds to the analytical focus on gender equality. The collaborative work with observing participants questions structures of knowledge production and applies Harding's (1993) concept of strong objectivity. Hereby, I particularly acknowledge and raise awareness for the individual positionalities and potentials for the research objectives. Further, this method challenges binary structures of western scientific knowledge production. Through friendship and collaboration, the relationships reconceptualise on horizontal lines.

I highlighted the requirements and necessary considerations of event-based fieldwork. I selected the easily adaptable but simultaneously

highly attentive documentation technique of participative observation in response to the complex field sites. Furthermore, with attention to the festival experience, I outlined the necessity of teamwork in order to collect not only individual perspectives but also a wider web of perceptions.

I conclude my consideration of the collaborative practice with conceptualizations of observing participants as citizen scientists. I value their contribution to the research project beyond a basic participation in social scientific investigation. Observing participants collect, create and reflect upon the data collection and therefore become essential collaborators in the research project.

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NOTES

- i Hull, as the short version for Kingston upon Hull, is situated in the county of Yorkshire in the Northeast of England at the junction of Humber River and Hull River. The city counted 258,995 inhabitants in the national estimation of 2015 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2015). The post-industrial city degenerated in regards to the declining fishing and trading industry in the 1970s. Ever since, the population has been dealing with the socio-economic consequences. The city was introduced to several regeneration plans in the 1990s and 2000s with specific attention to shopping and leisure facilities. The focus on arts, culture and heritage in the mega-event of Hull 2017 is motivated through a regenerative interest.
- ii I deliberately reverse the more standard phrasing in qualitative research of 'participant observer' to 1. reflect these participants' roles as observers for research purposes and 2. as participants as citizens in the cultural events, and 3. to foreground their collaborative status in the research project - hence 'observing participants'
- iii In this literature review, my focus lays on the independent academic investigations of the mega-event European Capital of Culture and UK City of Culture, due to the research interest of the project 'Gendering Cities of Culture.' Other sources regarding different mega-events and festivals address a similar three

folded structure in their research outlines (Getz 2008).

- iv Changes and developments of the residences are not included. Two observing participants have moved location since the beginning of the collaboration. While one participant moved within the same post-code, the other person's relocation is highly relevant for the research project. The participant moved from East to West Hull with the motivation of better access to cultural activities.
- v Analogue refers to the pen and article technique of participative observation. While new technologies are increasingly used for the observing task, I apply the traditional approach to participative observation, in which the observer documents through manually written field notes and collections of social artefacts.

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