ABSTRACT

PRODUCING ON THE FRINGE: HOW FRINGE FESTIVAL STRUCTURE IMPACTS PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

By

Monica A. Miklas

May 2015

This thesis, presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration/Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Management, investigates the business models used by performing arts festivals known as "fringe festivals." In the United States, there are three basic fringe festival models: the open access or Edinburgh model, the limited access model, and the adjudicated model. Interviews with artists who participated in fringes as producers reveal that the model impacts the participant experience less than the degree of scaffolding the fringe offers and the degree to which the fringe constrains producing choices. This thesis suggests a fringe festival framework, classifying fringes by degree of scaffolding and constraint, which can be used by producers to identify festival settings that will be the best fit for their needs. The framework can also be used by fringe festival organizers as a tool for self-reflection and festival assessment.

PRODUCING ON THE FRINGE: HOW FRINGE FESTIVAL STRUCTURE IMPACTS PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Theatre Arts

California State University, Long Beach

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Business Administration

Master of Fine Arts

in Theatre Management

Committee Members:

David Horne, Ph.D. (Chair)
Nicki Genovese, M.F.A.
Xela Batchelder, Ph.D.

College Designee:

Anne Justine D'Zmura, M.F.A.

By Monica A. Miklas

B.A., 2009, Stanford University, Stanford, California

May 2015

UMI Number: 1589632

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI 1589632
Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.
All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful for the thoughtful guidance and support of this thesis's review committee members, Dr. David Horne, Professor Nicki Genovese, and Dr. Xela Batchelder, as well as for the sage advice of Dr. Wendell Nekoranec in the project's early stages. It is with profound gratitude that I acknowledge the constant encouragement of Sara Waugh and the unwavering support of my family: Rob and Brigid Miklas, my brother, John Miklas, and especially my husband, David McKeever, whom I met—where else?—on the fringe.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

LIST OF TABLES vii

LIST OF FIGURES viii

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION 1

2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS 6

Festival Theory Literature Review 6
Fringe History and Models 8
The Edinburgh Festival Fringe 8
Fringe in Canada 11
Fringe in the United States 13
Fringe Festival Literature Review 18

3. EXPECTATIONS 24

4. METHODOLOGY 28

5. RESULTS 34

Producer Characteristics 36
Fringe Scaffolding 38
Access to Learning Opportunities 39
Access to Infrastructure 41
Access to Relationships 46
Fringe Constraints 50
Standardization 50
Festival Size 53
Geography 54

CHAPTER Page

6. DISCUSSION 56

Assessment of Expectations.. 56
Scaffolds and Constraints Revisited 59
Developing a New Fringe Framework... 61
High Scaffolding-High Constraint.. 62
High Scaffolding-Low Constraint... 64
Low Scaffolding-Low Constraint 66
Low Scaffolding-High Constraint... 67
Applications 68
Further Study and Conclusions... 72

APPENDICES 76

A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 77

B. CODING SAMPLES: OPEN CODING, AXIAL CODING AND MEMO 80

REFERENCES 83

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE Page

1. A Sample of Fringe Festival Fees……………………………………………………14

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE Page

1. The non-profit lifecycle…………………………………………………………20

2. The scaffolding-constraint fringe framework………………………….…………..63

3. The scaffolding-constraint fringe framework with festival characteristics......69

4. Questions for artists to use with the fringe framework……………………...71

5. Questions for festival leaders to use with the fringe framework…………....73

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The global performing arts phenomena known as fringe festivals have surged in popularity in the United States in the last two decades, springing up in communities large and small across the country. Even within the community of people who regularly attend and participate in these festivals, "fringe" is a slippery term. As soon as a definition crystallizes, an exception comes along that shatters expectations. Depending on the source, fringe can be a spirit or ethos, a specific festival model, a style of performance, even a verb, "to fringe." From Portland, Maine to San Diego, California, more than forty festivals fitting some definition of fringe will take place in 2015. Of twenty-one festivals for which attendance numbers could be found on festival websites or through the United States Association of Fringe Festivals (USAFF), an industry group, the average audience size is around 17,000, with a range from 550 to 75,000 people and a median of 9,700. The median attendance for festivals in existence for fewer than ten years is lower, around 5,000 attendees. Even using the lower median figure for attendance points to an estimated fringe attendance of some 450,000 to 500,000 patrons in 2015.

To understand the current fringe craze in the United States, we must look at the history of fringe festivals and how they came to be in North America. The term "fringe festival" itself derives from the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, which began in 1947, "when eight theatre groups turned up uninvited to perform at the (then newly formed) Edinburgh

International Festival" (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society 2015). The groups, all Scottish, staged performances, as one reviewer put it, "round the fringe" of the festival, using theaters and converted spaces not in use by the official festival (Bain 1996, 4). In the subsequent years, groups of performers continued to show up to self-produce adjunct shows alongside the curated International Festival. In 1954, the adjunct groups organized, setting up a central ticketing system and pooling publicity resources, while continuing to take all comers to the festival who could pay the registration fee. A governing body known as the Festival Fringe Society was established in 1958, first as a volunteer-run organization and eventually developing into a professional, registered charity staffed by a handful of full-time employees. The non-selective Fringe acted as a counterpoint to the curated International Festival. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe grew in size and influence and the idea of "fringe" diffused through the performance world. As in the parlor game "Telephone," where a whispered message morphs as it makes its way from lip to ear around a circle, so too did the idea of "fringe" shift in meaning and practice as it made its way around the United Kingdom and then the globe.

In the summer of 1981, fringe came to North America when the first Canadian fringe festival took place in Edmonton, Alberta. The festival remained true to the ethos of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe by eschewing artistic administration, but the organizers made a decision that would come to influence all of the fringes in North America: to rent venues and assign participants to them. With support from the municipal government, the organizers provided the space to performers free of a rental charge. However with the "free rent" came a different sort of price. Gone was the anything goes venue market of

Edinburgh in which performers negotiated for space. Instead, fringe organizers by necessity had to put some boundaries on the shows within the festival. Performances had to fit within set time slots and conform to the production specifications of the venue to which they were assigned. The size of the Edmonton Fringe was limited to the number of groups that could fit in the venues booked by the organizers. Edmonton Fringe, widely copied across Canada, gave birth to what is now known as the Canadian model of fringes (itself the template for the more broadly defined group of festivals known as limited access fringes). The basic tenets of the Canadian model are codified in Canada by an industry group known as the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF) which trademarked the terms "fringe" and "fringe festival" in 1998. It is important to point out that Canadian fringes, from the moment of their inception, changed the definition of fringe. In Edinburgh, fringe was originally a relational term, referring to the festival's existence around the edges of the Edinburgh International Festival. In Canada, fringe came to refer to theater happening outside of established theaters, which was usually considered risky, edgy, or new.

Fringe arrived in the United States around 1990, as organizers in four cities, Seattle, San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Orlando, began to plan fringe festivals. These fringes were directly inspired by the Canadian festival model, not Edinburgh's, and like the Canadian fringes, were stand-alone affairs, but each reflected the specific situation of the local environment (Lane 2003, 59-60). Seattle's fringe showcased the buzzing small theatre scene "seeking to compete with more established theatre institutions," whereas Orlando's founders sought to establish an alternative theater scene in a re-emerging

downtown district (Lane 2003, 32). All tweaked the Canadian model slightly to suit the needs of the local community, but admitted participants through a first-come, first-serve selection process or through a lottery. The registration fees of participants went toward festival overhead and as in Canada, the central fringe organization managed the festival performance venues. In 1997, new fringe festivals were announced in New York and Philadelphia, but these were fringes with a major twist. In a break with tradition, both festivals said they would accept applications and then select participants through a curatorial process. Freeing artists from the constraints of someone else's artistic administration and interpretation was a founding principle not only in Edinburgh, but of all the North American fringes up to that time. Many fringe organizers considered the curation decision an affront to their values. CAFF demanded that the New York and Philadelphia fringes remove the word "fringe" from their names, a request to which the new festivals did not acquiesce. Though Philadelphia Fringe underwent a series of subsequent model changes, the New York International Fringe Festival remains an "adjudicated" fringe and is the largest such festival in the United States with an attendance of some 75,000 patrons in 2013 (USAFF 2015b).

In the last decade and a half, the American fringe scene has boomed, with fringes inspired by the templates of the first four American fringes, New York's adjudicated fringe, and Edinburgh popping up in cities across the country. Between 2003 and 2013, the membership of USAFF went from five to twenty-five festivals. Dozens more festivals that operate according to one of the fringe models, but are not members of USAFF, take place every year.

Much of the literature that deals with fringe festivals focuses on the Edinburgh Fringe and the origins and evolution of fringes in other parts of the world. This research points to the diversity of fringe models and structures across the United States, but the last comprehensive, comparative study of American fringes was published in 2003, before the current boom of new festivals. Further, much of the research on fringe structures examines the motivations of founders. Relatively little has been examined from the point of view of the artist participating in the festival. As a practitioner of theater and a former participant in fringe festivals, I began to wonder how the multitude of fringe formats were impacting the artists who participated in them. Do different fringe models affect the participant experience? To gain a deeper understanding of this question, I turned to the participants themselves, undertaking an interview-based examination of their experiences in a variety of American fringe festivals. In the next chapter, I frame the research question with a contextual analysis of fringe history and the pertinent literature. This section is followed by my expectations for the study. Next, I describe in detail the grounded theory methodology used in the research process. I report the results of the interviews, organizing them using the concepts of scaffolding and constraints, borrowed from education theory. Finally, I discuss the results and suggest a new framework for fringe festival evaluation from various perspectives and look to where future research in the field might lead.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Putting fringe festivals in context requires consulting a variety of sources and perspectives. The world of fringe has a specialized vocabulary, as well as guiding traditions, some of which are now the source of much debate within the fringe community. To begin the contextual analysis, I review the festival theory literature, placing the study of fringe festivals in a larger context. Next, a brief history of fringe festivals and models thereof orients the reader unfamiliar with the fringe community. The fringing world is vast, so at this point, I narrow the focus to the North American fringe movement, paying attention to how fringes on this continent differ from the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Finally, a fringe festival literature review places the study at hand within the context of existing academic studies of fringes, as well as the journalistic documentation of fringes.

Festival Theory Literature Review

Academic inquiry into festivals in general has increased as festivals have become more popular. Schoenmakers (2007, 28) conceptualizes the festival as "an event consisting of single events, in other words: a meta-event" organized around "an integrating principle" meant " to evoke the feeling that we are dealing with a recognisable identity at the level of the festival." Festival impacts, particularly economic ones, have

been studied extensively, as has the interplay between festivals and tourism (Mair and Whitford 2013, 6). Major gaps in the festival research are identified in event policy, methodology for economic evaluation, and events pertaining to indigenous peoples (Mair and Whitford 2013, 7).

Stakeholder theory is an accepted lens for analyzing festivals (Hauptfleisch 2007, 43-46; Getz, Anderson, and Carlsen 2010, 3). Hauptfleisch (2007, 43) calls the festival a "poly-system" defined by "a variety of dynamic forces…ultimately vying for supremacy and 'ownership' of the festival as a whole." Due to the interconnected web of stakeholders, "It clearly becomes a matter of some difficulty for any organiser or organisation to really control a festival" (Hauptfleisch 2007, 45). Festival organizers recognize the power of other stakeholders, but one cross-cultural analysis indicates that festival organizers perceive paid artists as low-importance stakeholders, mattering less than venues and facilities, local government, and paying customers (Getz, Anderson, and Carlsen 2010, 9). A key difference between fringes and the festivals in that study is that fringe festival organizers do not pay artists; rather ticket sales pass through fringe administration systems to artists or go directly to them in the first place. Very little of the literature contemplates how unpaid festival participants figure into festival management, underscoring the need for specialized research on this class of festival.

Fringe festivals do not fit neatly into the festival literature on theater or performance festivals because they involve outsourcing the production of performances to participants. It is necessary that artists continue to participate; without them, the festival would be a shell, all infrastructure and no substance. Festivals predicated on

participation do appear in the literature, Burning Man, an annual, week-long event in the Nevada desert, being a prime example of a participatory festival widely studied by academics (Saillant 2010; Clupper 2007). Clupper (2007, 223) writes that Burning Man operates according to "cultural values" of "radical inclusion, radical self-expression, radical self-reliance, decommodification, gift exchange and communal effort." Fringes again contrast with this area of research, selling tickets to a paying audience being a fundamental part of the business model for both organizers and participants.

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival in specific is discussed in the literature through crisis and innovation cycles (Carlsen et al. 2010, 7-8). Fringe festivals are also studied by Frew and Ali-Knight (2009, 222), who place fringe festival atmosphere at the confluence of "human variables," including artists, "fringe festival organisers," and "physical variables." The integrating principle of the Edinburgh Fringe, as with most fringes in North America, is nonselectivity (Shrum 1996, 88). Mair and Whitford's (2013, 7) broad survey of the literature makes no distinction between selective and nonselective festivals like fringes.

Fringe History and Models

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe

To preface the fringe festival literature review, it is necessary to take a deeper look at the existing "fringe festival models" and how they came to be. As mentioned above, the concept of fringe springs from the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, a nonselective festival that began alongside the Edinburgh International Festival in 1947. An organizing body called the Festival Fringe Society formed in 1958, with the understanding that, "the

Society was to take no part in vetting the festival's programme" (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society 2015). The Festival Fringe Society continues to administer the Edinburgh Festival Fringe today, frequently described as a providing a "nerve center" for the festival (Lane 2003, 7; Batchelder 2006, 9). The metaphor is apt. The Fringe Society administrators set up a central box office and market the festival as a whole, including the printing of the annual Fringe guide. The Fringe facilitates connections between venues and participants, who then negotiate a rental deal on their own. The administration compiles and distributes a series of annual manuals on finding a venue, working safely and according to code, and producing. For their registration fee (in 2015, £393.50 or $607.12 for a full run of six shows or more) participants get a listing in the guide book, a set of manuals, and access to the Fringe's central ticketing platform and venue network. Because the Fringe does not operate performing venues (though it does maintain a press room, artists' lounge, and box office), overhead is low and the size of the festival is limited only by the ability of artists to find places to perform. During the month of August, anything with four walls, from churches to pubs, can be transformed into a playing space (Shrum 1996, 69).

The Edinburgh model, also known as the "open access model" allows for festivals of staggering size. The Edinburgh Fringe today is immense: in 2014, the festival featured 299 venues and 49,497 performances of 3,193 shows which sold an estimated 2.1 million tickets, making it far larger than the curated Edinburgh International Festival itself (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society 2015). The Fringe has long rivaled the International Festival in cultural importance as well—in 1996, the Fringe moved its dates

out of line with its parent festival, but remarkably, in 2015 the International Festival is moving *its* dates to coincide with the Fringe (Carrell 2014).

