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FESTIVALS AS LIMINAL SPACES

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Festival as Liminal Spaces

People have gathered in large numbers in the form of festivals since ancient times for a variety of reasons. Historically, such gatherings were often associated with religion and dedicated to holy figures or saints, agricultural cycles such as harvests and seasonal transitions, or the commemoration of important historical events and victories. In modern times, festivals have increasingly become spaces of entertainment, artistic expression and collective social experience.

Gatherings and festivities of this kind can be found in virtually all cultures. Their persistence across centuries suggests that festivals share certain common properties, dynamics and traditions regardless of time, place or purpose. At the same time, because festivals bring large groups of people together emotionally, spiritually, ideologically and socially, they have rarely remained outside politics and broader power struggles.

Festivals often involve a temporary departure from ordinary routines, norms and hierarchies. This gives festivals and festival sites a liminal character in terms of space, publicness, social relations and social order. Precisely because of these liminal and potentially transgressive qualities, festivals have frequently become sites of regulation, contestation and ideological struggle.

This paper begins by examining festivals and gatherings organised for entertainment purposes in general before narrowing the discussion to contemporary music festivals and large scale music events, which will hereafter be referred to simply as festivals. Although festivals have existed for centuries in many different forms, contemporary large-scale music festivals emerged as a distinct cultural form particularly after the 1960s and 1970s. Since the 2000s, music festivals have experienced a remarkable global expansion and have become one of the

dominant forms of entertainment and collective social experience for young people, while also gaining an increasingly significant place within the live music industry. This paper examines music festivals and large scale music events as temporary spatial formations that partially suspend ordinary social hierarchies, norms and principles. It argues that festivals function as liminal semi-public spaces shaped through their own collectively negotiated traditions, norms and behavioural codes. The paper first traces the historical transformation and regulation of collective festivities and mass entertainment. It then analyses contemporary festivals in terms of their spatial properties, norms, forms of regulation, social interactions, forms of expression, meanings, and power struggles. Using Turkey under the AKP government as a case study, the paper examines the regulation and suppression of festivals within broader struggles over cultural hegemony and acceptable lifestyles. Finally, drawing on theories of everyday resistance, it discusses festival attendance as forms of everyday resistance, while considering illegal rave culture as an intensified example of counter-spatial practice.

Historical Transformation and Regulation of Festivities and Open-air Entertainment

Festivals and collective festivities have existed across many societies since antiquity, often associated with religion, seasonal cycles, rituals and communal celebration (Cudny, 2014). In medieval Europe, carnivals, fairs and open-air festivities constituted important parts of collective gathering, performance and social interaction. Although many fairs were primarily commercial events, they generally hosted theatrical performances, music, parades and other forms of public entertainment (Cudny, 2014). Such festivities often took place in streets, squares and other open public spaces, temporarily changing ordinary routines, forms of interaction and behavioural norms.

The emergence of modern urban arts festivals is often traced to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (HOLND FSTVL, 2002, as cited in Quinn, 2005). Industrialisation, urbanisation, and the expansion of leisure time in the nineteenth century contributed to the growth of festivals and the increase in cultural activities within them. (Kaczmarek et al., 2010, as cited in Cudny, 2014). These early festivals were closely associated with the educational and civilising ideals of "high culture" and were often connected to broader projects of reconstruction, political stability and international cultural exchange in the post-war period, during when an upsurge in the number of festivals have been witnessed (Quinn, 2005). At the same time, some festivals also emerged as reactions against the rigidity and exclusivity of established cultural institutions (Frey, 1994, as cited in Quinn, 2005). Social trends of the time shaped the forms and functions of festivals and public gatherings, as they did other areas of social life.

A significant transformation began during the 1960s and 1970s, a period marked by youth-led social movements, countercultural politics and broader challenges to established social norms throughout the Western world (Quinn, 2005). Festivals increasingly became spaces of experimentation, collective expression and alternative cultural practices, challenging established distinctions between "high" and "low" culture (Quinn, 2005). During this period, festival activities increasingly expanded beyond conventional venues into streets, squares, cafés and other open urban spaces, fostering more direct interactions between performers, organisers, local residents and audiences (Quinn, 2005).

