DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Title of the dissertation
Production Networks: Indian Cultural Production in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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Institution awarding the Ph. D. Degree
University of Otago

Date of defence
May 2014 with Graduation confirmation August 2014

Goal and objectives of the dissertation
Goal
The aim of this research is to examine the ways producer identity affects production

practice and, ultimately, cultural representation in a diasporic context. More

specifically, the research interrogates the manner in which diasporic and non-

diasporic producers construct and manipulate production networks in the pursuit of

successful events.

Objectives
The objectives of this research are framed around a central research question: What

are the processes and relationships that support the production of cultural events, with

specific reference to events that are of interest to and/or produced by Auckland's Indian communities? This research is inherently interdisciplinary. It studies music and other performing arts events in industrial and non-industrial contexts. It examines cultural variations resulting from the efforts of producers, who are private individuals, entrepreneurs, community groups, or government bodies, all operating within a context defined by one of Auckland's major diasporic communities.

Methodology

This ethnographic research draws from ethnomusicology, event management, social science and industry practice to achieve a multidisciplinary approach to this applied research project. Primary data was collected by conducting 12 formal in-depth interviews, as well as ongoing discussions with those interviewed and other members of the local Auckland community involved in Indian community arts production during 2010-2012. For this research, participant observation was possible through immersion in various production roles as event support, advisor and as volunteer coordinator, and as audience member across many event platforms. This combination of methods allowed interview findings and statistical data to be compared. Secondary data was collected to support the findings including; government documents comprising quantitative statistical information, qualitative data from ephemera, media, and literature focussing on media promotion and government policy documents. Also included is a detailed discussion of a new method that I have developed in the course of this study and I have applied throughout the case studies. There is also an explanation of an 18-month media snapshot developed to validate the findings through quantitative data. The events included in this study, took place between 1995 and 2012 and are chosen to provide a variety of concerts and festivals featuring Indian cultural content and promoted to Auckland's Indian communities by a range of producer identities. This informed the theoretical approach to Chapters 2–5, which offer eighteen case studies that form the core of the research.

Results

In order to contrast and compare production practices, the case studies are divided by four different producer types: cultural organisations, government agencies, commercial producers and emerging producers. The findings have determined not only the nature of the events, but also their relevance to various stakeholders, including the audience, sponsors and the wider community. The role the producer plays within the wider community affects production practices, purpose and event goals. Four producer types were identified, and summations can be made on their differing sense of purpose and management styles. Community organisations play important role events in cultural transmission and community cohesion. The variety of community events is increased, reflecting the diversity and size of the growing population. Government agencies rely on government policies, political relationships and top-down management structures for the economic support to produce large cultural festivals. Commercial producers present high risk events, relying on large audiences and are driven by profit. New young migrants, challenging the other with their developed skills useful in the event industry, including DJing, marketing, IT experts and assess to the virtual world.

Theoretical conclusions

Taken as a whole, this research demonstrates the centrality of relationship networks as the key to the relative success or failure of the events studied. Identity and community, feasibility and power emerge as explanatory and analytical themes that help understand the relationships activated to create the networks that are central to the production of events. The findings in this research demonstrate in multiple ways the manner in which event producers construct, use, rearrange and maintain production networks. The event process is powerful, as it has the capacity to affect the reputations of performers, producers and communities. The ability of production networks to endure and evolve is a key to the longevity of the Indian cultural event industry in Auckland. This study has demonstrated how the concept of 'Indianness'

has become more complex in event production practices in the globalised world of the twenty-first century.

Practical application of the dissertation

This research makes a contribution to the growing literature in the field of event management in which a need to apply phenomenology (hermeneutics) and experiential assessment methods. Previous ethnographic studies of the multiple Diwali festivals in New Zealand (Johnson, 2007, 2010; Johnson & Figgins, 2005) focus on these as community events – which have a distinctive cultural significance for those of South Asian identity, old and new to New Zealand – as a cultural setting juxtaposing culture and ethnicity. This research builds on these findings and takes into consideration stakeholder relationships, cultural identity and the role the producer plays in presenting cultural performances. This comprehensive, processural approach contributes to the growing discipline of event management studies and reflects the need for greater interdisciplinary to advance the field of festival studies (Getz, 2010). The findings are also applicable for event practitioners involved in the complex business of producing events in a diasporic context.