By outsourcing physical operations to the venue managers, the festival organizers reduce the need for festival infrastructure. Participants bear all of the cost of their productions, which can vary dramatically based on the type of work they present. A *New York Times* poll of four American artists traveling to the Edinburgh Fringe put the range of their production costs at $15,000 for a solo show to over $100,000 for a new opera, including travel, registration, venue rental, marketing, and lodging (Mcelroy 2011). Theater trade publication *Back Stage* published similar Edinburgh touring estimates, ranging from $27,000 to $108,000 (Shenton 2005, 5-6). Averages would likely be less for Scottish or European artists with less distance to travel to attend. The financial barrier in some cases may be steep, but anyone able to fundraise or finance their costs may participate, subject to only the rules of the venue contract and municipal code.

Surprisingly, very few of the festivals that call themselves "fringe festivals" outside of Edinburgh use the same nerve center business model as the Edinburgh Festival Fringe; one estimate puts the proportion of open access or Edinburgh model fringes at less than one in ten (Batchelder 2006, 151). It is of critical importance to note that there is no one definition of fringe, nor one set of characteristics that define a fringe festival in practice, making it exceedingly difficult to pin down what the term even means. The divergence from the Edinburgh model in North American can largely be traced to the founding of the first Canadian fringe festival in Edmonton, Alberta, which Erika Paterson examines in her 1997 dissertation on the Canadian fringe festival circuit.

Fringe in Canada

In the summer of 1981, the city of Edmonton, Alberta slashed the budget for its annual summer arts festival, making the centerpiece "Shakespeare in the Park" series non-viable. In need of a cost-effective replacement that would also reduce tension between the city government and local theaters, Edmonton theatre producer Brian Paisley proposed holding a fringe festival instead (Paterson 1997, 46). Paisley wanted the festival to embody the scrappy, do-it-yourself spirit of Edinburgh Fringe, but he did not believe that Canadian artists would participate if they needed to find their own venues, equipment, and production resources. In more or less an inversion of the Edinburgh model, Paisley's festival administration used the city's arts budget to rent out venues and then assign space to participants, who were responsible for their own ticket sales. Participants who received a slot at one of the Fringe venues only had to show up, sell tickets, and perform. Though the business model was different, the guiding principles of the Edmonton Fringe, freedom of expression and from the interference of artistic administration, aligned with those of the Edinburgh Fringe (Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society 2015).

Within five years of its founding, the Edmonton Fringe was the largest theater festival on the North American continent and had spawned similar festivals in Vancouver and Victoria. Soon, a circuit of fringe festivals existed across the breadth of Canada and a performer could spend the entire summer hopping from fringe to fringe, moving roughly east to west. These festivals were largely patterned after Edmonton, but each organizer made subtle modifications to fit their needs and to reflect the local culture and

arts landscape. Interestingly absent was the relational sense of the term "fringe," the idea that a fringe festival must take place on the outskirts of another, curated festival. As opposed to the ever-sprawling Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the central administration of Canadian fringes by design limited their size and moderated their growth. The term "fringe" by Canadian standards began to take on the meaning of risky, edgy, or bold work happening outside of the regional theatre system. As previously mentioned, CAFF was founded in 1994 as an industry organization for Canadian fringe festivals and later took the controversial step of trademarking "Fringe" and "Fringe Festival" in Canada "to ensure that any theatre festival in Canada that wishes to call itself 'Fringe' must abide by the CAFF mandate and the four guiding principles" (CAFF 2015a). On its website, CAFF poses these questions to assess eligibility:

> Will your Festival be primarily based around indoor theatre productions?
> Will your Festival be completely uncensored?
> Will applications from theatre companies be accepted through a lottery or on a first-come, first-served basis?
> Will your Festival return 100 percent of the money generated from ticket sales to the artists themselves?
> If you answered "yes" to these questions, then CAFF would love to see a proposal from your Festival. (CAFF 2015b)

CAFF's rules impose restrictions on festivals and participants that make Canadian fringes quite different in practice from the Edinburgh Fringe (Batchelder 2006, 130-137). In Edinburgh, venue managers were free to make mutually agreeable deals with producers, even if that meant, for example, taking a rental fee as a cut of ticket sales. CAFF prohibits such arrangements, and though the CAFF mandate does not explicitly say that the fringe management must operate venues, the rules do imply a degree of control that would be difficult to achieve with third-party venues.

Fringe in the United States

The first four fringes in the United States took place in Seattle, San Francisco, Minneapolis-St. Paul (under the name Minnesota Fringe), and Orlando in the early 1990s. The genesis of these festivals will be discussed further in the review of the fringe festival literature. Important to note here is that in the United States, there is no trademark on "fringe." The membership rules of USAFF, the American corollary to CAFF, are less strict than its Canadian counterpart's. The lack of restriction has given rise to a great diversity within fringe festivals in the United States.

USAFF identifies three basic models of fringe festivals operating in this country: the open-access or Edinburgh model, the limited access model (similar to the CAFF or Canadian model), and the adjudicated model (USAFF 2015a). The Edinburgh, or open-access, model is that used by the pioneering Edinburgh Festival Fringe. As described above, the festival organizers operate a central ticketing agency and produce a festival guide. Organizers promote the festival as a whole and provide support to participants as well as patrons. Participants contract directly with venues, interactions that may be facilitated but not controlled by festival organizers, to set rental rates or bring a venue on their own. Typically, all or nearly all of ticket sales go to the participants, with organizers taking a service fee on ticket sales or a small percentage of sales to cover festival expenses.

In the second festival model, the limited-access model, festival organizers identify a number of festival venues and then offer low-cost performance slots to participants, either on a first-come, first-serve basis, or via a lottery (or a combination of both). As in

the Canadian fringes, the festival bears the expense of venue management, and must have the organizational capacity to support the operation of multiple festival venues. Costs to participants are typically lower than at an open-access festival as venue rental is subsidized, but fewer artists are able to access the benefits of festival participation. The festival's size and growth is inherently limited by its own organizational and financial resources. Some, though not all, limited access fringes in the United States are members of CAFF, abiding by its mandate and paying one hundred percent of ticket sales to participants. Other American fringes inspired by the Canadian model of managing all fringe venues hold back a percentage of ticket revenue in order to pay for the festival's overhead costs, a practice that represents a critical philosophical difference from the CAFF model. Sometimes limits are set on ticket prices, further complicating the budgeting process for a producer. Some fee schedules samples are included in Table 1.

TABLE 1. A Sample of Fringe Festival Fees

Model	Open Access/Edinburgh	Limited Access	Adjudicated
Sample Festival	Hollywood Fringe	Minnesota Fringe	New York International Fringe Festival
Application Fee	$0	$25	$40
Registration Fee	$250	$0	$0
Venue/Production Fee	Average $150 to $300 per performance	$350-$450 for five performances	$700 for five performances
Artist Payout	100%	65-70%	58%

(Hollywood Fringe 2015; Minnesota Fringe 2015; FringeNYC 2015)

Third, USAFF identifies curated or adjudicated fringe festivals. In these highly controversial festivals, participants solicit a performance slot with a detailed application, possibly including a script, video, or portfolio images. A jury or panel selects from among the applicants and then assigns selected performers to a festival venue. Like limited-access festivals, curated fringes require an organizational structure that can manage the physical operations of multiple venues, but unlike other fringes, they also require an adjudication process and staff. Until the founding of the first two adjudicated fringes, in New York City and Philadelphia, in the late 1990s, all North American fringes, like Edinburgh, refused to exert any artistic control over the work of participants. Upon hearing of the new adjudicated fringes, CAFF leaders "demanded the removal of the word 'fringe' from the descriptions of these two festivals," writes Lane (2003, 124) in her account of the controversy, "But founding members of Fringe NYC and the Philadelphia Fringe defended their choices as simply more appropriate in fulfilling their communities' needs." Critics from CAFF and elsewhere in the fringe world contended that by introducing the idea of adjudication into a fringe festival, the organizers made their festivals inherently not fringes. Today, the New York International Fringe Festival remains adjudicated, but Philadelphia Fringe eventually gave in to community pressure and separated its festival into two wings, a la Edinburgh: a curated, big-budget festival of invited acts called Live Arts and the nonselective, open-access Philadelphia Fringe Festival. In 2013, Live Arts acquired a year-round home and rebranded itself and its curated festival as FringeArts, strikingly using the term "fringe" in the name of both of its curated and open access annual festivals (Philadelphia News 2013).

Some American fringes now offer a hybrid model, combining two or more of the fringe models to provide more opportunities for artists. Often this involves instituting what is known as a "Bring-Your-Own-Venue," or BYOV, wing alongside a fringe that manages venues. In a BYOV fringe wing, participants seek out a venue themselves, or start a relationship with a venue that the fringe recommends but does not manage. BYOV is essentially the Edinburgh model, but the term is usually used in the context of a "BYOV program" within a limited access or adjudicated festival. For example, San Diego Fringe operates lottery venues, but also allows participants to bring their own venue for a lower registration fee. New Orleans Fringe selects the shows that perform in "official" fringe-managed venues, but invites any producer to bring their own venue to the fringe. Other hybrid fringes include a juried program or showcase alongside a limited access festival. In the case of Capital Fringe in Washington, D.C., a series of site-specific performances are adjudicated, but all other performance slots are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Pinning down the exact number of fringe festivals in the United States is difficult. What constitutes a "fringe festival" is open to interpretation and the concept of fringe is in a rapid growth phase. As American festival organizers come into contact with the idea of fringe, they continue to mold it to meet the needs of various stakeholders. USAFF has at least twenty-eight member fringes (twenty-five on its website and three more that claim membership on their own sites but have yet to be added to USAFF's), however since the organization has no authority over American fringes, festivals are not compelled to join as they are in Canada. Internet and Facebook searches reveal at least fourteen

more American festivals that call themselves fringes or that operate strikingly close to one of the fringe models. There are certainly more—finding festivals operating like fringes that do not use "fringe" in the title becomes challenging, and fringes that have not embraced social media are even harder to track. Eighteen of the twenty-five USAFF fringes currently listed on USAFF's website were founded within the last decade. More staggering still is that of the list I compiled of forty-one active fringe festivals, better than half were founded after 2010. Fringes appear in the country's biggest cities—New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago—as well as smaller communities like Scranton, Pennsylvania and Wilmington, Delaware.

The size of the American fringes in terms of audience numbers is similarly difficult to assess. Partial audience reporting to USAFF points to over 360,000 tickets sold at member fringes in the most recently reported year (USAFF 2014). An estimate closer to 500,000 tickets does not seem outrageous for all American fringe festivals in 2015. Fringe ticket prices are modest; some fringes cap prices around $10. Even a conservative estimate of fringe revenues puts them into the millions of dollars annually. On the large end of the scale, the New York International Fringe reported a ticketed attendance of 75,000 in 2014 (USAFF 2015b). On the other end is a new festival like Ithaca Fringe in upstate New York, which in its first year reported more than 500 attendees and total ticket revenue of over $4,000 for its twenty performances (The Ithaca Fringe Festival 2015).

Of the twenty-five USAFF members currently listed on the organization's website, seventeen are Canadian or limited access model fringes, six are adjudicated, and

two are open access fringes in the Edinburgh style (USAFF 2014). Based on what I could gather from USAFF as well as individual festival websites and Facebook pages, I estimate that roughly sixty to sixty-five percent of American fringes adhere to the philosophy of nonselectivity. The remaining thirty-five to forty percent are either completely juried festivals or have a hybrid adjudicated-BYOV model.

Fringe Festival Literature Review

The academic study of North American fringe festivals is not widespread. At the time of this writing, I have located three dissertations, all qualitative in approach, that deal directly with fringes in the United States and Canada: Erika Paterson's detailed exploration of the development and structure of the Canadian circuit, undertaken as part of a Ph.D. program in Theatre at the University of Victoria (1997); Amy Lane's Ph.D. dissertation in Theatre at Wayne State University, a historical analysis of the genesis of the first six American fringes and their organizational development (2003); and Xela Batchelders's examination of Edinburgh Fringe structure, the role of the venue, and "fringe myths" that influenced fringe development beyond Edinburgh, a Ph.D. dissertation in The Ohio State University's Graduate Program in Theatre (2006). All three of these works are useful in providing context, sharing a fundamental concern with how different fringes came to be and with the structures that underpin modern fringe festivals. That said, the voices of fringe founders and administrators are more widely represented than those of the festival participants. Coupled with the rapid, but non-uniform, expansion of the American fringe scene, a tightly focused account of the impact of structure on participant experiences extends the extant literature.

Extensive interviews with fringe organizers and first-hand experience inform Paterson's analysis of structure in the Canadian fringes, but she also notes the impact of fringe structures on participants, identifying critical areas of tension between artists and fringe organizers. "Schedule and venue assignment," technicians, and the revenue split are all areas where artists can perceive that they are not being treated fairly (Paterson 1997, 141-148). Paterson also recognizes some of the emergent properties that make a fringe feel like a fringe: strong "'word of mouth'" promotion and central meeting points, usually beer tents, are "integral to the production structure and the Fringe philosophy" (Paterson 1997, 151-152).

The uniformity Paterson describes in the Canadian circuit has not translated into the American fringes. Partially this may be because the first fringes in the United States were all were trying to suit the needs of their local communities, resulting in different structures and emphases (Lane 2003, 61-64). Lane (2003, 16-17) uses Susan Kenny Stevens's non-profit lifecycle theory as a lens to track the development of fringes (See Figure 1). The lifecycle theory identifies seven stages: idea, start-up, growth, maturity, decline, turnaround, and terminal. Lane's major finding is that contrary to what is expected of non-profits over their lifecycle, some fringes intentionally avoid advancing to the maturity stage typified by stable institutions. These fringes choose to remain in the start-up stage, projecting grassroots values and a free-spirited attitude (Lane 2003, 119-122). The introduction of the curated or adjudicated fringe model in 1997 injected further diversity, and controversy, into the American fringe scene (Lane 2003, 124). The early 1990s National Endowment for the Arts scandals and the subsequent decline in

government and corporate funding for the arts created a "new climate of self-sufficiency," forcing artists "to search outside the traditional pathways to find new ways to reduce overhead and pool resources" (Lane 2003, 129), thus creating the opening for fringe festivals. A similar downturn in funding followed the Great Recession, likely spurring the multiplication of fringe festivals in the last seven years.

