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Residents' Perception of the Social and Cultural Impacts of a Public Music Festival in Catalonia

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ABSTRACT

Many authors recognize that events, besides generating economic impacts, also contribute to social and cultural development, for example by creating and communicating social values and promoting social sharing, strengthening local identity and culture and/or promoting a sense of pride and belonging to a community. This study analyses the perception that residents of the city of Vic (a medium-sized city in the interior of the region of Catalonia, Spain) have developed about the Mercat de Música Viva de Vic (MMVV); an international music festival organized annually by public institutions for the past 27 years. From the results of a factor analysis the paper demonstrates how this event is valued for the positive economic impacts generated, but in particular, for other impacts that have favored the social and cultural development of the region, while negative impacts are also recognized.

Keywords: Social Impacts; Cultural Impacts; Residents' Perception; Music Festivals; Public Institutions

Muchos autores reconocen que los eventos además de generar impactos económicos también contribuyen al desarrollo social y cultural como por ejemplo creando y comunicando valores sociales y potenciando el intercambio social, fortaleciendo la identidad y cultura local o fomentando el sentimiento de orgullo y pertenencia a una comunidad. Este estudio se centra en el análisis de la percepción que los residentes de la ciudad de Vic (una ciudad mediana situada en el interior de la región de Cataluña (España) han desarrollado sobre el Mercat de Música Viva de Vic (MMVV), un festival

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musical internacional organizado anualmente y de manera continua por instituciones públicas desde hace 27 años. A partir de los resultados obtenidos en un análisis factorial se demuestra cómo este evento es valorado por los impactos económicos positivos que genera pero también, y muy especialmente, por otros impactos que han favorecido el desarrollo social y cultural de la región, al mismo tiempo que se reconocen impactos negativos.

Keywords: Impactos Sociales; Impactos Culturales; Percepción de los Residentes; Festivales Musicales; Instituciones Públicas

Introduction

Events, as exponents of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), have been turned into or have been created as tourism products, mainly due to the economic benefits they generate (Burgan & Mules, 1992; Chhabra, Sills, & Rea, 2002; Daniels, Norman, & Henry, 2004; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000; Gazel & Schwer, 1997; Gelan, 2003; McCartney, 2005). Public and private institutions have used these economic benefits to justify their investment in and support for the development of event tourism. Finkel (2006), however, has pointed out that this economic pressure has led some events, such as cultural festivals, to ignore or push into the background the events' other benefits or intrinsic aims, for example, cultural outreach, education or even profits for the community. In other words, aims that would be a central part of any event organized through public institutions using public resources.

In fact, the assessment of the economic impacts of such events has been one of the most widely treated subjects in event and tourism literature. While the importance of the assessment's effectiveness is recognized in the literature, what exactly this assessment should be measuring, and how, is not quite so clear (O'Sullivan, Pickernella, & Senyardb, 2009). Despite the large number of works published on this topic, the diversity of methodologies and lack of consistency (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2001) have made it very difficult to compare results across different events (Carlsen, Ali-Knight, & Robertson, 2007). A further limitation is that, historically, in analysing economic impacts, the focus has been largely on post-event activity, thus ignoring the potential value of pre-event analyses. Of the many problems raised by evaluative approaches, one of the most significant is a lack of comparability.

Events, as unique and unrepeatable tourism products, have the capacity to create a real-time space in which people can gather and interact (Getz, 1989). Events have a symbolic component (unique, experiential, even authentic) that turns them into social spaces and, therefore, into platforms capable of influencing social and cultural structures of communities and organizations. Events can create opportunities that contribute to social and cultural development, create and communicate social values and improve social exchange, strengthening a sense of identity or promoting a feeling of pride and belonging to a community (Moscardo, 2007; Small, 2008). Thus, the value of events as social and cultural phenomena resides in their capacity to gather people together and consolidate communities and groups. Regarding festivals, Quinn (2006) notes that: "They have a strong collective dimension and have always functioned as practices from which communities have expressed beliefs, identities and celebrate, confirm or answer in different ways social structures and value systems that unites them" (p. 289).

Events can have a key role in the creation and development of communities, as they boost their identities and link them to places and to other communities or people (Carlsen et al., 2007). De Bres & Davis (2001), for their part, have shown the valuable role events play in strengthening place identity and promoting a sense of pride and a feeling of belonging to a community, which at the same time allows the community and regional identity to be developed and maintained (Richards, 2015). Events connect people with places, with the local culture and identity and with those with whom they

share the space. According to Derret (2003), festivals contribute to the creation of a community identity because they act not only as a tourist magnet but also as the cultural fabric of the place, therefore contributing to the social sustainability of a city.

