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Understanding the Value of Events for families, and the Impact upon their Quality of Life  
(QOL)

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*Introduction*

Drawing on previous conceptual and empirical research (Jepson & Stadler, in press) this chapter explores the contemporary issue of Quality of Life (QOL) and opens critical discourse to ascertain how festival and event attendance could potentially improve QOL for families, individuals and communities. The research presented here clearly has overlap with many other areas of investigation such as; leisure provision, constraints and participation levels (see Hinch et al 2005), or designing events to enhance social interaction (see Nordvall et al, 2014). Our focus here though is upon family orientated festivals and events. Our discussions of value are set in the context of what events mean to families and the potential family socialisation value they could gain from attending them which in turn has the potential to enhance a family's overall QOL.

Our chapter begins with a review of literature which investigates and defines festival studies, the role of children within families, quality of life research, and individual and family quality of life, in order to provide empirical and conceptual context to understanding the relationship between QOL, festivals and events. Following this discussion our chapter explores current methods being used to capture and analyse empirical data in respect of QOL. We use our research methods (Jepson & Stadler, in press) to demonstrate how QOL research is carried out in distinct stages. The subsequent section then presents analysis under the frame conditions of *time & space, money/wealth, and rest, health & happiness* which impact upon QOL and event attendance. The final section of our chapter draws conclusions from our current research in the area of QOL, it examines the gap between event research and praxis,

and discusses the key conditions needed when families visit events - such as the potential for social bonding, belonging and attachment to place.

### *Festival Studies*

As a field of academic inquiry festival studies are deeply rooted and established within cultural anthropology and sociological fields of study, connected by a number of seminal works. Van Gennep (1909) discovered that the nature of ritual ceremonies accompanying the landmarks of human life was universal apart from the detail which varied from one culture to another. Turner (1969, 1974, and 1984) documented the ritualistic liminal psychology associated with cultural festivals, events and rites of passage. Geertz (1973) theorised the role of rituals in social change and made us aware of the potential for conflicting views in society to be played out in the dramas created for ritualistic events and festivals. Abrahams (1982, 1987) in his research discussed the symbolic meaning and importance of events and their multi-faceted components in a consumer driven society. Falassi's (1987) book 'Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival' is thought to be the most cited literature in festival studies, either to set context and define or to seek to understand a festival's unique phases, patterns of behaviour, morphology, or its various rites of valorisation, conspicuous display, exchange, consumption, and rites of competition. Manning's (1983) research was the first to explore the construction of festivals and the connections between festival development and its authenticity or perceived authenticity. The following discussions are used to contextualise individual and family QOL in the extant festival studies literature. Currently there is a lack of understanding on the impact and value festivals can have on upon family QOL. The vast majority of research has focused primarily upon an individual's QOL. Our research demonstrates that there is a need for a stronger focus on families, friends, or groups of people within communities to better understand value creation and QOL. Therefore our research aims to investigate and analyse the impact of festival and event attendance upon family QOL by highlighting the social values created through family event attendance.