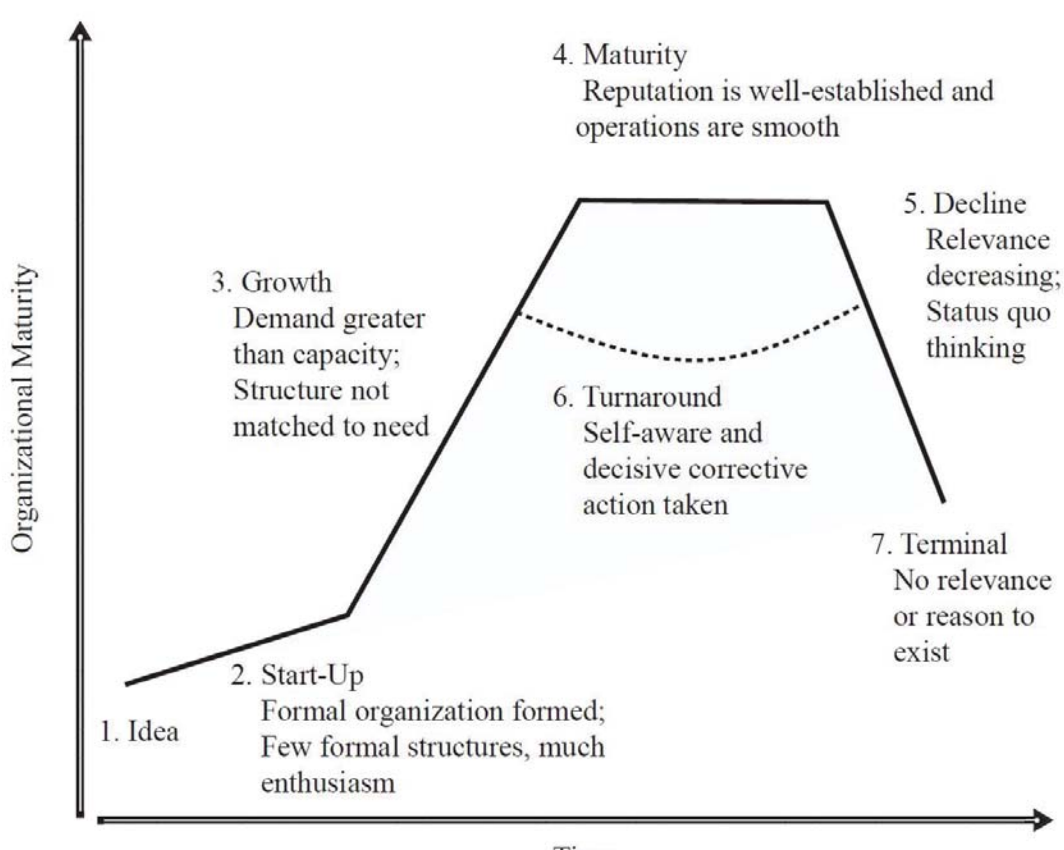


FIGURE 1. The non-profit lifecycle.

Batchelder (2006, 86) ties the development of "Non-Edinburgh Regional Fringes" or "NERFs" to the dissemination of three "fringe myths," "ambiguous" exaggerations of the Edinburgh Fringe so pervasive that they inspire people to participate or start their own festival. The first myth, "the fame myth," is that an unknown actor or writer can be discovered in the context of the fringe (Batchelder 2006, 87). Though this has happened, the numbers alone make it a distant dream—the Edinburgh Fringe in 2014 had over 3,100 shows. The second myth is the "'tiny audience' myth." This myth comes with various numbers, but in essence, it is that the average audience of a fringe show is ridiculously small, usually less than ten, despite an average of fifty-one reported by the Fringe Society (Batchelder 2006, 96-99). These first two myths almost seem to contradict one another—how can an artist get famous at a festival filled with tiny audiences? The second myth enhances the mystique of the first and serves to sooth the egos of those producers whose productions do in fact bring in below-average audiences. Third, the "new works myth," that the Edinburgh Fringe is primarily about new work, is disproven by analysis of historic fringe guides revealing the percentage of new works to be slightly more than fifty percent over the ten year period from 1995-2005 (Batchelder 2006, 107). A detailed analysis of the etymology of the term "fringe," draws from surveys of regional fringe directors and reinforces the stunning diversity of what fringe means to different people (Batchelder 2006, 114-118). The "fringe myth" of new work provides a rationale for fringes like New York City's to organize around the principle of edgy, new work, rather than nonselectivity (Batchelder 2006, 138). Of the open-access Edinburgh model she

writes, “The fact that everyone participates without an invitation fosters independence, autonomous democracy and even a hint of anarchy” (Batchelder 2006, 30).

My research uncovered only a handful of other sources about North American fringe festivals in theatre or events management journals, most of which analyzed in depth one aspect of a particular festival and often from a dramatic theory perspective. As such, they are not particularly pertinent to the comparative questions at hand. One unpublished master thesis exists exploring the possibility of developing a fringe in Portland, Oregon. Non-academic sources for fringe festival information abound, as fringe festivals and the shows within them are typically covered to some extent by local media and have been the subject of several memoirs. Much of the journalistic documentation is dramatic criticism or oriented from the patron perspective but some sources offer an insight into the artist experience of fringing. When asked to speak for themselves, fringe artists are often posed the question of whether or not a festival experience was worth it. In one very informal survey of four fringe producers, three mentioned having fun, gaining press exposure, and making international connections as motivation for going to Edinburgh (Mcelroy 2011). Advice from one fringer to another and first-person accounts of participating in or starting specific fringe festivals also come up (Harris 2000; Healy 2009). Two former Fringe Society administrators, Alistair Moffat (1978) and Michael Dale (1988), have published memoirs of their days in the fringe which form the basis of historical understandings of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The Edinburgh ethos is further explored by theater critic Wesley Monroe Shrum, Jr., whose

Fringe and Fortune: The Role of Critics in High and Popular Art (1996) devotes several chapters to the structure of the Edinburgh Fringe and the festival's values.

The literature makes it clear that the study of fringe festivals is a dense subject area, one that lends itself to examination from the perspectives of different stakeholders. An under-researched group of fringe stakeholders is the performers themselves, whose presence is a unifying characteristic among all of the various fringe models. Many of the artists who participate in fringe festivals are producing their own shows, undertaking both artistic and business decisions. Seeking a better understanding of the relationship of these producer-performers to fringe structures is vital as more and more artists are presented with the opportunity to participate in a regional fringe.

CHAPTER 3

EXPECTATIONS

In this study I use the grounded theory methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1999) and used subsequently by qualitative researchers in the social sciences and health sciences. Grounded theory is an inductive research strategy, aiming to move build theory from data, rather than testing data to see if it fits a theory. The methodology is concerned with social processes, "Seek[ing] not only to uncover relevant conditions, but also to determine how the actors respond to changing conditions and to the consequences of their actions" (Corbin and Strauss 1990, 5). It is used widely across many research areas and has been applied to arts marketing and cultural industries (Goulding and Saren 2010, 70-82). In the case at hand, we are concerned with the fringe producer (often a producer-performer) as the actor responding to the conditions of various fringe festivals. Methodology will be further described in the next chapter, but here I note that though the grounded theory methodology precludes the use of a formal hypothesis, my experience in the field and the literature review do lead to three expectations.

The first expectation is that the respondents will have different criteria for what makes a festival experience successful. Roughly, I expect to these definitions of values to correlate to Conte and Langley's (2007, 2-3) four motivations for doing theater: (1) money, the desire to make a profit, recoup investment or raise funds to support a cause;

(2) fame, the desire to "gain recognition or prestige"; (3) service, the desire to champion a greater social purpose or effect social or personal change; and (4) fun, including not only the desire for entertainment but also the desire for "'connectedness'" with other people or the art form. Through my years spent within the Hollywood Fringe community, I know that making money on a fringe show is not a guarantee, but also not an impossibility, and fringe revenues can be quite meaningful for small companies. For example, a popular show in that festival grossed more than $7,000, with a profit of about $2,500, providing enough capital to pay the upfront costs for the company's next production. The producer most definitely judged that venture a success. Finding fame by being discovered at a fringe festival is one of Batchelder's "fringe myths." I would regularly expect to hear this motivation from Edinburgh participants, but I expect it to be less frequent among American fringes, except possibly among the more elite, curated fringes. The desire for community and connectedness is a motivation I hear anecdotally at the Hollywood Fringe every summer; I would expect it to be highly valued by producers. Participants with a social mission must have a platform in order to spread their message. I would expect them to appreciate the reliability of participating in an open access model fringe.

Expectation 1: Fringe producers have diverse motivations. The value proposition of a fringe will be perceived differently by different producers.

My second expectation is that data about what the respondents value will allow me to move toward a theory about which fringe model best serves participants with certain motivations and values. The adjudicated model with its promise of exclusivity

seems to appeal to producers with a desire for money or fame. Smaller, Canadian model festivals too may allow a participant to be a big fish in a small pond, so to speak. Open-access festivals cannot make the same promise that participants will be recognized, but by taking all comers, they may provide a better environment for having fun and making connections, as well as championing social causes. I expect to find that individual producers may use different types of festivals to fill different needs and that they will view those structures more favorably that help them meet their specific goals.

Expectation 2: Each fringe model will have an "ideal" participant who is best served by the unique features of the model.

Finally, I expect to hear echoed in the participants' views the debate over adjudicated fringes as described by Lane (2003) and Batchelder (2006), with some participants avoiding the adjudicated festivals out of principle. It seems likely that many producers will express frustration over the unpredictability of lottery entry into Canadian model fringes and the financial burden of applying to festivals to which they may not be accepted. In my experience, the criteria by which adjudicated festivals choose shows are widely discussed, and I anticipate this being a source of tension, especially for producers whose initial experiences in the field were in nonselective festivals.

Expectation 3: Some producers will avoid adjudicated fringes because they adhere to the philosophy that fringes are defined by nonselectivity.

The three expectations will be evaluated through the interview process. Gaining insight into these areas will require general discussion of respondents' motivations and values, as well as specific exploration of experiences within the festival models. The

expectations should be viewed less as variables to be tested and more as facets of the broader question I take into the research process: How does fringe structure impact experience? With that question in mind, we turn to the methodology of the research itself.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The literature on fringe festivals focuses largely on festival development, and the ways in which festival structures emerge and operate. To better understand how participants fit into those structures, I cannot turn to theory, as formal, predictive theories in this area have not yet been developed. In a field where "theories are not available," and when the researcher poses a question that begins with "how," rather than a comparative "why," Creswell (1997, 17) recommends the choice of a qualitative method. This choice is in keeping with the existing academic literature that deals expressly with fringe festivals (Batchelder, 2006; Lane, 2003; Paterson, 1997).

Within the qualitative realm, choosing a research tradition depends on the research question. In this case, biography and case study would be too limiting; I am concerned with a comparison among fringe models. Ethnography would be a valid choice for studying the social and cultural aspects of fringe, but less suited to the analysis of structure. Also fitting would be phenomenology, concerned with the meaning of experiences, or grounded theory, concerned with how "individuals interact, take actions, or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon" (Creswell 1997, 56). Phenomenology's philosophical approach and the lack of theory in the area of fringe festivals lead me to choose instead the grounded theory methodology, intended for use in

theory development. According to Glaser and Strauss (1999, Part 1)[1], when working toward a theory, "Generation…can be achieved by a comparative analysis between or among groups within the same substantive area," a substantive area being defined as an "empirical, area of sociological inquiry, such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency, or research organizations." Producing in fringe festivals meets the substantive area criteria; Glaser and Strauss (1999, Part 1) themselves even point to the "producing of plays by amateur theater groups," as a potentially rich, and under-researched, substantive area. The grounded theory methodology avoids simplification and broad generalization, instead favoring theories that are "likely to be complex rather than oversimplified ways of accounting for a complex world" (Turner 1983, 334).

Grounded theory is recommended for use in "non-traditional areas where there is little or no technical literature," a description that fits the fringe (Glaser and Strauss 1999, Part 1). It is a highly codified process, intended to provide structure to qualitative research. The process begins with theoretical sampling within a substantive area, "sampling the incidents, events, and happenings that denote the work" of individuals in that area and "the conditions that facilitate, interrupt or prevent their work, the action/interaction by which it is expressed and the consequences that result" (Corbin and Strauss 1990, 8). The researcher simultaneously gathers and analyzes data in what is known as the constant comparative method of analysis, wherein all samples are compared at first to each other, then to the properties of the emerging categories of data (Goulding

[1] I cited several works in electronic format without stable page numbers. In these cases, a chapter or section has been identified.

and Saren 2010, 71). Coding begins with open coding, the "interpretive process" of breaking apart the data into discrete categories (Corbin and Strauss 1990, 13). As categories emerge, the researcher records a series of memos, detailed notes on the emerging theory, which then inform the axial coding, when categories are compared to one another. New data is compared to the emerging categories. The process of memo-writing and drawing connections between coded categories continues until the researcher moves into the selective coding phase, identifying the "core" categories which inform her theory.

In using the grounded theory approach, I enter the research with expectations, as described in the previous chapter, but without a formal hypothesis. I used a theoretical sampling approach to identify potential subjects. The target population for this research consists of people working within the substantive area of fringe producing, the work of bringing a performance into being within the context of a fringe festival. The definition of producing varies slightly depending on the context, but Langley and Conte's (2007, 11) definition provides a starting point: "In the American theatre, a producer is the person who initiates a theatrical project by finding a property and securing the performance rights to produce it in a desired venue and raises the capital necessary to get the project to opening night." Generally, producers handle the business affairs or logistics of planning a show. I identify fringe producers through functional role rather than self-identification. None of the subjects self-identify only as producers (they may think of themselves as writers, artists, or directors, too), but without their initiative, their fringe project would not have been undertaken. In effect, the research subjects all

functioned in a producing role, regardless of their self-identification. I refer to the research respondents as "producers" or "participants" through the work.

Each subject participated in a semi-structured interview, guided by an interview protocol (See Appendix A). The semi-structured interview is the most common in social science researching, generating rich, complex data while allowing for a certain degree of comparability among subjects (Arksey and Knight 1999, 8). I successfully posed each question in the interview protocol to all of the respondents. In some cases the order was changed, and in nearly all interviews I asked relevant follow-up questions that furthered the discussion. Interviews varied in length from twenty-five to sixty minutes. Interviews with Respondents 03, 04, 06, and 07 were conducted online via the video call platforms of Skype and Google Hangout. I interviewed Respondents 01, 02, and 05 in person in Los Angeles. All interviews were recorded on tape recorder and digital recorder and then transcribed. To prepare for the interviewing process, I consulted Weiss' *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies* (1994), as well as Salmons' *Online Interviews in Real Time* (2010).