1. Resident perception and event impact studies

As stated by O'Sullivan, Pickernella & Senyardb (2009), governments have seen events as a tool for strategic community development. However, the approaches and current methodologies used to evaluate their impacts do not allow their true value to be understood. This has created a significant weakness and a need to create new theoretical and methodological frameworks for this. In fact, although local events are supported mainly in light of their sociocultural value, the methodologies used to evaluate them are centred on the measurement of economic outputs (mainly economic impact, as well as volume and profile of visitors) and on process improvement, not on assessing whether these very sociocultural aims have been achieved. In this sense, Getz (2007) proposes that researchers be critical, work within an interdisciplinary framework (theoretical and methodological) and position the studies in wide social, economic and environmental speeches.

Public institutions have begun to recognize that festivals provide more than just economic benefits, partly due to their contributions to identifying the social, cultural and, to a lesser extent, environmental impacts generated by events (Daniels, Backman, & Backman, 2004; Hede, 2007; Jönsson, 2014; Waite, 2003). However, there are recognized difficulties in measuring this type of impact (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). In this context, the triple bottom Line (TBL) approach argues for a balanced approach incorporating economic, social and environmental impacts, which, in spite of the difficulties in applying it to the sector (Fredline, Jago, & Deery, 2003; Hede, Jago, & Deery, 2003), underlines the need for a comprehensive assessment approach that allows events to be studied in all their complexity.

This holistic perspective in event studies is also necessary in order to understand their contribution to sustainability in greater depth. Here we must take into account the concept of an event's sustainability. To expand our knowledge of the total value of events, we have to reconsider their relationship with sustainable development. The study of events and sustainability has moved from the purely ecological standpoint (green events) to include social and economic factors of sustainability, linked to the durability of the event. This framework is linked to new viewpoints like that of Moufakkir & Kelly (2013), who argue that one of sustainability's aims is to induce cultural change, a change of attitude, civic pride, social capital, improved quality of life and health and social cohesion. That is to say, it is a social sustainability (Booth, 2013) defined as the creation of formal and informal processes, systems, structures and relations that actively support the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy and friendly communities, generating a high quality of life. It is in this context that the social and cultural impacts of the events take on new value and a central role. Within this frame of reference, assessment studies have paid little attention to residents' perception of the impacts of events. New proposals to study event impacts

in all their complexity – for example, the triple bottom line (Hede, 2007), or through quantitative methodological perspectives (Andersson & Lundberg, 2013) – have appeared. However, due to public administrations' interest in economic impacts and how difficult it is to quantify this social reality, residents' perception have largely been absent in these types of studies.

The topic of residents' perceptions of and attitudes towards the impact of tourism has been studied at length (as shown in Deery, Jago, & Fredline (2012) or throughout the works of Ap (1992) or Sharpley (2014)), but no such proliferation of studies exists in the field of events. This has meant a loss of very rich and significant information for both public administrations and for organizers. Residents experience first hand the impacts of events held in their place of residence and feel the effects in their everyday lives. Therefore, it can be said that they have earned the moral right to be listened to; even more so when we take into account that they are putting their own resources – part of their daily lives – at the service of others. In fact, institutions, especially with regard to events subsidized with public resources, should be sensitive and astute enough to use the knowledge and experience accumulated by residents in this respect (in terms of events' impacts) in managing matters of local interest more efficiently (Weaver & Lawton, 2013). Residents are the ones that interact directly with visitors and therefore have the power to support or reject an event (Deery et al., 2012), since the dissatisfaction of a community can threaten the success of an event on a long-term basis, regardless of its economic viability (Small, Edwards, & Sheridan, 2005). Furthermore, considering the perceptions and attitudes of residents enables us to acquire a sustainable perspective in event studies, as Fredline & Faulkner (2000) explain: "Given that the quality of life and equity outcomes within a community will have a significant bearing on resident perceptions, a planning/management regime sensitive to community needs is an essential ingredient of sustainable tourism development" (p. 2).

Stokes & Jago (2007), for example, state that public institutions take part in the creation of events mainly by providing economic support but that "a periodic review by government practitioners of the relevance of the public sector influences and their perceived impact on event tourism strategy in their state or territory is recommended" (p. 11). It is precisely through this perception and assessment of impacts that we can detect if public institutions are contributing to a healthy and cohesive society, tied to the place and empowered, or, instead, fostering exclusively the economic dimension of development generated by the event, giving secondary importance to the social, cultural and environmental aspects of the events they organize. Or indeed, to detect if they are even aware of this fact. Assessment can bring to light the social and cultural impacts of events organized with public subsidies that were not strategically planned or nor intended, but which occur nonetheless.