From the 1980s onwards, the rapid expansion of festivals became closely connected to post-industrial urban transformation, the growth of the service economy and increasing inter-urban competition. As many cities sought new forms of economic development following industrial decline, festivals increasingly became instruments through which cities attempted to

market themselves, attract tourism and reshape their urban image (Bassett, 1993, as cited in Quinn, 2005). In this process, festivals gradually shifted from relatively collective and locally embedded forms of festivity toward more organised, regulated and consumption-oriented cultural events. The growing "festivalization" of urban culture increasingly positioned festivals not only as spaces of celebration and gathering but also as tools of branding, image production and urban regeneration (Quinn, 2005).

Given that festivals gather large crowds, often take place in public spaces and sometimes emerged as attempts to overcome the restrictions and rigidity associated with established cultural institutions (Frey, as cited in Quinn, 2005), while also functioning as agents of urban change (Smith, Osborn, & Quinn, 2022), they have historically been closely monitored by those in power. For centuries, state and religious authorities frequently viewed large festive gatherings and "unruly" crowds as potential threats to public order and morality (Stallybrass & White, 1986). From the seventeenth century onwards, popular festivities and expressions of collective joy were increasingly pushed out of streets and public spaces (Sevilla-Buitrago, 2015). As rapid urbanisation accelerated during the nineteenth century, authorities intensified their efforts to regulate public morality and discipline growing urban populations.

In Britain, the Fairs Act of 1871 enabled the abolition of hundreds of fairs that were considered economically unnecessary or morally dangerous (Creed, 1995). Authorities increasingly attempted to separate the "economically useful" fair from forms of festivity associated with (Stallybrass & White, 1986). At the same time, public gatherings in fairs, taverns, theatres and music halls became subject to increased policing, surveillance and regulations. Popular entertainment spaces were frequently associated with both physical contagion and moral decay, while the visibility of working-class youth and unchaperoned

women in leisure spaces generated moral panics (Stallybrass & White, 1986). Such attempts to regulate collective gatherings and forms of festivity would continue into the twentieth century through public order legislation.

Contemporary forms of collective gatherings continue many of these dynamics in new forms shaped by neoliberal modes of life and consumption. Although festivals are often promoted as celebrations of public culture and urban life, they are frequently directed toward a more controlled and selective form of publicness. Through ticketing systems, barriers, security measures and controlled access points, many contemporary festivals transform open communal areas into highly regulated sites of consumption and managed circulation (Smith, Osborn, & Quinn, 2022).

As the preceding discussion has shown, any analysis that does not take into account the political and social environment within which festivals and public gatherings are transformed will remain incomplete. We cannot fully understand the significance of the Woodstock Festival without considering the broader political and cultural climate of the period, including the Vietnam War and the rise of the countercultural movement. Similarly, we need to take into account Thatcherism and the social and economic conflicts surrounding the miners' strikes of the 1980s in order to understand the dynamics behind the illegal raves that followed.

Festivals as Liminal, Negotiated, and Semi-Public Spaces

"What is a festival? It's something exceptional, something out of the ordinary ... something that must create a special atmosphere which stems not only from the quality of the art and the production, but from the countryside, the ambience of a city and the traditions ... of a region" (de Rougemont, as cited in Quinn, 2005).

Music festivals and open-air music events are temporarily constructed on spaces which normally serve different purposes, meanings and social functions. They temporarily redefine the spatial environment for communal celebration, entertainment and appreciation of music. They create an altered environment distinct from ordinary life, with a unique sense of community where social constraints are loosened and hierarchies are temporarily suspended. Such environments allow participants to express themselves more freely through emotionally intensified, sometimes euphoric, collective experiences. As such, festivals provide detachment from ordinary life and some aspects of daily social life, creating proximity to an altered state.

Victor Turner defines liminality as a state "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 1969, p. 95). In his book *The Ritual Process*, Turner argues that liminality is not confined to ritual transitions but can also be found in collective experiences that temporarily suspend the ordinary structures of social life (Turner, 1969). In this sense, festivals can be conceptualised as liminal spaces.

The first form of liminality discussed in this paper is symbolic and normative. Some aspects of ordinary social order and behavioural codes are replaced by altered and mutually accepted norms formed and negotiated over time between participants, organisers, the broader public and authorities. Social codes within the festival environment become partially transformed through these collectively negotiated norms.