### *The Role of Children within Families*

The role of children within the family has increased in importance over the last decades; this has been recognised since the mid-to-late 1980's with a steady increase in family-centred service delivery. This delivery is characterised by family choices, a family strengths perspective and further recognition of the family as a support unit to all members (Poston et al, 2003). Research now shows that a family day out is more than just about satisfying adults, and that children's satisfaction comes above the needs of parents. For example a Mintel Marketing Intelligence report (2004) revealed that from the top five enjoyment factors associated with going on a family holiday over 70% of respondents wanted to engage in activities that their children would enjoy as opposed to more traditional antecedents such as weather and relaxation. Robinson (2008) adds to this debate by summarising that happy and satisfied children should result in happy and satisfied parents, guardians or carers. Further research also by Mintel (2005) reveals that children like spending time with their families (85% of 7 year olds), although as one might expect this figure falls as children mature and seek to become more independent (71% of 14 year olds). Robinson (2008) further adds to this debate by stating that parents, guardians or carers gain happiness and satisfaction from watching their children have fun and learn new things especially if this aids their intellectual, physical or emotional development. Poria et al's (2003) research has similar findings and suggests that the increase in visits to stately homes and museums has a lot to do with the types of experience and educational re-enactments and activities which they promote. Light's (1996) research also noted that historical and cultural heritage sites lose out on attracting visitors due in part to a lack of practical experiences and facilities offered to children. They concluded that although many sites appeared to be family friendly there are issues surrounding what exactly this means and what is or should be included on site. Successful family attractions create memorable experiences and appeal to all age ranges, Robinson (2008) cites 'Thomas Land' (within Drayton Manor Park and Zoo) as a prime example which is based around the characters from the successful television series Thomas the Tank Engine. Its success is a model combining nostalgic memories for parents and present day memories and association for children. This suggests that if the right environment is created for families then rewarding and enriching educational and cultural experiences are realised through parents and children. It can be concluded that family bonding and social cohesion are powerful leisure motivators; and that festivals and events can provide a platform for this to happen. Earlier research by Uysal et al (1993) began to show that events can encourage

family togetherness. This was reinforced by Crompton & McKay (1997), who found that the need for interaction and socialisation within the family is often inhibited by the independent actions of individuals in the home environment which may be accompanied by a desire for culture enrichment outside the normal environment. Family togetherness, socialisation, and resultant bonding can therefore be seen as the most important motivational influence for families attending festivals and events.

### *An Introduction to Quality of Life Research*

The search for QOL has gained momentum and become a growing concern for individuals, families, communities and governments as a result of a rapidly changing world and a desire to find, and sustain satisfaction, happiness and belief in the future (Eckersley, 1999; Mercer, 1999; Lloyd & Auld, 2002). Defining QOL is a hugely complicated task as it relates directly to a personal state of mind and all those factors which shape individual and group well-being (Rapley, 2003). The term well-being or 'bien-être' of French origins can be traced back to the 16th century: agréable procurée par la satisfaction des besoins du corps et ceux de l'esprit. ("an agreeable sensation procured from satisfying the needs of the body and those of the mind"). (Pasquier, 1555, p. 301). QOL research has been approached from various academic fields: economics (Fox, 1974); marketing (Sirgy et al, 1982; Sirgy et al, 1985; Sirgy, 1986); population ecology and environment (Bubloz et al, 1980; Murrell & Norris, 1983); public health (Murrell, 1973; Kimmel, 1975; Siegel et al, 1978; Murrell et al, 1982; Bell et al, 1983; Nguyen et al, 1983) and community psychology (Murrell, 1973; Hirsch, 1980; Mitchell et al, 1981; Riger & Lavrakas, 1981). Rapley (2003, p. 27) summarises how the term QOL has been used in the literature in many different ways: *Happiness; life-satisfaction; well-being; self-actualization; freedom from want; objective functioning; 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being not merely the absence of disease' (WHO, 1997: 1); balance, equilibrium or 'true bliss' (Kant, 1978: 185); prosperity; fulfilment; low unemployment; psychological well-being; high GDP; the good life; enjoyment; democratic liberalism; the examined life (pace Socrates); a full and meaningful existence (cf Sheldon, 2000).*

A quality of life theory was first developed by Sirgy (1986) from Abraham Maslow's (1954) human developmental perspective model. Maslow (ibid) concluded that developed societies involve members who are mostly preoccupied in satisfying higher-order needs (social, esteem, and self-actualization needs), whereas less-developed societies involve members who are mostly preoccupied in satisfying lower-order needs (biological and safety-related needs). Sirgy (1986) recognised that QOL could also be defined in terms of the hierarchical need satisfaction level of most of the members within a society. Sirgy (ibid) concluded that the higher the needs satisfaction of the majority in a given society the greater the QOL of that society. From a festival studies perspective this is an important relationship as QOL goals could then be defined as; *the satisfaction of human and developmental needs in a community or society* (Sirgy, 1986, p. 331).