Of the seven respondents, four are people I met during my own years of involvement with the Hollywood Fringe Festival. Two subjects are producers I met at the New Orleans Fringe Festival in November 2014, and the final respondent was recommended via a prior respondent. The respondents had participated in festivals in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In interviews, I chose two festivals that the respondents had participated in and asked them to describe those experiences in greater depth. The fringes in Hollywood, San Francisco, Minnesota (located in the Twin

Cities), and New Orleans were the most commonly explored. Other festivals discussed explicitly were those in Edinburgh, Philadelphia, San Diego, and Montreal; many others were mentioned. Although my research focus was on American fringes, I found the Canadian and UK festivals to be a fascinating contrast and decided during the interview process not to deter respondents from discussing them.

Three of the seven interviews were conducted in person, rather than online, which may have enhanced the respondents' feelings of connection to me, making them more open. These interviews tended to be longer and more detailed than my online interviews with subjects. These subjects had all participated in the Hollywood Fringe, so the experience of participating in that festival may be more closely scrutinized than others. I view this as a benefit: though there are many limited access fringes in the United States, Hollywood one of only several that operate exclusively in the Edinburgh model, making it an important counterpoint to the other festivals discussed.

In analyzing the interview data, I used the constant comparative method "of joint coding and analysis" in which the researcher uses an evolving system of codes to parse the data, beginning the coding process while still gathering new information (Glaser and Strauss 1999, Part 1). A sample of coded material can be found in Appendix B. Early open coding focused on festival attributes, participant attributes, venues, and the producer's learning process. After coding several interviews, I began writing memos on key areas of the findings, an example being the participants' desire for control. Axial codes involving specific fringe structures and participant beliefs and motivations would be used in later interviews. After working through all of the transcripts, I moved into

selective coding, identifying the core categories of scaffolding and constraint which will be discussed in depth later in the "Discussion" section.

Due to the close-knit nature of the fringing world, much care has been taken in reporting the data to protect the confidentiality of the subjects. It is highly possible that revealing any combination of the subjects' demographic profiles or festivals in which they have participated would allow for their identification. Some, particularly the solo producer-performers, have such distinct styles of performance that a description of their work alone would identify them. I have attempted to provide the richest description possible while obscuring identifiable details. I attribute respondents' experiences to specific festivals whenever doing so will not point to a specific incident that might be recognized.

Thus far I have explored the world of fringe through history and the literature, identified research expectations, and described a methodology for the study. Interviews with fringe participants are intended to provide the link between existing research on fringe festival structures and the people who populate these festivals. The next two chapters, "Results" and "Discussion," deal with the reported experiences of the study respondents.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The results section begins with a brief sketch of the respondents. Next, I examine the ways in which the respondents reported that fringe structures *impacted* their experiences. These impacts are divided into two sections, the first of which details three ways in which fringe festival structures can aid in the task of producing a show. First, fringe festivals provide an environment in which participants learn the knowledge and skills of producing. Second, fringes can provide access to infrastructure that makes producing less burdensome. Third, fringes can provide access to a set of relationships that make producing more effective. I call these types of access—to knowledge, infrastructure, and relationships—the "scaffolding" of a fringe, borrowing a term from education theory and Nina Simon's (2010) work in the field of participatory museums. A more detailed exploration of the concept of fringe scaffolding, as well as an assessment of expectations, follows in the "Discussion" section.

The second impacts section describes three areas of "fringe constraints": the ways in which fringe structures can constrain participants, controlling, limiting, or influencing their ability to produce their shows. The first constraint described is the standardization of the festival's operations, which translates to the imposition of festival-

wide rules. Festival size, in terms of number of participating shows, is the second area of constraint. The third constraint reported is the geographic nature of the fringe.

The two impacts sections could be seen as roughly "pros" and "cons" of festival structures, but this is an incomplete picture. Both scaffolds and constraints are extra layers of structure that a producer would not have to deal with in an unfettered self-producing environment.[2] Scaffolds are defined as structures which support and enable, an example being a strong festival relationship with local news outlets. Constraints are those structures which control or delimit, for instance, a festival-imposed limit on show length or a strict late-seating policy. My findings are that the typical positive and negative connotations of scaffolding and constraint, respectively, are usually accurate, but not always. Some producers may appreciate constraints and construe them as a positive element of the fringe. Others may not need, and thus appreciate, certain types or degrees of scaffolding.

Before detailing the findings of the research, it is also important to note one area in which producers were less vocal than I expected them to be. Though I began the research without a hypothesis, my time in the fringe field did make me expect participants to offer their feelings about curated or adjudicated fringes, as this is an issue that has been debated, with vitriol on both sides, for nearly two decades (Lane 2003, 124-126). Quite surprisingly, this debate was seldom broached. The respondents who had been in hybrid adjudicated-BYOV festivals, like New Orleans or Fresno's Rogue Festival, scarcely noticed the difference between the two branches. In other festivals, like

---

[2] However to be fair, whether such an "unfettered" environment exists is debatable.

Philadelphia, the gap was felt, but in more subtle ways than I expected. Part of the issue may have been that only one of my respondents had produced in the New York International Fringe, the quintessential juried fringe festival, a quirk of the sampling process and one that should be addressed in subsequent fringe festival research. This observation led to an important adjustment in my approach to reporting the data. Rather than focusing on the beliefs of fringe organizers on participants, I look instead at the lived experience of fringe structures. Where respondents compare their experience with their values, I report it. By and large, I attempt to mirror the way the respondents reported the data, paying more attention to the practical realities of fringing and the effects of fringe models, rather than the values that brought fringe structures into being. When appropriate, I describe differences between the open access and limited access models, or the nuances presented by a hybrid model.

Producer Characteristics

A cursory glance through a fringe guide or website will make the reader well aware that there is no uniform set of characteristics that define fringe participants. As in any professional or leisure pursuit, the motivations of practitioners vary wildly and are myriad in number. The aim of this research, furthermore, is not to definitively categorize fringe participants or determine an essential shared characteristic. In spite of those two qualifications, a distinct pattern of characteristics did emerge from the interviews that speaks to a deeper understanding of what one might call the "archetypical" fringe participant. Having at least some insight into commonalities among fringe producers critically informs the discussion of their relationship to fringe festival structures.

First of these patterns is that all of the respondents perceive of themselves as artists. Though perhaps it seems obvious that this would be the case, the delineation between artistic and administrative staff is pervasive in American and Canadian theater, making it not totally expected that all of the participants I spoke with would assume both artistic and producorial functional roles. In the fringing world there are ensembles and solo performers who hire producers to bring their works to the stage, but, suffice it to say, the category of producer investigated here is the producer-artist working primarily on self-composed material.

The second pattern I detected among the respondents were traits of self-reliance, independence, and an adventurous spirit, often manifest in respondents' expressed desire to maintain control over their work and their career. As Respondent 05 said, "[H]aving another person produce would be, I don't, I don't know if I could do it….Because it's always like been [me] calling my own shots. And I've been doing it so long that I truly do know what works and what doesn't." Respondent 02 told me that his "dream, five years ago was…to travel the world, teaching, learning and doing theater," and a tour of fringes "was an opportunity that we were able to create for ourselves to do just that in the US." These types of responses line up with Shrum's (1996, 80) assessment of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe's ideology that, "The right of *any artist* to perform any kind of work, to solicit an audience, and to succeed or fail is important." In the egalitarian festival system, artists are free to perform their own aesthetics, come what may. Respondent 05 sums it up succinctly: "The cool thing that I like about fringing is the fact that you can take control of your career."

Third, the respondents were acutely aware of the financial realities of fringing. They recognized recoupment as a distinct possibility, profit as a more distant one. The Canadian fringes were consistently viewed as a place where, as Respondent 05 said, "You're not going to get rich, but you can make a decent living fringing." Respondent 07 had the most extensive experience in the Canadian fringes, and corroborated those beliefs. After several years in the circuit, she reported, "I can make a decent, I won't say living, but I can make a decent return on my investment there." The harsh realities of fringe financials make it such that most producers are seeking out more than just money. Deciding to participate in a festival involves a more complicated set of considerations than just if the show will recoup its investment, but participants did not seem to be blindly following the "fame myth" observed among Edinburgh participants. Respondent 02, the artistic director of a small theater, reasoned that, "The experience, of course, is the thing…it's not about making money for a six-person show." Respondent 03 agreed: "Since for me for right now, it's more just like not going broke and long-range plan and having a good time, I think I always try to remind myself…am I going to suffer this experience? Because if I'm suffering the experience, it's really not worth it." The structures which help participants decide which experiences are worth it are the subject of the following two sections.

Fringe Scaffolding

Fringe festivals provide scaffolding, or support, for the producing efforts of participants. Scaffolding structures are both explicit and emergent. Some elements pertain to the organization of the festival and others to the general environment that the

organizational systems foster. The scaffolding can be thought of in three categories, all having to do with access that the fringe provides to something that supports producers. First we look at the scaffolds that provide access to knowledge or learning opportunities. The second type of scaffolding is organizational infrastructure, which helps producers overcome logistical challenges. The third area is access to relationships, a critical component of the fringe experience and value proposition.

Access to Learning Opportunities

Any producing endeavor can offer opportunities for learning. A distinction of fringes is that they also provide for many participants an impetus to action and a setting for experiential learning. Fringe festivals were seen by some respondents as environments that reduced the risks associated with producing for the first time, pushing participants to take on a novel challenge. "I'd never written a play before," explained Respondent 06, "I'd never produced a play before, so [the Philadelphia Fringe] was a good safe environment to start." Respondent 04, inspired by her experiences in fringe festivals, started a small, themed festival that she believed was in keeping with the spirit of fringe:

> I succeeded in making it a really welcoming environment for people who weren't so sure about their production skills, which is what I think part of a fringe festival should be about, giving people a chance to try it. People who have a theater background, people who don't have a theater background and frankly want to get involved and have something to say.

The opportunity to try something new was a hallmark of Respondent 04's conception of fringe festivals, which fits with the egalitarian values of the fringe in Edinburgh (Shrum 1996, 80-82). Advantages of producing in a fringe environment which explain why

participants perceive of fringes as "safe" places to produce are detailed later on in this section, but here it bears noting that low financial barriers play a critical role in reducing risk. Though producing a fringe show may be expensive, relative to not producing one at all, typically the technical constraints mean that, "The cost of entry is low compared to producing a show normally" (Respondent 01). Respondent 01 said that in fringe environments his company "spends maybe twenty percent of the budget that we would normally spend on one of our mainstage shows, twenty to thirty percent." He reported spending about $12,000 to take a show from Southern California to the New York International Fringe Festival.

Most respondents described the experiential learning environment of the fringe as a place to hone their skills or receive validation for their hard work. They went to fringes to test their own ability; "So mostly I just wanted to see like, you know, is this thing that I'm doing, was it a fluke? Because it went well the first time, you know, can I replicate it?" (Respondent 04). "I've learned a lot of skills that I've brought back with me that have been beneficial here in L.A.," Respondent 05 said. After several years of producing, Respondent 01 was even able to use the fringe as a training ground for other members of his ensemble company: "Making better producers out of some of my collaborators was an unexpected but wonderful result that came out of it this year." Respondent 02 described the satisfaction felt upon completing a tour: "The thing itself of getting into these two fringes and then organized the tour around it was not just a great goal, like for fringes, but for my lifetime. It's been one of the greatest accomplishments for me as a person to make that happen."

The understanding of fringe as a laboratory is not limited to new producers. After four years of participating in the Hollywood Fringe, Respondent 02 wanted future fringe shows to be "ones…that we're really trying to experiment with and figure out." He went on, "[Fringe]is a great opportunity to learn…what works, what doesn't, incubate that opportunity and then be able to take it beyond Los Angeles." Access to audience plays an important part in making a viable testing ground. Respondent 07 felt similarly about the marketing environment in Edinburgh, using the massive crowds "to test out locations, like my theories about where are good locations, where are good times, where is good traffic to hit up." It may be coincidence that both of these experienced producers cited festivals using the open access model as good places to experiment, but it also may be that comfort level with large festivals is more characteristic of the experienced.

Access to Infrastructure

Fringe festivals provide participants with infrastructure along several dimensions that makes producing less burdensome and allows participants to spend less time on the business-side tasks of creating a theatrical work. First and foremost, fringes add a layer of legitimacy that lets a participant, quite literally, get a foot in the door. Many respondents shared feelings of being excluded or left out of the standard theatre scene, either because of their lack of experience in the field or the nature of their work. "No one in New York is just going to let you waltz into any theater, even if it's an independently run place and produce your own show," said Respondent 04. Respondent 07, whose work typically involves sexually explicit themes, concurred that, "I started doing fringe festivals because I saw them as a place, the only place really that the works that I was

doing could be done." When asked why he chose to apply to the New York Fringe, Respondent 01 pointed to the brand equity of the festival, calling it "the easiest entry point to an off-Broadway credit for any of your work that I've ever seen."

Fringes of all three models have an organizational infrastructure, the set of standard operating procedures, codified or not, by which the festival operates. Festivals that operated with a high degree of clarity and efficiency were deeply appreciated by respondents. As Respondent 04 said, "There should be a lot of infrastructure already in place to aid the producer, so you don't have to start completely from scratch." Often it is details that strike the respondents. Respondent 02 was impressed by a festival where "every time I email them, they get right back to me. Throughout the year." He contrasted that experience to working in venues outside of fringes in which "sometimes it would take five, six days to get a response, a simple 'O.K.,' or a simple, 'Let me look into this.'" Respondents showed fairly broad acceptance of different organizational cultures and level of support, but they did expect fringes to follow through on their promises. One respondent was annoyed that his ensemble did not get a billet, a homestay arranged by the festival, in Minnesota when he "came to find out other groups of like eight people, ten people, got housing in one location. And we were only six." Respondent 01 was critical of a festival whose "opening night party," a critical networking opportunity, "basically didn't happen as advertised."

Finding a venue in which to perform is a fundamental producing challenge at any level. Fringes can alleviate that burden in one of two ways: in the limited access and adjudicated models, fringes rent out and manage performance venues, then assign them to

participants. Open access festivals can build and maintain a network of participating venues and connect participants with information about the places they can perform. "The ease of getting space," was a chief concern for Respondent 04. "The less I have to negotiate with a theater owner, the better." Comments on venues in the limited access model tended to revolve around assignment to a venue, which is explored in detail in the "Constraints" section.