It is on these premises as well as knowledge about the event and its setting that we formulate our research objectives. Through an exploratory factorial analysis of residents' perceptions we aim to examine how residents in the same community (Vic) perceive the impacts of the Mercat de Música Viva de Vic, an international music festival organized recurrently by public institutions for the last 27 years. The specific aims of this article are, firstly, to analyze the response patterns observed in resident perception of the effects of the MMVV and the value given by them to each of the

factors studied. In this sense, we conclude that Vic residents have generally positive attitudes toward the MMVV, but recognize that negative impacts exist in parallel.

At the same time, this work is based on the premise that public cultural festivals have a very significant role in the daily life of cities and that through the appropriation of public and semi-public spaces, festivals favor redefinition, rediscovery and expansion of local social life and of the meanings of places (Stevens & Shin, 2014). We argue, moreover, that it is key to study this fact by listening to the voices of local actors (Gotham, 2005). In this sense, this study also aims specifically to explore the usefulness of studies of residents' perception in public assessment of events. It is useful to ask to what extent the information produced by studies of residents' perceptions of social and cultural impacts can help event organizers and public managers to understand and evaluate more deeply the effects of their efforts on communities at the local and regional scale.

2. El Mercat de Música Viva de Vic

Vic is a city of 41,956 inhabitants situated in the centre of Catalonia. Historically, the city has been a meeting point for commerce and fairs, and this commercial capacity has turned it into an axis for a large part of central Catalonia (not only as the capital of the county of Osona, but also as a point of reference for the whole of Catalunya Central) while boosting its individual potential as a city. In fact, so great is this potential that a specific body has been created to manage these events: the Organisme Autònom de Fires i Mercats (OFIM) of Vic (<http://www.vicfires.cat/>). The Mercat de Música Viva de Vic (www.mmvv.cat) is one of the events with the furthest reach of all those organized by the city and even within Catalonia. Today, it has made music, not something for which Vic is historically known, one of the city's icons. Throughout its 27 previous editions, it has gained in importance and has positioned itself as a benchmark of the music industry, both national and international, and especially in the Mediterranean area.

The MMVV is organized and mainly subsidized by Vic City Council and the Government of Catalonia through its Institut Català de les Empreses Culturals (ICEC – Catalan Institute of Cultural Firms). It is therefore a markedly public event, the resources for which come mainly from the subsidies awarded by these institutions, in addition to the sponsorship of Estrella Damm (a renowned Spanish brewery that has worked to associate itself with music festivals as a marketing strategy). In the case of the MMVV, we are referring to an event with a budget of almost one million euros, that attracts over 120,000 people and with the participation of almost 700 professionals from 30 different countries (Morales, Flores, Garcia & Pacheco, 2012).

2.1 An event for both music professionals and the people alike

Like many other festivals in other cultural industries, such as in the cinematic arts, the MMVV is two types of event in one. It combines an offer of free concerts for the general public in festival format, and a space reserved for only music industry professionals in trade fair format. Indeed, the design of the event's programme is made to reflect these two spaces.

Therefore, the MMVV is not only a music festival, but also a platform to increase business opportunities in the music industry; a professional meeting point that brings together all sectors of the industry. In short, a "music market", as the name of the festival suggests. In fact, boosting the music industry is one of its main objectives, and the event channels this target through various actions: a specific space, the MVLab, which is a venue for professionals in the music industry and which serves as a meeting and contact-building point during the day, with a decidedly trade fair look; specific programming aimed solely at professionals and a space in which they can interact, the specific Club MV stages. As such, thanks to the work done by the management and artistic teams, during the four days of the Mercat, music agents from around the world travel to Vic to discover new talents, attend forums, exchange knowledge and buy and sell music.

The MMVV, however, has traditionally been known for its role as a music festival rather than a forum for the economic revitalization of a cultural industry. We must not forget that the MMVV is organized with public funds, and thanks to the event, culture is generated and shared, certain citizen needs are satisfied and the city is made known to a large audience coming from different parts of the region and the country. Thanks to this structure and the support of public funds, concerts are held mostly in free, open-air spaces of the city, with "the hub" in the Plaça del Mercat or Plaça Major squares in Vic; medieval sites of great authenticity and great symbolism for the MMVV. It is precisely this facet of the music festival (public and open to citizens) that generates the greatest impact on the city's public space. Figure 1 shows a map of the public and semi-public places in which the MMVV concerts are scheduled. The geographic distribution is far from random, responding to a logic that takes into account different public profiles (visitors and professionals) as well as the diverse music styles on the agenda. The concerts are held mainly in the Vic city centre, with the Plaça del Mercat or Plaça Major squares as the nucleus. The concerts of greatest interest to the wider public take place here, and it is not uncommon to see families enjoying the music. However, it is also the place where the most evident expressions of identity or protest take place, such as those connected to being Catalan. It is here where this is most felt, but also where the greatest representation of the local identity and a sense of belonging take shape.