The discussion of hierarchical dimensions in both Maslow's (1954) and Sirgy's (1986) models, however, has its limitations. A major discussion point in relation to defining QOL is that it is inherently subjective as individuals assess themselves psychologically against multiple life domains and in doing so identify and prioritise the aspects of their life they feel are important for social and cultural well-being. Life domains are also value laden and do not necessarily fit into a hierarchical structure, such as education, family, health, job, friends, and relationships which relate to an individual's psychological space, where memories related to specific kinds of experiences and feelings are stored (Andrews & Withey 1976; Campbell et al, 1976; Day 1978, 1987; Diener 1984; Rapley, 2003). More recent studies in QOL particularly within QOL marketing (Lee et al, 2002) have relied on the development of satisfaction hierarchy models to explain the relationship between consumer well-being and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is defined as a reflection of a person's considered evaluations of life or stages within it (Campbell et al, 1976; Michalos, 1980; Diener et al, 1985).

### *Defining Individual and Family Quality of Life*

One of the first studies on Family QOL by Kuyken (1995) was undertaken on behalf of The World Health Organisation (WHO). The project set out to develop an international QOL

assessment and in doing so produced multi-dimensional profiles of families across six main and 24 sub-domains of QOL. Kuyken (1995, p. 1405) defined QOL as an: *Individual's perception of their position in life in the context of culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns*. The identified six domains of QOL include: physical domain, psychological domain, level of independence, social relationships, environment, and spirituality/religion/personal beliefs (Kuyken, 1995). Rapley (2003, p. 50) highlights that the WHOQOL definition benefits from comprehensiveness and efforts to relate the idea to cultural, social and environmental contexts and to local value systems. While these QOL domains and the original definition are still used, a variety of theoretical and conceptual approaches have since been applied to the concept of QOL. Most of them, however, emphasise the importance of social relationships (and personal relationships in particular), social values, as well as opportunities to participate in recreation/leisure in one way or another (Rapley, 2003). In relation to festival and event studies researchers have thus far mainly focused on the individual's experience of QOL (see for example, Small et al., 2005; Liburd & Hergesell, 2009; Packer & Ballantyne, 2010; O'Shea & Leime, 2012). Family QOL, considers all family members in terms of what it takes for them to have a good life and their "aggregated" perspective (Poston et al., 2003, p. 139). Agate et al (2009) found that it is not necessarily the amount of time that families spend together engaging in leisure activities, but how meaningful they are to individual family members and the family as a whole. Special events, for example, can provide such out-of-the-ordinary experiences which bring the family together in different and new ways. In their study of 50 parents/guardians with children in Birmingham, Yorkshire and London, Foster & Robinson (2010) identified that children are crucial in the event decision-making process of families and parents are willing to compromise if the event is satisfying for the child(ren). 'Family togetherness' was thereby found to be the most important motivational factor as well as having an impact on family QOL. Their study is, however, limited to motivational factors for attending events as a family and does not apply the broader concept of family QOL.

More recent studies in this area such as Tayler et al (2006) looked at how a festival could help build relationships between parents and children to enrich a child's creativity. Packer & Ballantyne's (2010) research employed positive psychology theories to explore the impact of music festival attendance on young people's psychological and social well-being. Positive