Open access fringes and the BYOV sections of hybrid festivals do not share the same obligation to book and manage venues. Most of these festivals take a page from the Edinburgh playbook and provide a list of participating venues and venue contacts to participants, often with technical specifications. A repeated refrain among the participants from the Hollywood Fringe, an open access festival that does provide a venue contact list, was that finding suitable performance space posed the biggest challenge to producers. Most of those respondents reported that over time they had developed a good business relationship with a venue manager, alleviating but not eliminating the worry. When open access fringes did not help participants find venues, tensions flared. Respondent 06 complained of the Philadelphia Fringe, "The fringe really didn't offer any help whatsoever in finding a space. So I really just had to like, ride my bike all over Philadelphia for six months, stopping in people's garages and being like, 'Hey, I know you work on cars here but can I do a fringe show?'"

Another aspect of infrastructure was the issue of a central meeting place for fringe participants. Networking in the central meeting place was key to Respondent 05's marketing strategy: "You have to, have to, have to, have to go to Fringe Central, like,

every night. You've got to meet people." Others seek out the central meeting place for socializing. Asked what she liked most about the Hollywood Fringe, Respondent 04 responded, "It's fun. I know that's not a very complicated answer, but…it's a huge party, you know, from beginning to end. It opens with a party, and…the party atmosphere, the camaraderie goes on throughout." Respondents appreciated when the meeting place aligned with fringe values of egalitarianism and accessibility. Respondent 06 favorably described the vibe of a fringe bar as, "Down and dirty…you can buy like, a dollar P.B.R. and people could kind of stay there all night, until like six A.M. They really never kicked anybody out and it was really artist-heavy." Respondent 02 preferred a fringe-run meeting place, because, "When you do it at restaurant, there's an inherent exclusion, you know. I mean money, for one…when you go to the fringe watering hole, you don't have to spend any money."

In the minds of most of the participants I spoke with, the meeting place was a critical element of infrastructure provided by the fringe festival organizers. Failing to provide artists with a place for socializing can have a negative effect on a participant's experience and even damage the reputation of a festival. Respondent 07 said that San Francisco's lack of a social space limited that festival's sense of community: "There's no like big space for people to chill and be fringe in. The hallways inside the complex are narrow and crowded. The lounge that they had in that complex has a fire capacity of like seventeen." Respondent 06 was even more critical of the Philadelphia Fringe's decision to designate an upscale restaurant as the fringe meeting place, which was:

> Not in the price range or like any type of thing that the fringe artists really want to get to. So…they're not really providing like a place for the fringe artists to get

> together. And they don't want to. They want to provide a space for you to connect with like wealthier donors and get in touch with this other community, which is cool, but also they're just completely ignoring the fact that artists just want to like hang out and you know, socialize with each other and coordinate there.

Though Respondent 06 was not opposed to networking with donors, the importance of those connections paled in comparison to the importance of connection with other fringe artists.

In addition to physical considerations, fringes can provide varying degrees of promotional infrastructure, around which an individual producer can plan her marketing efforts. In all fringe models, the festival engages in institutional marketing, which organizers and participants hope raises the profile of the entire festival, thus driving traffic to individual shows. Respondent 07 said, "The number one task" for festival administrators "is making the city and making people in the city aware that the fringe festival is going on." Respondent 03 agreed that, "If they're not going to give you the publicity list to contact yourself, you want to hope that they do a lot of publicity." Successful fringes were those that generated substantial buzz about the fringe itself. A strong promotional infrastructure helps participants orient their own efforts. In Minnesota, Respondent 02 found that, "When we were on the street promoting, everyone we were handing flyers to had heard of the fringe. Literally, everyone had heard of the fringe…I had to stop conversations, because people were talking to me too long." In contrast, Respondent 03 was frustrated by the New Orleans Fringe's less organized marketing plan, saying, "I don't really know where to poster and flyer. I mean I do more now, because I've now hung out in the neighborhood for like two-plus weeks over two

years…but there's still like, I still have sort of a feeling of like, I don't know how to get the word out to people."

Access to Relationships

Fringe festivals and the people who organize them establish networks of relationships over time and invite producers to access those relationships through participation. Respondents cited access to audience as a key motivator to participating in fringes in the first place. "Getting my work out to new audiences is always the biggest thing," said Respondent 01. A concept that came up repeatedly among the respondents was that of the "built-in audience," an enthusiastic and reliable body of festival patrons who attend the shows of artists to whom they have no personal connection. For example, the Minnesota Fringe frequently was described as having a strong audience base. Respondent 03 said that festival "has a big central audience and they talk and they show up. So at the very least, you might…sell a big chunk of your house to the core people even if you can't get more people to show up." Though a producer may not be trying to make a profit on a show, ticket sales are the primary way she can recoup her financial investment, making access to audience a critical component in the calculus of deciding to participate in a festival. The audience size needed to make a fringe feel successful varied among the respondents. Respondent 06 was generally pleased with a New Orleans Fringe run that "averaged about twenty-six people per each show," whereas Respondents 02 and 04 both spoke of sold-out shows as a goal.

Fringes without strong audience bases can make for demoralizing and financially draining experiences. Respondent 01 spoke of a fringe run in the BYOV wing of a

limited access festival when his four performances attracted fewer than twenty patrons total, only four of them paying. The low turnout resulted in a financial loss and an ensemble of performers with hurt feelings. Respondent 03 also lamented the small built-in audience of the San Francisco Fringe, saying, “I’ve seen really great solo shows…that like all the staff went to and thought, everybody should be coming to see the show, and no one would come to see the show. They couldn’t talk it up enough…there wasn’t enough of the core.” Open access fringes had audience issues as well. Multiple respondents reported a small festival audience in Hollywood, and that in that festival their audiences typically consisted of family and friends. Respondent 05 said of Hollywood, “I’ve had friends who’ve come from other cities, because I know a lot of people on the circuit, and I know people who on the rest of the circuit do really well, that come [to Hollywood] and don’t do well.” Respondent 07 said that in Edinburgh the problem is the sheer size of the festival: “Last year there were over thirty-one hundred shows…there's just not enough audiences in any city to justify that.”

Press relationships are slightly less central to the successful fringe environment, but they are important for artists seeking to publish their work or build their profile on a national scale. Respondent 07 saw fringe press as, “Just a really good way when you're starting out, especially with more radical content, to develop some credibility that you can take to the outside world, outside theater world.” A well-connected fringe can act like a lens, focusing the attention of a theater community on participating shows. Respondent 02 relayed that his ensemble company has had “to some degree, stronger showcases of our work than what we do at the fringe, but much less attention is brought

to it…at the fringe, we get more eyes and better eyes in that it can lead to future opportunities." Of a successful fringe, Respondent 01 said, "The twelve award nominations and the six critics' picks definitely didn't hurt, you know…it's so difficult to get that in a normal producing environment, to get that kind of attention from the press and from the audience in any given time."

Fringes by their nature put participants in a group of like-minded artists, creating opportunities for collaboration and connection. "Every year we come away with more members and new collaborators," Respondent 01 said of the Hollywood Fringe. "Our fall mainstage just closed and we had three people in that cast who were people that we knew through the fringe." Also recounting his experiences in Hollywood, Respondent 02 said,

> I had the experience of L.A. theater being very disjointed and not like connecting as a community, all at once. You know, I connect with people here and there, and every time I go to a show I see someone I know, but there's something so special about the fringe where we all come together, you know, and I mean, really, there's nothing like it.

The desire for meeting new collaborators at the fringe seems more profound among ensemble producers, but solo artists report making powerful connections, too. When starting her own festival, Respondent 04 drew upon "the fact that I produced so, you know had spent so much time at the Hollywood Fringe festival and had good relationships with the theater director where I had my shows." She reported that, "I was able to get a lot of information from them, as well as from…more senior members of the Hollywood Fringe Festival." Fringes do not seem to need to do much to provide access to fellow artists, but a central meeting place, as described above, is one pathway to

fostering participant interactions. Encouraging artists to see each other's shows also helps. In New Orleans, "They give all the artists comp tickets," a strategy that made Respondent 06 feel both valued and part of a community.

The last major relationship network that respondents seek to access through a fringe is one of non-artist professional contacts, people like bookers, agents, and scouts who could be the key to getting future gigs. American fringes were not widely viewed by the respondents as having strong professional networks, especially when compared with fringes in Canada and the United Kingdom. "I started doing the U.K. festivals, in particular Edinburgh, because in those places you can find contacts in that outside theater world who are looking, you know who are basically head-hunting or scouting for…productions," said Respondent 07. Well-established American fringes like Minnesota did offer rewards for the repeat performer. Respondent 05 said that in the Twin Cities, "I do a lot of storytelling shows and different shows that I booked because of the fringe, so I normally go there and do shows like four or five times a year…a lot of performance work has come out of the fringe." Some fringes though, even those of long-standing, are seen as not offering as many opportunities as self-producing in the city. For instance, Respondent 02 said he would not return to the San Francisco Fringe because, "We can connect to actual institutional theaters and get a show up there…in a different format rather than the fringe, in a better area, with someone who's actually going to help with promotion."

Fringe Constraints

The added layer of governing structure provided by a fringe can come hand in hand with constraints, structures that control or limit participants, or remove opportunities for decision-making. Standardization, typically through the rules associated with the management of venues, is a primary source of constraint. The festival staff is sometimes seen as constraining participants, either through action or beliefs. The geographic structure of a fringe, as well as the number of shows in the festival, can also constrain a producer.

Standardization

Treating participants equally is a value shared by most fringes, stemming from the Edinburgh Fringe itself, but fringe leaders interpret that calling in different ways. In the Edinburgh model, the fringe creates an open-market system and offers services to all groups who can afford a registration fee and have enough wherewithal to find a venue for themselves. The Canadian and limited access model fringes take a more active role in designing a system to treat all participants equally, which usually involves a degree of standardization. Standardization can level the playing field, providing structure especially for new producers, but it also constrains producers, limiting options and choices. Having fewer options is not intrinsically bad—some participants may appreciate the ease of having one fewer decision to make—but impinging on the agency of the somewhat-iconoclastic fringe producer can cause frustration.

Standardized assignment to a fringe-run venue was an area in which respondents often felt constrained, or at the mercy of a system they did not fully understand. The year

Respondent 02 went to the Minnesota Fringe, he had to select from a small, medium, or large venue. Choosing the medium size led to a lottery placement in St. Paul, "fifteen minutes out from everybody else…We were the only venue in St. Paul, not in Minneapolis." Although he still reported good attendance, he discovered that the largest venues were all located in a central complex. He now believes that, "If I had said large venue, they would have put us in this large venue and we would have been selling this large venue." Respondent 05 corroborated the fear of being isolated, "If you get like a far out venue, people may not go…It's literally the luck of the draw. You get what you get and you've got to kind of deal with it." He summed up the appeal of the third party venue:

> The thing I do like about producing at [the Hollywood] Fringe is I have control. Not one hundred percent control, but…I have a say in what my nights are, I have a say in my theater, my theater space, and other fringes you don't have that. You basically take what they give you, so I do like having that say-so.

Even placement into what seems like an objectively good space can be problematic. Respondent 04 remembered a festival that had access to "these wonderful, professional spaces in the Times Square-Broadway area," of New York City, but felt that the space did not match her needs: "Personally for the type of work that I do, I prefer the down and dirty black box spaces, and that people are feeling like, 'Hey, I paid ten dollars and this is appropriate.'" A high degree of standardization can make a fringe feel not like a fringe. Even though "things are taken care of. The staff is all over things," in Minnesota, Respondent 03, "didn't feel as much of a personal touch to Minnesota Fringe, because it's big and slightly corporate-y and well-organized." Such comments echo

Respondent 06's frustrations with the Philadelphia Fringe bar, which she perceived as not in keeping with the culture of fringe.

Festivals that operate venues usually assign a technical staff member to assist participants in the venue, taking on much of the work of a production stage manager. Standardizing venue tech staffs can have the benefits of cost-saving for participants and risk-reduction for festivals, but a bad fit complicates a producing process. Respondent 02 encountered one technician who was "rude," and "not very effective, and we were forced to work with him. And because the fringe knew him and liked him, there was only so much I could do and say." When Respondent 05 had to work with a technician with less-than-adequate technical knowledge, he said, "I had to be very vigilant." Managing the technician became an extra burden rather than an aid.

Standardization frequently involved rules about show length, late seating, and pricing, all of which can chafe a participant. Respondent 05 said that under Minnesota Fringe's strict no late seating policy, if "someone's coming to see you and they're one minute late, well that's just too bad." Respondent 04 believed that standard ticket prices were "not necessarily fair for the audience or the participants, because you know, maybe your show frankly isn't worth $18.50, plus the charge for buying the tickets. Maybe your audiences don't have that kind of money, or people aren't willing to take a risk for that." Respondent 01 told the story of a disastrous fringe experience involving a miscommunication about the length of his show. "When they put up the ticketing and everything, I emailed them going like, 'Hey guys, my ninety minute show only has an hour time slot.'" The festival could not recreate the schedule around a ninety-minute

show, “So I lost my venue, which was located right next to…fringe central.” The fringe connected him with a BYOV venue that suited the show, but was considerably farther from the festival center, which he blamed for low ticket sales.

Festival Size

Respondents perceived festival size to sometimes be a constraint, and interestingly, found fringes at both ends of the spectrum of size to be problematic. Small fringes, particularly those operating in a single complex of theaters, limited opportunities. Respondent 03 put it simply: “Because San Francisco Fringe is inherently small, that core audience is still smaller.” Respondent 07 saw “the lack of space to operate in for promoting,” as a major problem in San Francisco. It seemed that the smaller a festival, the more narrow its network relationships. San Francisco happened to have another challenge in that the complex was in a neighborhood that Respondent 07 said, “Doesn't have a good reputation.” Respondent 03 concurred, “There’s other venues in the area, but…you don’t want to walk around in the Tenderloin.” The single venue and the bias against the neighborhood in the larger community combined to isolate the festival and limited the opportunities it held for artists.

Large festivals presented problems, too, both in terms of number of shows and geographic area. In a festival with many participants, respondents feared getting lost in the shuffle. “Making your show stand out,” was a challenge for Respondent 04 in Hollywood, a festival with a geographic boundary, but no limit on number of shows. “Really getting the audience not just in the door, but getting the audience to help you create buzz about your show,” were among her annual concerns. Limited access model

fringes with a well-run infrastructure can also grow to staggering size. “If I were just coming onto the fringe scene now, I don’t even know if I’d do,” the Minnesota Fringe, said Respondent 05, “Because it’s gotten really big, like really big. Really big.”