The spaces transformed for this purpose can be either public or private. However, in both cases, the transformed environment becomes subject to neither purely public nor purely private norms and regulations. Access to the space is generally controlled, yet it remains open to anyone who decides to participate. Although festivals operate as privately regulated environments, this does not grant organisers complete autonomy, as festivals come with their own traditional

embodied practices and norms. Despite being privately regulated, they function as spaces of collective visibility and social interaction associated with the public sphere and provide a favourable environment for democratic forms of expression, which this paper will later return to. The space therefore acquires a legal and social hybridity between public and private space, which can be understood as the second form of liminality.

Designing and constructing a festival site involves the reproduction of space through the interaction of organisers, participants, the broader public and authorities. The reproduction of this liminal and negotiated spatial environment can be further understood through Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space (Lefebvre, 1991). As festivals primarily aim to create "lived experiences", the experiential and symbolic properties of space gain relative importance during the planning process. Festival organisers interpret this primacy through mutually accepted norms. In festival environments, "representational spaces" become increasingly influential within "representations of space". Organisers partially adapt the "conceived space" according to collectively negotiated expectations, embodied practices and symbolic meanings associated with the festival environment. In this sense, the balance within the dialectical relationship between "conceived space" and "representational space" partially shifts towards lived experience.

Modern music festivals, in the form experienced today, were founded decades ago mostly by independent promoters emerging from various musical subcultures and communities. Some began as grassroots organisations seeking to preserve their way of life and freedom of artistic expression, while others took more distinctive forms, such as Hippies and New Age Travellers organising free festivals throughout the year. Although profitability was not disregarded, preserving the subcultures they represented was often their primary concern. This dynamic has historically shifted the production of social space further away from what Henri

Lefebvre conceptualises as “abstract space” towards “differential space” (Lefebvre, 1991). In this sense, festivals create “differential moments” through collective experiences and spontaneous social interactions that partially exceed the planned spatial order, particularly within an anti-capitalist and egalitarian spirit.

However, in recent decades, especially through the acquisition of independent companies by major international corporations, this dynamic has been significantly weakened. There are still a significant number of independent festivals, yet more than 200 major European music festivals were owned by four corporate groups in 2025 (Barreira, 2025). Through commodification by large capital groups, music festivals are increasingly being pulled away from “differential space” towards “abstract space”, which can be observed in the way they are designed, produced, marketed, budgeted and priced. As competition intensifies within this expanding market, promoter companies increasingly shift their efforts towards enhancing the “lived experiences” they can offer in order to increase their market share. However, these experiences are becoming more “centralized, organized, hierarchized, symbolized and programmed to the nth degree” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 59). Thus, “representations of space” increasingly facilitate the manipulation of “representational spaces”.

Even within collectively negotiated norms, festival sites remain heavily planned spaces through ticketed access, zoning, surveillance, sponsorship and rules. Nevertheless, they can still become political by hosting democratic forms of expression, protests, collaborations with NGOs, support for social causes and particular worldviews often struggling against dominant systems. Glastonbury Festival, founded in 1970, remains the largest and most influential music and contemporary arts festival in the world, making it a significant example of these dynamics. Known for its support for social causes and long-term partnerships with NGOs such as Oxfam,

Greenpeace and WaterAid, Glastonbury's 2025 edition became a major site of pro-Palestinian demonstrations (Hajiyianni, 2025), while hosting a large-scale dedicated space addressing refugee issues through artistic interventions associated with Banksy's migrant boat imagery (Wright, 2025). Numerous artists expressed support for Palestine from the stage, while thousands of Palestinian flags and political symbols were visible among participants. The festival also hosted a performance by Kneecap, despite the group being removed from several other festival line-ups due to allegations of support for Hamas (McCambridge, 2025).

As a liminal formation between public and private space, festivals continue to provide forms of democratic publicness through collective engagement and practices of resistance, which can occasionally challenge authority. This occasionally draws intervention from authorities, turning festival space into a site of power struggle. Festival space is therefore controlled yet partially liberating, commodified yet still experiential, surveilled yet capable of producing liminal experiences and capitalist while still carrying the potential for resistance. The festival form therefore contains a certain degree of ambivalence within its core. Festivals can therefore be understood as spaces continuously reproduced through shifting dynamics, subtle tensions, contradictions and ongoing power struggles.