psychology according to Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) seeks to understand and build upon those factors which can improve the QOL and enable individuals, communities and societies to thrive rather than just survive. Packer & Ballantyne's (2010) study offers a good insight into building theoretical frameworks to understand how festivals can impact on an individual's well-being. Their adapted framework utilised Laiho's (2004) psychological functions of music in adolescence, namely interpersonal relationships, identity, agency, and emotional field. Packer & Ballantyne's (ibid) framework also included psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), subjective well-being (Keyes et al, 2002), and social well-being (Keyes, 1998). They found that the festival experience tended to begin months before people attended, and that the experience of attendance enabled a transitory state of subjective well-being which became a part of and strengthened a person's identity through strong emotional connections with music, people and place. Packer & Ballantyne's (2010) study found that feeling part of the festival performances was essential as this created a sense of belonging and enabled social integration during and beyond the event. Another interesting aspect of their research was the discovery that those who attended a festival every couple of years (rather than annually) reported a greater level of well-being outcomes than those who attended less or more frequently. Liburd & Hergesell (2008) conducted a preliminary study on the Wadden Sea Festival in Denmark to try to ascertain how a cultural event might influence individual participant's QOL. This study gave preliminary findings in regards to economic growth and tourism, but also went on to suggest that differentiation needs to take place between subjective definitions of QOL (Andereck et al, 2007) and those concerned with life satisfaction (i.e. feelings of contentment or fulfilment with ones experiences in the world). This should be taken forward in future studies; and psychological definitions which refer to the actualization of one's self potential (Liburd & Hergesell, 2008).

Foster & Robinson's (2010) paper was the first to explore families in the context of events; they did so by providing analysis of motivational factors that influence attendance. Foster & Robinson's (ibid) study provides useful context as it explored the role and importance of children as a key determinant in decision making regarding the type of events which were attended. The study (ibid) also identifies the key motivations for festival and event attendance as socialisation and family togetherness which were previously identified in numerous other studies (Uysal et al., 1993; Mohr et al., 1993; Backman et al., 1995; Scott, 1996; Schneider &

Backman, 1996; Formica & Uysal, 1996, 1998; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Faulkner et al, 1999; Lee, 2000; Tomljenovic et al, 2001; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Lee et al, 2004; Bowen & Daniels, 2005). Foster & Robinson (2010) identified children as the prime factors in deciding which type of festivals and events to visit and that their satisfaction comes ahead of that of parent's, guardian's or carer's. It could be argued that studies by Uysal et al (1993), Crompton & McKay (1997), Packer & Ballantyne (2010), Tayler (2006) and Foster & Robinson (2010) give the closest connection to research on the value of festival and event attendance upon family QOL. However no research within event or festival studies has investigated how family togetherness, socialisation and bonding could create social values and impact upon a family's QOL. Therefore one could suggest that another research domain is emerging on 'Family Values and Impact discourse'.

#### *Appropriate methods to investigate the impact of events upon family QOL*

Based on the review of existing literature, significant gaps and a lack of understanding in regards the impact of festivals and events on QOL have been identified. The first phase of our research adapts theoretical perspectives (Ragheb & Tate, 1993; Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Poston et al, 2003; Packer & Ballantyne, 2010), which are used to form discussion themes and questions within family focus groups (Please refer to Appendix 1. for further details). Critical realism (Collier, 1994) has been identified as the most appropriate research philosophy for this study as it will test theories of QOL but assumes that relationships are present between variables and facts. Fairclough (2003) gives further justification for this approach when he concludes that social events contain social practices that exist within social structures, which are all part of reality.

The research project is the first of its kind and hence a mixed methodological approach is employed. Due to the complexities and diversities of local communities, a singular research methodology would not fully explain or provide accurate conclusions on how community festivals and events impact upon an individual's or family's QOL. The research project therefore consists of three stages (see Figure 1): phase one includes an initial qualitative exploration of individual and family QOL domains through focus group discussions with

families in Hertfordshire, UK. Findings from this research phase are presented below and will also feed into phase two: semi-structured interviews with families' pre- and post-event attendance. The third and final stage will bring together findings from focus groups and semi-structured interviews in order to develop a QOL measurement scale for events and festivals which will test findings on a broader scale. It is important to note that this research project is iterative and ongoing, this chapter presents only the first phase of our research.