Geography

Festivals spread over a wide area created issues for producers, perhaps by not offering enough constraint. Respondent 06 appreciated the relative proximity of venues in the neighborhood around the center of the New Orleans Fringe, but, “Didn't go to any of the shows that were down in like the center city district, like the business district,” several miles away. The second location felt, “Weird and foreign and a place I didn't know and wasn't familiar with, so [I] didn't end up going there.” Respondent 03 called the Minnesota Fringe, “Too spread apart. They sort of had like little clusters where you can kind of Fringe from part to part.” Respondents recognized that constraining the geographic area of a fringe had costs for organizers:

> What's nice about Theatre Row is it really is maybe outside of NoHo, that's the only other, those are the only two places I think in Los Angeles that have multiple theaters in a square mile, even less, half-mile radius. So that's great. I think they're very smart about situating in there rather than expanding it out, because I just think it would be very disorganized and too all over the place if they did it like in a larger area and I think it probably like was [an] economic challenge for them (Respondent 02).

However some also associated a large geographic area with disorder. Respondent 01 questioned if the San Diego International Fringe, “Had grown too fast from Year 1 to Year 2,” resulting in a general disorganization. Hearing rumors that the festival intended to add venues across the border in Tijuana left him, “Wondering how the hell they're going to manage it.”

Thus we see scaffolding and constraints as new way to consider the various dimensions of fringe festivals. The variables that change across fringes are innumerable, including diverse parameters of culture, stakeholders, organizational behavior, and infrastructure. Using scaffolding and constraints as the basis for comparisons among fringes puts an emphasis on the practical logistics of fringing, providing an individual-level complement to literature that explores the broader sweep of fringe history and festival development.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The study respondents delivered rich information about the experience of producing in a fringe festival. In this section, I analyze the results and look for applications in the field. First, I assess the accuracy of my expectations. Next, I revisit the concepts of scaffolding and constraint with regard to the results and the literature. This discussion leads to a proposal for a framework which participants can use to assess fringe festivals along with its applications. I conclude with suggestions for areas of further study.

Assessment of Expectations

Before undertaking the research, I identified three expectations. Expectation 1 was that the respondents would report a range of motivations for participating in fringes, leading to a variety of understandings of the value of fringe participation. Expectation 2 was that unique features of the three American fringe models would each best serve an "ideal" participant. Finally, Expectation 3 was that some producers, motivated by the belief that fringes are defined by nonselectivity, would refrain from participating in adjudicated fringes.

As I originally set out to examine structural impacts from the participant perspective, I focused on the most discernible difference among fringes: the basic model by which they operate. As expressed in Expectation 2, I expected to be able to describe

the types of respondents best served by the limited access, open access, and adjudicated models. As evidenced by the respondents' focus on individual structures and the divergent experiences they had within each model, I now see this approach was too broad. Respondents noticed the scaffolding fringes provided to them and the way in which fringes constrained them, picking apart discrete elements of a fringe in order to arrive at an overall assessment. They made broad allowances for the organizational culture of a fringe, so long as they felt the fringe delivered on the benefits it had promised them.

As stated in Expectation 3, I also expected that the respondents would incorporate the philosophy behind fringe models into their evaluations, with some rejecting the adjudicated model. As mentioned in the Results section, explicit discussions of the models and fringe values occurred less frequently than I thought they would. The fringe model was less important to the respondents than their actual experience and the practical realities of the fringe structures. Having seen multiple definitions of fringe, respondents seemed less likely to believe that a certain model represented a "true fringe." Many did hold certain fringe values dear, notably egalitarianism, risk-taking, and accessibility, but did not seem to believe that only one model could provide an environment conducive to enacting those beliefs. Rather, they found elements of those values across a variety of experiences.

The expectation that was confirmed was Expectation 1. Participants indeed had different definitions of a valuable fringe experience, but again, the results were more complicated that I had anticipated. Some respondents, like Respondents 01 and 02,

placed a high value on interactions with other artists and the learning experience of fringing. Others, like Respondents 05 and 07 defined value more in terms of exposure to new or receptive audiences and the ability to make supplemental income. There seemed to be a different value equation for ensemble and solo producers, owing to the sheer cost of touring with a group. New producers had more need for learning experiences and a supportive infrastructure than did more experienced producers, who tended to value the freedom to make their own choices within the festival environment. Whether a producer was from the city in which the fringe was held also played a role, as did the temperament and risk-aversion of the producer, two elements I failed to foresee and figure into my expectations.

Some concepts of value were ubiquitous. All respondents valued experiences that let them take control of their careers and that provided access to audiences. The former observation meshes with the founding ethos of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. When the eight original adjuncts organized their own performances, they were taking control of their own situation, refusing to be left out of the cultural process in Edinburgh despite having not been invited to the Edinburgh International Festival. The value for independence, and even rebellion, continues among fringe producers today. It is quite understandable that access to audiences was critical to a valuable experience, as the audience is essential to the art form of theater (Conte and Langley 2007, 4). A performance can happen without critics or industry representatives present, without any marketing, even without a theater space, but without an audience, a performance is arguably just a rehearsal.

Scaffolds and Constraints Revisited

In order to entice artists to take part, or to fulfill a mission of community service (Lane 2010, 137), fringe festivals offer scaffolding for the producing experience. I borrow the term from the field of education, where instructional scaffolding has many exact definitions, but generally refers to experiences which allow a student to practice a skill in a guided setting, while moving toward a scenario in which she needs less and less assistance to demonstrate the skill (Benson 1997, 126). Using training wheels when learning to ride a bicycle or the "See one, do one, teach one," model used in surgical instruction are both examples of instructional scaffolding in the educational context. In the context at hand, the "scaffolding" of a fringe can help an artist learn to self-produce or function as the impetus to action. Fringe scaffolding eases the job of the producer, removing many of the hurdles of self-producing by placing her in a more structured environment, making it a relative safe place to start. Fringe scaffolding also importantly involves access to things a producer cannot get in the field, namely to infrastructure and relationships.

In educational theory of instructional scaffolding, constraints applied to the learning situation help learners focus on the target skill. Nina Simon (2010, Chapter 1) of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History brings the concept into the arts, making the case that the thoughtful use of constraints aids in coaxing museum visitors to participate in creative exhibits. In her work designing participatory museum exhibits, she finds that, "Meaningful constraints motivate and focus participation," because "open-ended self-expression requires self-directed creativity" (Simon 2010, Chapter 1). Fringe artists,

however, are part of a minority of people that do in fact engage in self-directed creative pursuits, taking initiative to realize an artistic vision of their own volition. They do seek a semi-structured environment in which to work, but as evidenced by respondents' complaints about overly regulated fringe environments, constraints are less valuable to a self-directed population, and in fact, can turn the corner from aid to imposition.

Lane's (2003, 67) analysis of fringes through the non-profit lifecycle suggests that mature festivals, or those seeking to become mature organizations, will have an efficient infrastructure and written policies, developing constraints as they create more scaffolding. One mature fringe, Minnesota, does fit this expectation. The respondents who had participated in Minnesota Fringe reported an incredibly high degree of scaffolding, evidenced by the strong press network and large "built-in audience," but they also noticed strict regulations on show length and late seating that contributed to what Respondent 03 called the "slightly corporate-y" atmosphere. Respondent 02 praised the well-functioning infrastructure of Hollywood Fringe, which I perceive to be in a growth phase on its way to becoming a mature institution. Lane's model would predict that with maturity, policies and rules would be becoming more codified in Hollywood. Freedom to make decisions, however, was what several respondents liked most about Hollywood Fringe, suggesting that Lane's findings may not be generalizable to open access or Edinburgh model fringes. How fringes arrive at their signature structure is an area where further study would be warranted.

The management of venues seems to be the critical point of difference between the open access fringes and the other two models, more salient than size or selection

philosophy. Respondents noticed a direct link between fringe venue management and constraints, reporting that in limited access or adjudicated fringes, the degree of constraint differed by festival, but was always higher than in open access fringes. Fringe-managed venues required standardized procedures and often came with technical staff. The number of venues was limited by how many the fringe organizers had booked. Open access fringes had no limits on venue numbers and passed on venue management decisions to the independent venue managers, resulting in fringe environments with more options and freedom, but perhaps more chaos as well.

Developing a New Fringe Framework

Artists considering fringe participation want to know, will this be a valuable experience for me? The results of this study affirm that value is in the eye of the beholder and, as noted above, that the simple definitions of fringe models are not a sufficient basis to explain the diversity of fringe experiences. An artist must synthesize multiple sources of information, including material from fringes themselves, the advice of other artists, and her own needs, desires, and expertise. A tool or framework to help make sense of this information would be especially useful to a new producer unfamiliar even with the right questions to ask. Based on the results, I propose a model for categorizing fringe festivals not by festival model—limited access, open access, or adjudicated—but by the structures within them, that is, the degree of scaffolding and constraint within the festival.

At the core of this framework is the understanding that there is no such thing as a "perfect fringe." Even a well-respected festival like the Minnesota Fringe inspired both

admiration and frustration among respondents. Each fringe festival has a structure that offers a different combination of scaffolding and constraints to the participant, inherently serving some participants better than others. So, too, do participants' comfort with constraint and need for scaffolding differ from each other's and over time. Given the infinite combination of fringe layouts and artist needs, a model that categorizes scaffolding as "good" or constraints as "bad," would be of limited value. Instead, in the tool I use rankings of "high" or "low" for the scaffolding and constraints within a fringe, a simplification indeed, but one that necessitates the consideration of the individual structures and festival attributes in order to make a categorization. Placing "high" and "low" "Degree of Scaffolding" and "Degree of Constraint" into a two by two grid, as shown in Figure 2, leads to four combinations of high and low scaffolding and constraints. Below, I outline the likely characteristics of each environment and suggest examples from the results.

High Scaffolding-High Constraint

The fringe with high degrees of both scaffolding and constraint offers a participant considerable access to things widely valued by producers: audience, press, and other arts professionals. The highly-scaffolded fringe has a large built-in audience and a strong promotional infrastructure. The festival staff are attentive and effective. Venues are operated by the fringe itself, eliminating a major producing challenge, but also limiting options and the overall size of the festival. The well-oiled machinery of this fringe has come with a process of standardization, making the festival rule-bound, even

inflexible. Issues like venue placement and schedule may be decided by lottery or a process hidden to the producer.

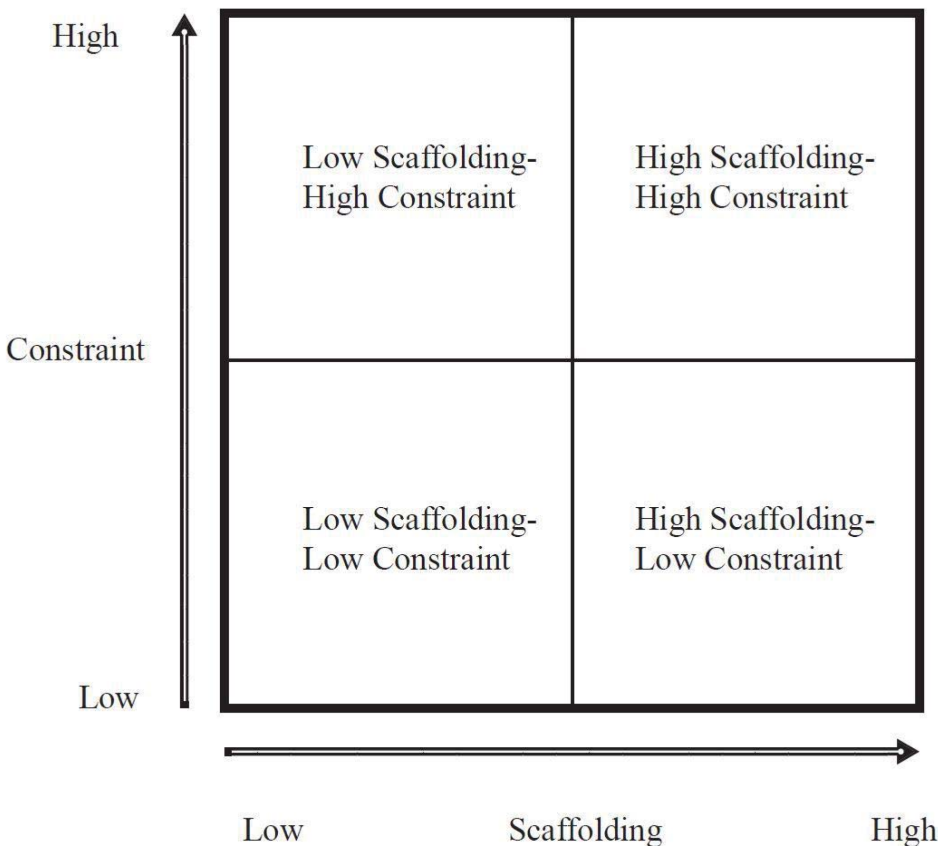


FIGURE 2. The scaffolding-constraint fringe framework.

Most participants will thrive in this environment, believing that the high degree of constraint is justified because the festival fulfills on its promise of delivering access. The high constraints in these fringes reduce the number of decisions a producer must make, making it an easier experience for new producers or casual producers with limited interest in honing producing skills. The large built-in audience reduces financial risk,

making this fringe a good fit for ensembles with high expenses or artists from other cities. The most independent and experienced, however, will feel uncomfortable ceding control of decisions that they view as central to the producing task, like choosing a venue or setting ticket prices. The environment may not feel challenging enough for the producer motivated by taking risks or learning new producing skills.

The archetype of this category is a well-run limited access model festival, with Minnesota Fringe being a good example. Respondents 02, 03, and 05 all spoke in glowing terms of the size of the audience at the festival and the smoothness of venue operations. The experienced Respondent 05, however, complained of the festival's inflexibility on late seating and Respondent 02 of a lack of clarity in the venue assignment process. Ultimately, this fringe is safe and supportive, but at the expense of individual choice.

High Scaffolding-Low Constraint

The high scaffolding-low constraint fringe offers opportunities and freedom. The low constraints in this category are probably due to the fact that this festival does not manage venues. Outsourcing venue management reduces the need for standardization and removes size constraints, so this festival can grow each year. The high degree of scaffolding may be related in part to that very issue of size. As the festival grows in number of performers, it attracts more industry and press, as they can do "one-stop shopping" for new talent. This fringe also actively builds a festival audience and offers producers assistance in finding a venue. It should be noted that the development of infrastructure often lends itself to a process of standardization. If one were to conduct an

exhaustive survey of American fringes, I would expect this category to be fairly small, comprising only the highest-achieving open access festivals.

This fringe creates an environment in which the experienced producer thrives. Independent, entrepreneurial producers appreciate the degree of control afforded them. On the other hand, this fringe is likely to be large and chaotic, possibly intimidating less experienced producers unless the fringe invests in programs or materials designed to aid the initiate. The lack of constraints also leaves more room for producer error, making this an environment for those comfortable with risk. The venue in a low-constraint environment may start to assert more authority, becoming a selective agent itself as Batchelder (2006, 130) observed among the selective, entrepreneurial venues in Edinburgh.