Control and Power Struggle over Festivals in Turkey

The current ruling party, AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - Justice and Development Party) has been increasingly restricting and cancelling musical events, especially festivals. Restrictions on festivals has been a recuring practice more than a decade, cancelling 16 events in the summer of 2022 alone (Gazete Duvar, 2022). Whereas university spring festivals were once a common feature of campus life across Turkey during the 2000s and early 2010s, many universities have either cancelled, restricted or transformed into far more limited events in

recent years. Some of these cancellations are formally justified through the refusal to grant permits on grounds such as security, public order, traffic, and environmental concerns, many of which appear questionable. However, in a number of cases, such justifications are difficult to sustain, for instance, where the festival have been held in fully licensed venues or follow the same format and take place in the same location where they have been organised for years without issue, as was the case with the Zeytinli Rock Festival (NTV, 2022).

Although it is commonly accepted that the AKP falls under the category of an electoral authoritarian regime and is founded on conservative, traditional and Islamic values, which provides some insight into its motivations, it is still worth looking more closely at why it has persistently and systematically targeted the festivals.

Returning to Turner, festivals and similar events can be understood as existing at the margins of, or temporarily outside, the regular structures of social life. As hierarchies and classificatory systems are temporarily suspended, participants enter a state of communitas (Turner, 1969, p. 96) . He argues that communitas is characterised by comradeship, anonymity, egalitarianism, and the temporary absence of status and rank. Such liminal phenomena may be considered “dangerous and anarchical” (Turner, 1969, p. 109) by those responsible for maintaining order. Such environments generate a powerful sense of collective belonging and shared experience, enabling forms of freedom, solidarity and emotional intensity that are otherwise constrained within structured social life.

Drawing on Buber, Turner emphasises the spontaneous, immediate and concrete nature of communitas, as opposed to the norm-governed, institutionalised and abstract nature of social structure (Turner, 1969). In this sense, communitas and liminal phenomena introduce forms of

social experience that may be perceived as destabilising by a autoritarrian government such as the AKP, and therefore in need of restriction or suppression.

Especially in a society where public space and public expression are increasingly restricted, festivals have a distinct meaning. These environments are one of the few realms in which young people can express themselves freely, socialise with large numbers of peers, enjoy anonymity while being out in the open surrounded by masses and be guided primarily by the norms of like-minded individuals.Within these spaces, they can act and dress as they wish, become intoxicated, dance exuberantly, sing out loud, scream and shout collectively and engage in flirtatious interaction. At the same time, they remain largely free from familial, societal and authoritative pressures, fostering a sense of belonging to a broader, even global, community and alternative sociality, precisely the kind of experience that the AKP seeks to constrain.

The AKP appears to regard itself as having established political hegemony but not yet cultural hegemony. This has been openly stated by the party's leader and the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (AK Parti, 2020) and also by one of the symbolic figures of the regime in recent years, Fahrettin Altun, then Head of Communications "Your political hegemony has ended; your cultural hegemony will end as well" (Yeni Şafak, 2023).

Festival Attendance and Persistence as Everyday Resistance

As Foucault famously argued, "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). This observation is equally relevant to the power struggles surrounding festivals. Since this paper began with the restrictions imposed on festivals, these interventions should not be understood solely as acts of regulation, but also as processes that generate new forms of adaptation, negotiation and resistance.

A remark made by Nigerian photographer Misan Harriman in a social media interview captures this broader understanding of resistance: “Resistance right now is the culture. Resistance right now is everything from comedy, joy, reading a history book […] and building community” (Subway Takes, 2025). While expressed in a different context, this broader conception of resistance resonates with James Scott’s theories of everyday resistance.

Scott argues that the definition of what is political needs to be expanded and that the threshold for what counts as resistance should be lowered. Actions that may appear trivial often carry important meanings within ongoing relations of power (as cited in O'Brien, 2026). Drawing on Hobsbawm, O'Brien (2026) highlights that history is shaped not only by major confrontations with power, but also by ordinary everyday practices through which people negotiate relations of power and sustain alternative ways of life.

With this perspective this paper argues that attending festivals, experiencing communitas, insisting on liminal spaces and practices may be considered as a form of resistance. The sense of comradeship and egalitarianism that such liminal experiences provide can itself be understood as a form of everyday resistance, resisting on use of space for our own lived experiences.