<Insert Figure 1. Here>

### *Focus groups*

Focus groups can provide a responsive context for people who have not traditionally been encouraged to voice their perspectives on sensitive topics (Krueger, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Our focus groups gathered subjective accounts of personal QOL around the three variables of life satisfaction, happiness and morale as identified by Lloyd & Auld (2002). The focus groups also tested Ragheb & Tate's (1993) theory of frequency of engagement against levels of satisfaction in festivals and events. It is suggested that the outcome of the focus groups is the emergence of major QOL themes and sub themes which after comprehensive analysis will be adapted into semi structured interviews or questionnaires in future studies. This study though is only concerned with the data derived from family focus groups which were conducted in St Albans, and Welwyn Garden City, in the country of Hertfordshire, UK where festivals are an established part of community life. We employed a mixture of snowball sampling, contacting local communities through cultural groups, toddler groups, and social media sites, and by visiting local events in Hertfordshire to recruit families. Our focus groups consisted of 4 families (with small children aged between 0 and 4 years). At the time of writing three focus groups had taken place between June and October 2015. We used the term family loosely when constructing our focus groups but employed the definition put forward by Poston et al (2003, p. 319). All focus groups were held in a neutral and close by environment (local church halls or community centres) where participants could leave and get home quickly if they needed to. They lasted for 60 minutes in duration. Open-ended

questions were used to encourage discussion without intentionally introducing the chosen theoretical constructs (Please refer to appendix 1).

All participants were made aware of the purpose of the research and completed consent forms before the focus groups took place. Participants were also advised that they could withdraw from the focus group discussions at any time should they feel uncomfortable (nobody withdrew from the groups). Focus groups were audio-recorded (Ipad, and Iphone) digitally but not videoed, they were then later transcribed for thematic analysis. More specifically, they were coded and sorted using NVivo after transcription, in order to identify major and minor QOL themes emerging from the discussions. We then employed the constant comparative method of analysing data to generate categories, subcategories, and codes to interpret patterns and themes, and ensure rigor (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln, 1995). Trustworthiness in this study was achieved through incorporating the concepts of credibility, transferability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln, 1995; Rapley, 2003). Finally we employed a second phase of ‘thematic data analysis’ (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) to further understand the importance of the relationship between festivals, families and social values which reaffirmed our key themes and frame conditions to achieve QOL.

### *Findings and Discussion*

Our findings presented here suggest three interconnected themes as important conditions for family QOL: time & space; money/wealth, and rest, health & happiness (see Figure 2). We suggest that in order to achieve family QOL through festival attendance, these three conditions need to be positive, and also taken into consideration by event organisers and stakeholders. The following sections explore and discuss our qualitative data framed by the thematic conditions mentioned above. Findings are presented here through anonymised and encoded responses from family members across two focus groups (*Focus Group 1. / FG.1; respondents A -D, and Focus group 2. / FG.2; respondents E – F*).

<Insert Figure 2. Here>

### *Time and Space*

Participants in our focus group discussions highlighted time as a key element of QOL and linked this clearly to personal and family health and well-being. More specifically, there was a perception of rushed behavioural practices; parents identified that there was little down time and that events and activities were difficult to attend due to the extended preparation to get from home to the event location. According to our participants, in order to achieve socialisation and family bonding, time often needs to be strategized to long term dates rather than being able to react quickly, unless events are local and happened upon within the normal day. Respondents also identified that there is a clear trade-off between domestic responsibilities and attending events together to create opportunities for socialisation. Usyal et al (1993) and Crompton & McKay (1997) emphasised the need for interaction and socialisation within the family which can be achieved through event participation, however, our focus group participants found this to be difficult to achieve when time is limited or needs to be spent on other domestic responsibilities.