No American fringe discussed in this study perfectly fits this category. Hollywood is close, but many respondents' complaints of low audience turn-out prevent me from making it the exemplar. Edinburgh Fringe itself is a good example of this category. The structures of the press room and ticketing service lend scaffolding to the festival, but the lack of central venue booking removes the source of so many of the constraints encountered by respondents in limited access festivals. Imagining anything but an open access festival in this category is somewhat difficult, since venue management is so closely tied to the development of constraints. A limited access or adjudicated festival with a BYOV wing does perhaps fit the bill of high scaffolding-low constraint. In that case, the two wings of the festival could take on characteristics of two different categories and should probably be viewed as such.

Low Scaffolding-Low Constraint

When a fringe offers little scaffolding, but also has few constraints, the festival setting differs very little from the non-festival producing environment in its city. Venues are likely managed by third parties, reducing the constraint level. Scheduling and ticket prices are not standardized. Whether a new festival or one that has chosen to remain in the start-up stage, in this festival infrastructure is loosely organized, ineffective, or non-existent. The festival itself may not attract patrons, though individual shows might have good turnouts based on their own marketing efforts. Similarly, the press and industry representatives attend performances, but not to a far greater degree than they would outside of the festival. It seems likely that this category would be populated by new or struggling open access festivals.

Who would participate in such a festival? Even though the overall scaffolding is low, possibly this festival offers a participant one element of scaffolding or a more basic level of support that is attractive enough to warrant participation. Producers already working in the city might take a "Why not?" approach, picking up incremental gains in an unconstrained environment that is already familiar to them. This festival is likely to be frustrating for artists from out of town who need a built-in audience and a promotional infrastructure in order to get the houses they need to recoup. One exception may be if the festival is new. Respondent 04, based in New York City, saw the first year of the new Hollywood Fringe as an opportunity to get in on the ground floor and grow her audiences along with the festival's.

Most likely is that participants perceive this festival as not being worth the cost of entry. The benefits of offer are those that a producer could procure for herself on the open market, without the added costs of festival registration. As a participant gains in experience, she may perceive more and more festivals as falling into this category, that is, as her own network grows, she has less and less need for the incremental gains a fringe can provide. Respondent 06's description of the Philadelphia Fringe seems to fit this description. As she said, "I can pay the fringe three hundred bucks to get in the guide, but if I just send out some press releases, I'll probably get similar houses without going through the fringe." Though her audiences were of an acceptable size, she did not believe they were larger because of the fringe.

Low Scaffolding-High Constraint

As in the immediately preceding case, the low scaffolding-high constraint fringe has little to offer a participant in the way of audience, press, or industry attention beyond what she might be able to access in the non-festival environment and the festival's infrastructure is inadequate. Furthermore, this fringe constrains the producer, removing choices through standardization or opportunities through a limited size. Festival leaders are perceived as tightly controlling the festival, but in ways that run counter to the desires of participants. Fringes in this category are likely limited access or adjudicated fringes that are either very small in geography or number of shows, or are new, having not yet had the time to build up audience or relationships.

The experienced participant from the local community perceives this festival as too rigid, the small incremental gains in access not worth the hassle of dealing with extra

rules. The less experienced may find the experience more palatable, since they have more need for basic scaffolding, but they, too, may feel that festival support is too low to justify registration. Out of towners will be frustrated by the lack of a built-in audience. Respondent 07's description of the San Francisco Fringe fits this category. She felt hampered by the cramped quarters in the building where the fringe was held and the distaste local residents had for the fringe's neighborhood. On the scaffolding side, audiences were small and opportunities for promotion few in number. Respondent 01's experience in the first year of the San Diego Fringe also fits the category. In my research, respondents' most negative experiences occurred in low scaffolding-high constraint fringes. I would anticipate these festivals to attract the fewest participants and have a relatively low proportion of repeat participants.

Applications

Of course, the reality of the situation is more complex. The four quadrants, completed in Figure 3, represent archetypes and no festival will fit these perfectly. Most fringes will actually be somewhere on the spectrum in between "high" and "low" in both dimensions. The Hollywood Fringe is a good example. Respondents noted that that festival has a well-developed infrastructure and a vibrant community, but it lacks a large built-in audience. Should it be considered a high scaffolding-low constraint or low scaffolding-low constraint? The decision rests with the user of the framework.

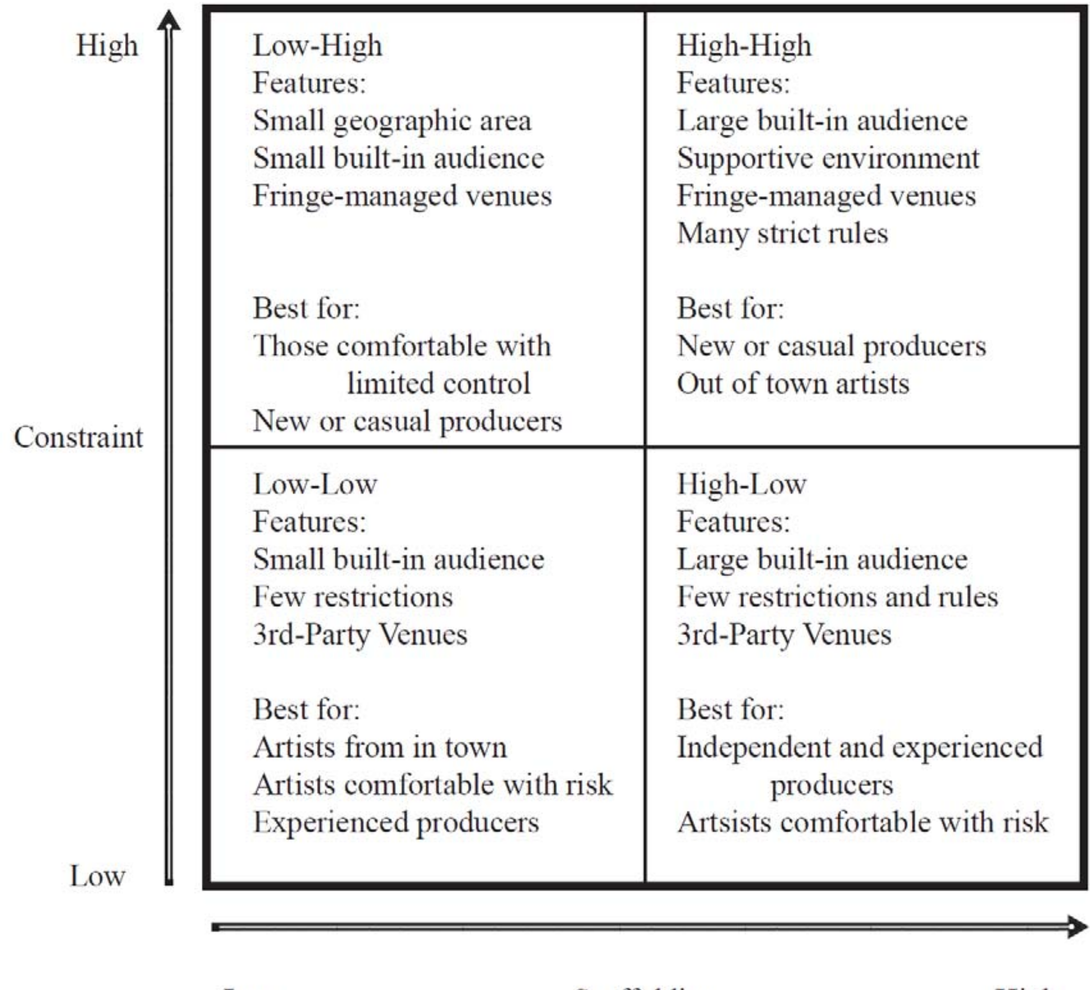


FIGURE 3. The scaffolding-constraint fringe framework with festival characteristics.

There are ways to make the categorization process less subjective; a scoring system could be developed based on a quantitative analysis of fringe statistics, including but not limited to annual ticket revenue, average audience size, and average number of press mentions per show. Individual attributes could be weighted, and then festivals could be plotted on axes by score, rather than placed into a quadrant. This would be a massive undertaking, and subjectivity would still be a concern—how much value is

assigned to audience? How much to the freedom to choose a schedule?—raising the question of whether one instrument can account for the overwhelming number of variables. Returning to the framework at hand, the subjectivity of categorization is not necessarily a flaw, as long as the user understands that it is not designed to label every festival in a particular way for everyone.

The framework has one noticeable absence: the actual monetary costs of participation. Application, registration, and production fees vary widely across fringes, and in Edinburgh or open access model fringes, participants typically pay fringe fees plus rent at a venue. Respondents do consider costs, but their decisions about which fringes to attend seem to be based more on value than on finding the cheapest fringe. Respondent 04 cited the costs of festival entry as the greatest barrier to her doing more festivals, but she also took issue with the practices of fringes that manage venues, choosing instead to work in the more expensive Hollywood Fringe. Respondents who had participated in both Edinburgh and limited access model fringes rarely brought up the price differential between the two models. Respondent 03 did say that the very low costs of New Orleans encouraged him to apply and Respondent 07 somewhat ruefully noted that, “Money is king in Edinburgh.” Because the act of producing involves the intersection of art and business, I would encourage participants to use the framework first to identify potential good fits before even starting a budgeting process. If a shirt does not fit you, it does not matter how much money is in your wallet. Gathering budget information is easiest in the limited access model as venue rentals are incorporated into the registration fee. In the open access model, participants will then need to conduct budget research, contacting a

variety of venues to see the range of rental prices before deciding if a good fit fringe is still a value at the current price.

Section 1 – Self-Reflection
How do I plan to measure success?
How would I feel about cutting a show to fit a time limit?
How important is performing at a certain time of day to me?
How important is choosing my performance venue to me?
How often do I plan to produce? Is this something I want to get better at?
How important is it to me to feel "in control" of producing decisions?
How do I feel about risk? Can I afford to take a loss on a show?
Do I want to travel outside of my hometown?
How important is getting publicity to me?
Will I be working with an ensemble?

Section 2 – Fringe Festival Assessment
Is there a "built-in" audience? What is the average audience size?
How easy or hard is it to get press coverage?
Is there a central place to meet other artists (a fringe central)?
What is the "vibe" of the fringe?
How do participants get a venue?
What sort of rules do participants have to follow?
How many venues are there in the fringe? How close together are they?
What is the fringe neighborhood like?
Is the fringe a good place to learn?

FIGURE 4. Questions for artists to use with the fringe framework.

To use the framework, I outline in Figure 4 a sample of questions that artists can use to fit themselves into the fringe framework. The first section comprises questions an artist should ask first of herself and her artistic team. This step of self-reflection is especially important in ensembles or in producing teams—everyone should ideally get on the same page about what they hope to accomplish through fringe participation. The second section contains questions to ask during the research process about fringes which

can be posed to other touring artists, fringe leaders, or patrons, or assessed through news articles, social media, and festival websites. The questions vary from the concrete to the subjective and neither section is exhaustive. An artist could add to the list over time as she found more parameters that mattered to her and should pose the questions in Section 2 to multiple people to get a diversity of opinions.

Though conceived with the artist in mind, the framework can also be used by fringe festival leaders as a tool for self-reflection with the sample questions in Figure 5. As service organizations, fringe festivals should understand whom they are best serving and how. This information allows festival leaders the opportunity to invest further in serving an existing target, or to undertake initiatives that make the festival more attractive to a wider profile of participants. Particular attention should be paid to the question of the built-in audience, as this was by far the most widely reported benefit sought by the respondents. Leaders should also keep in mind that using the framework within a leadership team is only the first step. Fringe festival leaders must compare their own self-assessment with the actual experience of participants. Participant surveys that ask about specific structural elements are one way to try to attain this critical information.

Further Study and Conclusions

In undertaking this project, I sought to better understand the experiences of fringe festival participants across the variety of fringe models used in the United States. As discussed above, I learned that the standard way of classifying fringes by the Edinburgh or open access, limited access, or adjudicated models fails to provide a complete picture. Incorporating the concepts of scaffolding and constraint, adapted from education theory,

helps to develop a more nuanced framework that participants and festival leaders can use to make wise decisions in the ever-crowded American fringe scene.

Is there a "built-in" audience? What is the average audience size?
What do participants spend on a show on average? Are they recouping?
How much press coverage does the festival get? Individual shows?
Do we offer a central meeting place for artists? Do they use it?
How do participants get a venue? Is the process transparent?
What sort of rules do participants have to follow? How often do rules get broken?
Where are our artists from? Mostly local?
What do we do to support out of town participants?
How close together are the fringe venues?
How would someone from out of town get around? Can they walk or bike?
What is the fringe neighborhood like?
What do we do to help producers learn new skills?
What is the "vibe" of our fringe?
For festivals with fringe-managed venues: Why do we manage venues? How does this serve participants and patrons?
For festivals with third-party venues: Why do we have independently-managed venues? How does this serve participants and patrons?

FIGURE 5. Questions for festival leaders to use with the fringe framework.

By focusing on fringe structures, I was able to gain a depth of knowledge on the issue, but perhaps at the expense of a more vivid and emotional picture of what it is to be a fringe festival participant. I asked participants to focus on specifics of their fringing journeys, illuminating a substantial amount of detail, but only creating an outline of their larger career arcs. More research on the sequence of decisions that fringe producers make over time would certainly provide more depth to the festival framework.

My research also points to the need for a better understanding of the culture of fringe festivals. Distinct from the traditional performing arts festival model and also

from decommodified, participatory festivals like Burning Man, fringe festivals exist in a hybrid space, one that has attracted little attention from academics. Rather than assuming fringes must be analyzed from a festival perspective, an alternative would be to view them through the lens of participatory cultures, a fast-growing topic in media studies. In a 2006 white paper for the MacArthur Foundation, Jenkins defines a participatory culture as:

> A culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created). (Jenkins et al. 2009, 3).

Though the participatory cultures analyzed in that paper exist online, every element of the definition is met in the ideal fringe experience.

The fringe values of self-reliance and uncurated creativity are present in other current social movements, including "the tech-influenced DIY community that has come to be identified as the Maker Movement" (Maker Media Inc. 2015). The growth in popularity of Internet sites and apps that foster self-expression and do-it-yourself aesthetics, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter among others, coincides with the growth in the number of American fringes. Are the two phenomena directly linked, in that the increasingly rapid dissemination of information via the Internet has introduced newcomers to the idea of fringe? Or are they dual products of the same set of social and economic influences? Investigation into this area strikes me as a rich vein of inquiry.