Now we will take a close look at one of the most enduring and influential examples of resistance centred on people's right to party on their own terms, which emerged in Britain during the late 1980s.

Illegal Raves as Counter-Spatial Practice example

Even at first glance, illegal raves in the UK between 1988 and 1994 can be read as a struggle between authorities and participants over the use of spaces such as vacant clubs, derelict warehouses, disused factories, the commons, and open countryside for purposes such as collective partying. While examining the spatial and power struggles surrounding these spaces, it

is necessary to consider the social dynamics that gave rise to this phenomenon in the UK. Doing so will also help us understand some of its lasting effects on contemporary festivals and forms of protest.

As Jeremy Deller argues in his documentary *Everybody in the Place: An Incomplete History of Britain 1984–1992* (2018), when electronic music started to emerge in UK, but instead of going to London, it found fertile ground in communities in Manchester. Venues such as the Hacienda helped introduce house and electronic music to wider audiences, with ecstasy use intensifying feelings of unity and togetherness, accelerating the spread of the emerging rave culture. The music gained popularity among the children of working-class families. This was all happening after the year-long miners' strike, in which approximately 142,000 miners participated (Bourne et al., 2025). Including their families, over half a million people were affected. The strike caused deep divisions within mining communities and British society more broadly, while also generating solidarity through food banks, fundraising initiatives and protests. These developments were taking place during the UK's transition towards neoliberal economic policies under Margaret Thatcher, whose statement that "There is no such thing as society" (Thatcher, 1987) came to symbolise, for many critics, the individualistic values being imposed on society. Against this backdrop of economic restructuring and social fragmentation, many young people were searching for new forms of unity and community. As demand rapidly outgrew licensed venues, illegal parties began to emerge, quickly attracting thousands of people and developing into a large-scale movement.

The M25 ring road around London, roughly marking the boundary between the city and its suburbs, became a gateway to these parties. Every week, dozens of events were advertised, with locations revealed only at the last moment. The police attempted to take every precaution to

prevent these events from taking place, but promoters continuously found ways to circumvent their efforts. They exploited legal loopholes, such as the police practice of not raiding gatherings of more than 2,000 people for fear of provoking a riot. As a result, organisers were effectively in a race to get 2,000 people into a venue before the police arrived. Many of these events took place in disused warehouses, abandoned industrial sites and other vacant spaces that had been left behind by economic restructuring and deindustrialization. In this sense, the rave movement was not only about music but also about the use of space. A continuous struggle was taking place between authorities and participants over how these neglected spaces should be used, who had the right to occupy them, and under what conditions people were allowed to gather and enjoy themselves collectively. The government, seeing that the Public Order Act 1986 had not been sufficient to stop the rapidly growing rave scene, introduced the Graham Bright Bill in 1990, which increased penalties for organising unlicensed events to fines of up to £20,000 and prison sentences of up to six months. However, this too failed to stop the ravers (Deller, 2018).

On the other hand, another movement had been developing for several decades, taking its roots from the hippie movement of the 1960s. With rising unemployment and economic depression associated with Thatcherism, more people were joining the nomadic convoys, living in buses and trailers, seeking to create an alternative way of life while partly making a living by travelling between, organising and trading at free festivals. The English countryside has long been a site of contestation over access, ownership and use, from the enclosure of common lands to more contemporary struggles over public space. During this period, similar struggles emerged in the actions of hunt saboteurs, road protesters occupying land, and the women of Greenham Common establishing a protest camp at a military site (Deller, 2028).

As illustrated in the documentary *Free Party: A Folk History* (Trinder, 2026), in the context of these nomadic convoys, referred to as “New Age Travellers”, this struggle often revolved around their right to use the commons, with free festivals becoming one of the most visible expressions of this conflict. Travellers argued that they had as much right to use these spaces as local residents, who traditionally used them collectively for grazing, recreation and other communal purposes.

In the 1970s, groups following an annual cycle of free festivals organised the Windsor Free Festival between 1972 and 1974. Its final edition attracted an estimated 60,000 people before being banned and raided by police, resulting in numerous arrests and more than 200 allegations of police brutality. The incident can be seen as one of the first major confrontations between the British state and the free festival movement (Dearling, n.d.).