Similarly, Harrington (2015) discussed the need for parents to bond with their children during family leisure experiences yet she doesn't make reference to the amount of time needed to ensure this is successful. Participants within our focus groups all agreed that time is a crucial element, but in order for children and parents to bond with each other and create social value and family happiness, time and space need to be brought together effectively. Semi-permanent event spaces can be created in order for socialising activities and family bonding to be achieved. However, finding activities that all the children can take part in sometimes divide the family rather than bring them together, which presents a clear challenge to event producers constructing and utilising temporary space:

*F: Sometimes on the weekend we're finding now that me and my husband, we'll split up. Like my husband will take him out, while I stay at home and take care of the baby. That works, but then you're not actually spending any family time together. And also you're missing out. Because he'll take them to football lessons, and I don't really know what's happening at those.*

Shaw (1997) and McCabe (2015) identified similar difficulties and issues for families spending time together when different leisure activities mean different things to members of the family. While all our participants considered time as an important element of enjoying experiences together as a family, the meanings and value attached to specific family activities experienced within specific spaces can be different for individual family members, which often leads to conflict or constraints.

### *Money / Wealth*

Monetary wealth was identified within our focus groups as another key element which improved their family's QOL. This conforms to Rapley's (2003) definition of QOL which highlights the need for opportunities to participate in recreation or leisure, and furthermore Sheldon's (2003) definition highlighting the need for prosperity and high GDP in order to participate. Many participants discussed festivals and events in relation to their size and categorised events as 'big and small events', where 'big and more expensive events' were usually considered a treat and not a regular occurrence. Participants also agreed that they would rather pay an up front entrance fee and then everything within the event is included in the admission price.

FG.1 Do ticket prices influence your decision to attend different types of festivals and events?

*A: I wouldn't necessarily say that if you pay more for a festival, you'll get a better time.*

*B+C+D: No, no, not at all.*

*B: Actually sometimes you get a better time when you pay less!*

*A: And it doesn't have to be loads of stuff either. It's just... having a theme and sticking to it! Sometimes there's so much going on, that you're quite overwhelmed and the kids get a bit confused.*

The focus groups revealed that admission price was not a defining factor in regards quality of experience and family happiness during the event visit, and that actually less stimulation within the event environment enabled greater family bonding and socialisation to take place. Particularly with ‘big events’, participants expressed concerns in regards to the perceptual quality gap and whether the event would be over commercialised. A clear message of ‘less is more’ was coming through in terms of event organisers providing a space for families to engage in meaningful experiences that enhance socialising and bonding and thus reemphasising values within the family unit as well as with other families and members of the community.

### *Rest, Health & Happiness*

A third element contributing to a family’s overall QOL as identified by our focus group participants was rest, health and individual and family happiness. Respondents further highlighted that both dimensions also need to be considered in relation to the family’s attachment to their local community, an element discussed below as ‘environmental happiness’, which in turn enhances social value.

*Individual happiness*; was defined by the family focus groups as making time for oneself and engaging in individual activities. These contribute to their individual QOL, such as,

F: *locking the door and having a shower [laughs]!*

E: *... or drinking coffee while it’s still hot.*

F: *... just head space and getting out of the house occasionally.*

E: *Well I find, going food shopping on my own is a treat! I know that sounds really silly, but wandering down the aisle calmly... without anyone going, “I want this, I want that... I need a wee!”*

Secondly, *family happiness* was discussed along many different dimensions: the most important one being individual happiness in the sense that, ‘if I’m not happy as an individual, my family won’t be happy either’. The focus groups also revealed a clear relationship between physical health and happiness (‘healthy family = happy family’), with many participants describing a state of paralysis if members of the family suffered from illness as a result of the family being at full stretch to look after another. However, ‘happy children’ was the single most important factor contributing to family happiness overall. This fits well with the early definitions of QOL; ‘*a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being not merely the absence of disease*’ (WHO, 1997: 1), and similarly Sheldon (2003) who identifies psychological well-being as a major component of QOL.