The explosion of American fringe festivals presents artists with a bevy of opportunities, both for enriching, rewarding ventures, and deeply frustrating and costly ordeals. Armed with a framework of scaffolding and constraints, producers will be better able to make sense of the array of possibilities. Before even using the tool or gathering information, producers must take the critical first step of honestly appraising their own knowledge and comfort with risk. Some will choose to learn from others, gathering multiple perspectives and distilling them according to their own needs, while others, true to the nature of the independent artist, will jump in with both feet. If the current American fascination with fringes is any indication, somewhere a fringe will be waiting to catch them.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol
Project: Producing on the Fringe: Exploring the Impact of Fringe Festival Structure on Participant Experience

Thank you for meeting with me today. To facilitate my note-taking, I would like to audio record our conversation. Only I will have access to this recording, which I will transcribe. Both the recording and transcript will be stored securely for three years, at which point the original recordings will be destroyed. This interview will last a little more than thirty minutes.

To participate in this research, you must sign a form of Informed Consent. Essentially, this document states that 1) any information obtained in this study that can be identified with you will be kept confidential, 2) your participation is voluntary, and 3) we believe your participation poses no more than minimal risk to you. Please take a moment to look at the "Consent to Participate in Research" and let me know if you have any questions. If you wish to participate, please sign the document and we will begin.

Introduction:
You have been selected for this research because you have participated as a producer in multiple Fringe Festivals. The purpose of this study is to gain knowledge about the experience of producers working within the three basic Fringe Festival models in the United States and the impact, if any, of the festival model on a producer's experience. The study does not aim to evaluate your performance or experience. Rather, I seek to better understand your experience in different Fringe Festivals.
Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewee:
City of residence:

Questions:
1. What is your history in producing at Fringe Festivals?
2. Why do you participate in Fringe Festivals?
3. What qualities make a festival attractive to you as place to produce a show?
4. Tell me about a time you achieved a goal you set out for yourself as a Fringe Festival producer.

[If the subject has participated in more than two different cities' festivals, I will choose two with different selection models and say:] *I'd like to know more about your experiences at two festivals.*

5. What are the biggest challenges of producing at [Festival 1]?
6. What do you like most about producing at [Festival 1]?

Let's talk about [Festival 2].

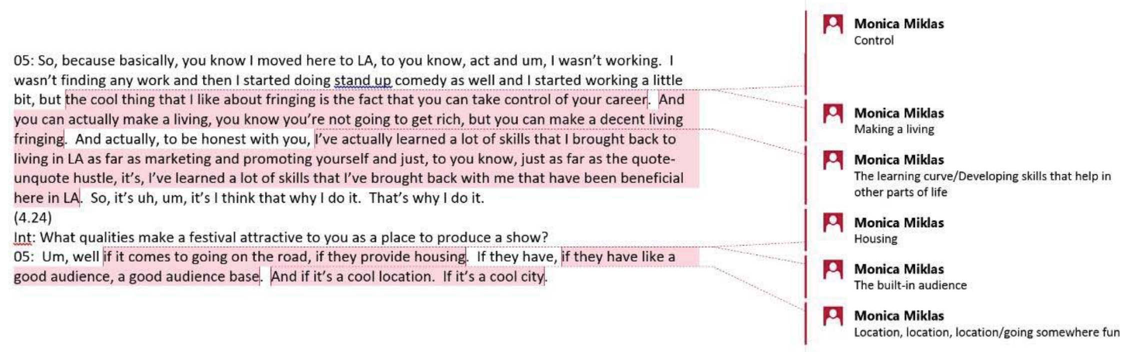
7. What are the biggest challenges of producing at [Festival 2]?
8. What do you like most about producing at [Festival 2]?

Thank you for participating in this research. Should you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me or my faculty sponsor. Our contact information is on the "Consent to Participate in Research."

APPENDIX B

CODING SAMPLES: OPEN CODING, AXIAL CODING AND MEMO

Open Coding



05: So, because basically, you know I moved here to LA, to you know, act and um, I wasn't working. I wasn't finding any work and then I started doing stand up comedy as well and I started working a little bit, but the cool thing that I like about fringing is the fact that you can take control of your career. And you can actually make a living, you know you're not going to get rich, but you can make a decent living fringing. And actually, to be honest with you, I've actually learned a lot of skills that I brought back to living in LA as far as marketing and promoting yourself and just, to you know, just as far as the quote-unquote hustle, it's, I've learned a lot of skills that I've brought back with me that have been beneficial here in LA. So, it's uh, um, it's I think that why I do it. That's why I do it.
(4.24)
Int: What qualities make a festival attractive to you as a place to produce a show?
05: Um, well if it comes to going on the road, if they provide housing. If they have, if they have like a good audience, a good audience base. And if it's a cool location. If it's a cool city.

Monica Miklas
Control

Monica Miklas
Making a living

Monica Miklas
The learning curve/Developing skills that help in other parts of life

Monica Miklas
Housing

Monica Miklas
The built-in audience

Monica Miklas
Location, location, location/going somewhere fun

Axial Coding

FESTIVAL ATTRIBUTES

CONTROL

05: the cool thing that I like about fringing is the fact that you can take control of your career

05: [Re Hollywood] I think it has something to do, and well it probably goes along with the model, the thing I do like about producing at this Fringe is I have control, not one hundred percent control but I have control of you know, I have a say in what my nights are, I have a say in my theater, my theater space, and other fringes you don't have that, you're basically take what they give you, so I do like having that say-so.

Memo
Control-Organization
Fringe producers are an independently-minded bunch. They want control of their work and want to initiate ideas or develop new work. They value originality and creativity. But they also want help, especially when just starting out. They very often choose to participate in a festival setting because they can maintain artistic control of their work while also getting some help in producing. The festival takes some of the burden of producing, allowing them to accomplish the goal of creating work and showing it to an audience without ceding control to other producers.

Their best experiences are when they feel they have the right level of control and when there is the right level of organization to facilitate their producing. The right level of "scaffolding" to support them, but typically no more than that. The right level of structure, of course, is different to different people. Producers appreciate personal, supportive relationships with festival leaders, but can also be skeptical of the motives of leaders. They want "small government" from festival staff, providing support only for the problems they feel they have, and otherwise leaving them alone.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Arksey, Hilary, and Peter Knight. 1999. *Interviewing for Social Scientists*. London: SAGE Publications.

Bain, Alice. 1996. *The Fringe: 50 Years of the Greatest Show on Earth.* Edinburgh: Scotsman Publications.

Batchelder, Xela Ann Pollock. 2006. "The World's Largest Arts Festival, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe: Mechanics, Myth and Management." PhD diss., The Ohio State University. Accessed June 27, 2014. https://etd.ohiolink.edu/.

Benson, Beth Kemp. 1997. "Coming to Terms: Scaffolding." *The English Journal* 86, no. 7 (November): 126-127. Accessed February 14, 2015. http://www.jstor.org/stable/819879.

Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals. 2015a. "About CAFF: What is CAFF?" Fringe Festivals. Accessed February 9, 2015. http://fringefestivals.com/about-caff/.

------. 2015b. "Start a Fringe." *Fringe Festivals*. Accessed February 9, 2015. http://fringefestivals.com/start-a-fringe/.

Carlsen, Jack, Tommy D. Andersson, Jane Ali-Knight, Kari Jaeger, and Ruth Taylor. 2010. "Festival Management Innovation and Failure." *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 1, no. 2: 120-131. Accessed November 8, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17852951011056900.

Carlsen, Jack, and Tommy D. Andersson. 2011. "Strategic SWOT Analysis of Public, Private and Not-for-Profit Festival Organisations." *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 2, no. 1: 83-97. Accessed November 11, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17582951111116632.

Carrell, Severin. 2014. "Edinburgh International Festival Moves Dates for 2015 as Part of Shakeup." *The Guardian*, May 8. Accessed February 21, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2014/may/08/edinburgh-international-festival-2015-moves-dates-fringe.

Clupper, Wendy. 2007. "Burning Man: Festival Culture in the United States – Festival Culture in a Global Perspective." In *Festivalising!: Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture*, edited by Temple Hauptfleisch, Shulamith Lev-Aladgem, Jacqueline Martin, Willmar Sauter, and Henri Schoenmakers, 221-241. Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V.

Conte, David M., and Stephen Langley. 2007. *Theatre Management: Producing and Managing the Performing Arts*. Hollywood: EntertainmentPro.

Corbin, Juliet, and Anselm Strauss. 1990. "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria." *Qualitative Sociology*, 13, no. 1: 3-21. Accessed February 21, 2015. *Academic Search Complete,* EBSCO*Host.*

Creswell, John W. 1997. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Dale, Michael. 1988. *Sore Throats and Overdrafts: An Illustrated Story of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe*. Edinburgh: Precedent Publications.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. 2015. "About the Edinburgh Festival Fringe." Accessed February 8, 2015. https://www.edfringe.com/about-us.

Frew, Elspeth, and Jane Ali-Knight. 2009. "Independent Theaters and the Creation of a Fringe Atmosphere." *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 3, no. 3: 211-227. Accessed February 9, 2015. http://dx/doi.org/10.1108/175-6180910980528.

FringeNYC. 2015. "International Application." The New York International Fringe Festival. Accessed February 28, 2015. www.fringenyc.org/index.php/get-involved/participants/94-international-application.

Getz, Donald, Tommy Andersson, and J. Carlsen. 2010. "Festival Management Studies: Developing a Framework and Priorities for Comparative and Cross-Cultural Research." *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 1, no. 1: 29-59. Accessed November 8, 2014. http://dx.doi.org.mcc1.library.csulb.edu/10.1108/17852951011029298

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1999. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, a Division of Transaction Publishers. Kindle eBook. (Orig. pub. 1967).

Goulding, Christina and Michael Saren. 2010. "Immersion, Emergence and Reflexivity: Grounded Theory and Aesthetic Consumption." *International Journal of Culture,*

Tourism and Hospitality Research 4, no. 1: 70-82. Accessed February 21, 2015. http://dx.doi.org./10.1108/17506181011024779.

Harris, Paul. 2000. "Worldwide They're Speaking Fringe." *Back Stage* 41, no. 25 (June 23): 28-34. Accessed June 10, 2014. http://mcc1.library.csulb.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=3263584&site=ehost-live.

Hauptfleisch, Temple. 2007. "Festivals as Eventifying Systems." In *Festivalising!: Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture*, edited by Temple Hauptfleisch, Shulamith Lev-Aladgem, Jacqueline Martin, Willmar Sauter, and Henri Schoenmakers, 40-47. Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V.

Healy, Patrick. 2009. "A Fringe That Isn't Downtown, But Up In the Hills." *New York Times*, August 7. Accessed April 17, 2014. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Hollywood Fringe. 2015. "For Participants: The Registration Process." Accessed February 28, 2015. http://www.hollywoodfringe.org/learn/index/127.

The Ithaca Fringe Festival. 2015. "Past Fringes." Ithaca Fringe! Accessed February 22, 2015. http://www.ithacafringe.com/Ithaca_Fringe_Festival/PAST_FRINGES.html

Jenkins, Henry, Katie Clinton, Ravi Purushotma, Alice J. Robison, and Margaret Weigel. 2009. "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century." Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. Accessed February 11, 2015. https://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/free_download /9780262513623_Confronting_the_Challenges.pdf.

Jones, Chris. 1996. "Edinburgh, U.S.A." *American Theatre* 13, no. 5 (May/June): 22-23. Accessed June 10, 2014.

Lane, Amy. 2003. "The Edges of Fringe: Development and Structure of the American Fringe Festival." PhD diss., Wayne State University. Accessed June 27, 2014. http://elibrary.wayne.edu/ record=b3041302~S47.

Mair, Judith and Michelle Whitford. 2013. "An Exploration of Events Research: Event Topics, Themes, and Emerging Trends." *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 4, no. 1: 6-30. Accessed November 10, 2014. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17582951311307485

Maker Media, Inc. 2015. "The Maker Movement." Maker Faire. Accessed February 16, 2015. http://makerfaire.com/maker-movement/.

Mcelroy, Steven. 2011. “To Edinburgh for the Fringe: Worth it All?” *New York Times*, Late Edition. August 22: C.1.

Minnestota Fringe. 2015. “2015 Minnesota Fringe: So you want to do a Fringe show…” Accessed February 28, 2015. http://www.fringefestival.org/apply/.

Moffat, Alistair. 1978. *The Edinburgh Fringe*. London: Johnston & Bacon.

Paterson, Erika. 1997. “Ordering Chaos: The Canadian Fringe Theatre Phenomenon.” PhD diss., University of Victoria. Accessed June 27, 2014. http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/tape15/PQDD_0005/NQ34281.pdf.

Philadelphia News. 2013. “A New Era for Philadelphia Live Arts Festival.” *Philadelphia News*, March 20. Accessed March 9, 2015. http://thephilanews.com/a-new-name-a-new-era-for-philadelphia-live-arts-festival-38586.htm

Saillant, Catherine. 2010. “Burning Man Becomes a Hot Academic Topic.” *Los Angeles Times*, October 20. Accessed February 14, 2015. http://articles.latimes.com/2010/oct/20/local/la-me-burning-man-20101020.

Salmons, Janet. 2010. *Online Interviews in Real Time*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Schoenmakers, Henri. 2007. “Festivals, Theatrical Events and Communicative Interactions.” In *Festivalising!: Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture*, edited by Temple Hauptfleisch, Shulamith Lev-Aladgem, Jacqueline Martin, Willmar Sauter, and Henri Schoenmakers, 27-37. Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V.

Shenton, Mark. 2005. “Edinburgh as Eden: Different Paths, Goals for Americans in the Fringe.” *Back Stage* 46, no. 33: 5-6. *Business Source Premier, EBSCOhost* (accessed November 14, 2014.)

Shrum, Wesley Monroe Jr. 1996. *Fringe and Fortune: The Role of Critics in High and Popular Art*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Simon, Nina. 2010. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0. Accessed October 6, 2014. http://www.participatorymuseum.org/read/.

Turner, Barry A. 1983. “The Use of Grounded Theory for the Qualitative Analysis of Organizational Behaviour.” *Journal of Management Studies* 20, no. 3: 333-348. *Business Source Premier,* EBSCO*Host* (accessed February 21, 2015).

United States Association of Fringe Festivals. 2014. “Festival Directory.” Accessed December 16, 2014. http://www.fringefestivals.us/festival/index.html

------. 2015a. "Fringe Selection Methods." Accessed February 28, 2015. http://www.fringefestivals.us/fringe-selection-methods/index.html

------. 2015b. "New York International Fringe Festival (FringeNYC)." Accessed February 28, 2015. http://www.fringefestivals .us/festival/new-york-international-fringe-festival-fringenyc/.

Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.