Content of the dissertation

Chapter one: Literature and Methodology

This section discusses the literature from social science, festival tourism and event management perspectives to identifying key theoretical concepts included in this thesis. The literature review is divided into six sections: 1) Community and Community Oriented Events, 2) Private, Public and Not-for-Profit Festivals, 3) Sense of Identity, Diaspora, and Globalised Cultures, 4) Festivalisation and Cultural Policies, 5) Events and Stakeholder Relationships, 6) Cultural Organisations' Demographic Details and Migration History. A migration overview is included identifying the formation of Auckland's Indian cultural organisations, contextualising the research in migration history.

The second section discusses methodology and the theoretical framework of this research. The rationale for using case studies and the analysis of the data that are at the core of this ethnographic research is explained. This research views culture from an anthropological perspective (Clifford, 1988; Geertz, 1973), with culture defined as a patterning of behaviour and a worldview within a social group that is passed onto the next generation. This relativist approach follows the work of classic anthropological work of Boas (1920) who argued that as humans we are not innately born with culture but learn from the world around us. This is followed by an introduction of a conceptual model that explains the application of a new methodological tool that has been developed over the course of this research and applied to the case studies. This is followed by an explanation of an 18 month tracking of events promoted in the local Indian media in order to collect event background information and quantitative data to analyse. This informs the theoretical approach to Chapters 2–5, which offer case studies that form the core of the research.

Chapter two: Cultural Organisations
Auckland's Indian community includes cultural identities from a vast array of regions, religious practices and linguistic divisions. The eight case studies serve to illustrate how cultural organisations produce events that are integral to rituals, spirituality, kinship and social interaction. The event examples were chosen to provide a range of events, organisations and cultures, offering an overview of the kind of organisations that produce events, their production practices, and where they culturally 'fit' in the larger community contexts. In this way, their events preserve the culture of their original homelands in the cultural site of their new homes (DeSouza, 2011; Turino & Lea, 2004; Vertovec, 1997).

Chapter three: Government Producers
Chapter 3 discusses and analyses the role government agencies play as producers and focuses on power structures and issues around representing the cultures of 'others'.

Government agency producers have hegemonic control over cultural production practices in which they control the resources. The chapter begins with a discussion placing government involvement in representing India, presented chronologically, 1995-2012. The eight case studies that follow examined concerts, festivals and the placement of concerts in festivals over this time frame in order to compare management practices, government agency involvement and cultural representation.

Chapter four: Commercial Producers
The six case studies, focussing profit driven events, compared and contrasted differing production practices in order to examine how some producers created economically and socially sustainable events. Issues and risk factors producers face presenting concerts in a city with a small audience pool are identified. Over 30 percent of the large events examined were not economically viable. From this data, it is clear that new migrants struggled for successful production outcomes and that the market was dominated by a few producers with strategic advantages. For most of the producers identified, profits as well community prestige were primary motivators.

Chapter five: New Migrants
The emerging voices of new migrants, in contrast to the producers in the previous chapters, bring different cultural perspectives to the content in their events based on the producer's individual understandings of India as a place they have lived in, visited or vicariously experienced through family and the virtual world and the world of film. The initial focus includes an in-depth case study of a successful DJ mix dance party that featured both local and overseas performers and followed by an examination of a number of local nightclub and family-oriented events.

Chapter six: Discussion and Analysis
The chapter begins by describing the process of identifying the emerging overarching themes from the four previous case-study chapters. Identity, community, feasibility and power have emerged as explanatory and analytical themes that help understand

production networks function. Revealed is the importance of cultural events for the Indian communities as spaces to reaffirm identity as a cultural minority. It is in this diversity of cultural identity, and positioning within a new homeland with remaining linkages to their past localities, that the events in this study are sited. Local and transnational relationships act as a binding agent between identity, community, feasibility and power. Relationships are central to all types of producers. The ability of production networks to endure and evolve is a key factor in the formal and informal processes, systems, structures and relationships that create power for the event producers and their community networks

Chapter seven: Conclusion

This research has demonstrated the variety of processes through which producers construct, utilise, rearrange and maintain production networks in their attempts to produce successful events. The local and global network formations central to the production networks, shape cultural performance content and, the consequent images of India that are received/consumed by the local Indian community, as well as, the wider New Zealand audience. The concerts and festivals discussed and analysed demonstrated the wide variety of cultural events produced representing Indian culture in Auckland. Taken as a whole, this research has demonstrated the centrality of the producer's relationship networks to the relative success or failure of the events studied. The ability of production networks to endure and evolve is a key to the longevity of the Indian cultural event industry in Auckland. This study has demonstrated how the concept of 'Indianness' has become more complex in event production practices in the globalised world of the twenty-first century.

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