Focus groups revealed that festivals and events can act as a unique platform for families to share experiences and generate very powerful bonding memories. These in turn enhanced individual (both children’s and parents’) happiness as well as overall family happiness. According to our participants, they last for a week or longer – an interesting observation which also links to the previously discussed importance of ‘time’ as a frame condition for QOL. Examples for these ‘memorable’ bonding experiences include,

*F: It’s usually something totally random. Like at the Farmers Market last weekend, there was the jazz band and they were playing. The toddlers... I was just standing there waiting for my husband, but the toddlers were absolutely fixated and that’s just where I knew that was one of those magic moments. But it’s usually something completely random, it’s not the main point of the event.*

*E: I’d say for us, it really depends on how the event goes and how the day goes. But especially the church [events], because there’s more adults, and with the church events, there’s a lot of volunteers. The volunteers help look after our children, so there’s more hands and then we relax more and it’s a really nice day out. But there are days where you don’t really know what to expect until you get there and that can be quite stressful, because you don’t know where you’re heading, where the facilities are. But when it works, it’s a lovely day and you do catch up. You spend*

*quality time, as you said, rather than arguing about the bins and what's for dinner and who's putting them to bed...?*

The above discussed examples of both individual and family happiness are closely related to the third element of happiness, *environmental happiness*, in the sense that the right facilities and the creation of a perceived safe 'space' need to be in place in order to be able to relax and 'be happy' as a family. Participants further discussed the importance of a positive engagement with their local community which acts as another bonding agent between individuals, families and events, and enhances social values. They expressed this in terms of event activities that showcase the local community, local food, or other local themes, and therefore provide a sense of place (see Derrett, 2003) for all members of the family. In turn, these 'simple things' contribute to the family's overall happiness and QOL. It should be understood though that the social cultural values of community festivals will only be widely understood if the event planning process has engaged local communities and been inclusive to include all communities within the area (see Jepson & Clarke, 2005, 2013, 2014; Jepson et al, 2008; Jepson, 2009; Clarke & Jepson, 2011; Jepson et al, 2013; Stadler, 2013; Ragsdell & Jepson, 2014).

### *Conclusions*

This chapter has demonstrated that there are very real practical benefits associated with understanding social values that are created or reinforced through attending events and in particular to local governments, event organisers, and families. Event organisers and other stakeholders such as local governments through a greater understanding of social values, themes and frame conditions of QOL would be better placed to tailor event programmes to families' specific needs and expectations, which will ensure families attend events on a regular basis, and hence feel a stronger sense of belonging and pride for their local community. Through creating safe spaces and affordable events with a focus on local themes, families can engage in activities that are meaningful to all members of the family and hence enhance their overall event experience. Families would also benefit from understanding the frame conditions of QOL which enable or restrict their ability to attend events; from this an

appreciation as to how events can foster social bonding, belonging, attachment to place and create happiness in the family through the creation of positive memories and values.

This chapter has presented phase one of our research. It has concentrated on festival and event consumption by families; in particular families with young children. Following detailed focus group analysis a number of important themes and frame conditions (see *Figure 2.*) have emerged which demonstrate the creation of social values and the potential for QOL benefits which families can gain from event attendance. We remain reflexive about this research and have no doubt that QOL could be analysed from other event stakeholder perspectives such as the event producers themselves, local governments and other major stakeholders.

The chapter is unique in that it has begun to unravel some of the complexity surrounding QOL and to contextualise these within festival and event settings where the major motivation for attendance is documented as: socialisation; family togetherness, or spending time with family and friends. It seemed a natural progression to begin to investigate the social values that events create and the potential they have to enhance a families QOL. Due to the complexities of research within QOL domains and events, we see this research as ongoing. Especially as thus far research has been concentrated upon an individual's QOL with very limited focus on understanding families and groups and how they experience, understand, and create value through event attendance. Festivals and events are value driven and as such values are identified and consumed. This is particularly significant to families who seek to reinforce positive social values and relationships between their members for the good of the family unit. The next phases of this research will include; collecting further data sets so that we may measure and understand the meaning of social values which families associate with attendance at festivals and events. And following this a framework to measure and enhance family QOL in events can then be developed.

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