These groups continued to gather at the Stonehenge Free Festival between 1974 and 1984 (Trinder, 2026). Following complaints after the 1984 festival, a court injunction prevented it from taking place again. Attempts by Travellers to reach the site in 1985 led to the violent confrontation known as the Battle of the Beanfield, which left dozens injured, resulted in 537 arrests and contributed to the introduction of the Public Order Act 1986 (Guardian, 2005).

Glastonbury Festival, introduced at the beginning of this paper, had allocated a space called the “Travellers Field” adjacent to its main ticketed site for these groups, many of whom helped build stages, stalls and festival infrastructure. After a brief encounter at the Treworgey Tree Fayre in 1989, the following year’s Travellers Field at Glastonbury became a major turning point, as illegal raver collectives arrived with their sound systems and the two movements came together (Lynskey, 2024). Although some Travellers initially viewed the new music with

scepticism, the groups soon became increasingly intertwined and frequently came together at raves and festivals over the following two years (Trinder, 2026).

The last and most significant of these gatherings was the Castlemorton Common Festival in May 1992, lasting for a week and which became one of the largest events of its kind since the Stonehenge Free Festival (Lynskey, 2024).The event “inspired questions in Parliament, made the front page of every newspaper in England and incited nationwide panic” (Reynolds, 2012, p. 139). Thirteen members of one of the organising collectives, Spiral Tribe, were charged and put on trial for public nuisance, “a law not used for over 100 years” (Trinder, 2026, 1:15:15). Altough all defendants were acquitted by a jury, the case contributed to the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, under which gatherings of twenty or more people listening to music “characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats” could be ordered to disperse by the police, with failure to comply constituting a criminal offence. The Act effectively brought to an end the era of large-scale free festivals on the commons and illegal raves, marking the culmination of a decade-long struggle over the use of derelict and vacant spaces, common land and collective gatherings (BBC, 2017).

The introduction of the Criminal Justice Bill did not go unchallenged. Because the legislation targeted not only ravers and Travellers but also squatters, road protesters and hunt saboteurs, it brought together groups that had previously separate motivations and struggles. Large demonstrations were organised against the Bill, including a protest in Hyde Park in July 1994 that brought together tens of thousands of participants, transforming opposition to the legislation into a broader struggle over protest, trespass and the use of space. Although the Bill was eventually passed, the alliances, networks and forms of direct action that emerged during this period would later contribute to movements such as Reclaim the Streets. As one of the

organizers, Camilla Berens describes it, while free festivals had largely come to an end, they were replaced by “urban festivals of resistance” in city centres. In this sense, some of the energies, tactics and concerns that had driven free festivals and illegal raves continued to find new expressions in struggles over urban space, later influencing Reclaim the Streets movement (Lynskey, 2024).

Conclusion

This centuries-long struggle surrounding festivals can be read as a struggle over people’s right to gather, socialise, celebrate and experience collective forms of enjoyment. However, reducing the issue to entertainment alone would overlook its spatial dimension. Festivals are often inseparable from the places in which they occur and are generally associated with the spaces in which they are held, whether a particular city or town, a coastline, a forest, a desert landscape or a network of indoor venues spread across an urban area. The spatial setting often becomes one of the defining characteristics of a festival and a significant source of its meaning. Such gatherings also require significant amounts of space. For this reason, attempts by authorities to regulate, restrict or suppress festivals have frequently operated through the regulation and allocation of space itself. In this sense, the struggle surrounding festivals is also a struggle over how space is used, by whom, and for what purposes.

As argued throughout this paper, festivals are liminal environments in which ordinary norms and forms of social interaction are partially suspended and replaced by alternative, collectively negotiated practices. At the same time, festival spaces occupy an ambiguous position between public and private space. Although access is regulated and festivals are often privately organised, organisers cannot arbitrarily determine the rules governing these spaces independently of the traditions, expectations and collectively negotiated norms that have developed around

them over time. Festivals are also important spaces for self-expression, public visibility and democratic expression. It is precisely this normative and spatial liminality that makes festivals recurring sites of negotiation, contestation and struggle over how space should be used and what forms of social life it should accommodate.

As some of the examples discussed in this paper have shown, these struggles have also provided participants with important experiences in collective action and protest. political mobilisation and contestation.

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