4. Results

Considering the average scores obtained for the 1-7 Likert scale for each item (see Table 1), we can say that residents, despite acknowledging the existence of the MMVV's negative impacts, consider that these are not important enough to warrant a negative attitude towards the event. Thus, the citizens of Vic show a higher degree of agreement with those items that show a positive attitude towards the event:

"The MMVV gives me the opportunity to enjoy time with friends" (5.58);

"The MMVV has enabled Catalan musicians to have more opportunities" (5.40);

"The MMVV conveys a good image of Vic" (5.34);

"The MMV creates more opportunities to meet new people" (5.25);

"The MMVV increases the pride that citizens have for Vic" (5.20);

"The MMVV promotes interaction/relations between local and foreign people" (5.20).

These elements mostly belong to the sphere of social capital and the social value of the event.

An exploratory factor analysis was carried out in order to explore the relationships among the variables tested and to find factors, which identify underlying constructs related to the residents' perceptions of the MMVV. The results of this statistical analysis allowed us to ascertain which factors determined residents' perceptions of the MMVV and to confirm that residents in the city of Vic generally show a positive attitude towards the MMVV but recognize the parallel existence of negative impacts for the city.

The exploratory factor analysis identified three factors out of the initial 29 variables that accounted for 48.12% of the total variance. Table 1 shows the results of the analysis. The first factor (which accounts for 30.8% of the total variance) is related to identity, social cohesion and the projection of the city of Vic, since most of the 13 items that summarize this factor indicate favourable attitudes toward these issues on the part of Vic residents. The second factor (which accounts for 11.0% of the total variance) describes perceptions related to the economic and urban dimension of the event, while the third (6.3% of the total variance) presents the perceptions of the negative aspects, which have more to do with the environmental and economic impacts on the city.

Table 1. Results of the exploratory factor analysis. Factor scores of the variables in each factor and average (1-7 rating scale) obtained for each variable

	Factors			
Average (1-7)	1	2	3	
				Factor 1: Identity, social cohesion and projection
5.34	.755	.254	.279	The MMVV conveys a good image of Vic
4.92	.689	.257	.211	The MMVV promotes values that are good
4.71	.685	.141	.127	The MMVV has made music a central axis of the culture of Vic
5.03	.665	.296	.044	The MMVV has projected the city of Vic to the world
5.08	.662	.344	.156	The MMVV increases and enhances the reputation of Vic
5.17	.631	.279	.010	The MMVV expands opportunities for leisure in the city
5.58	.626	.213	.197	The MMVV gives me the opportunity to enjoy time with friends
4.58	.588	.325	.220	The MMVV gives us the opportunity to teach others about the culture of Vic
5.20	.588	.419	.205	The MMVV increases the pride that citizens feel for Vic
5.25	.575	.155	.029	The MMVV creates more opportunities to meet new people
5.18	.541	.345	-.073	Thanks to appearance in the media, the MMVV promotes tourism and business in Vic
5.40	.464	-.089	.356	The MMVV has enabled Catalan musicians to have more opportunities
4.09	.382	-.062	-.039	The MMVV has increased the availability of parking in the vicinity
	Factors			
Average (1-7)	1	2	3	
				Factor 2: economic and urban dimension of the event
4.39	.252	.717	.010	Thanks to the MMVV, Vic's population enjoys more facilities being available
4.15	-.045	.698	.173	The MMVV extends the rights and civil liberties of local residents
4.81	.043	.628	-.074	The MMVV creates employment opportunities
4.47	.324	.587	.178	The MMVV helps maintain the areas close to the event
4.24	.336	.566	.146	The MMVV helps maintain public services
4.97	.410	.562	-.066	Thanks to the money that tourists and visitors spend, Vic's economy is stimulated
5.09	.333	.548	-.198	The MMVV increases local businesses' turnover
5.01	.453	.535	.221	The MMVV creates community
5.20	.312	.474	.459	The MMVV promotes interaction/relations between local and foreign people
	Factors			
Average (1-7)	1	2	3	
				Factor 3: negative aspects with environmental and economic impact
4.08	.061	.005	.741	The MMVV increases social inequality because it provides benefits to the rich but none to the poor
3.88	.161	-.002	.731	The MMVV generates violent behaviour and crime
4.01	-.192	.183	.674	The MMVV has changed the cost of living in general
3.95	-.123	.130	.671	The MMVV has modified the prices of some goods and services
3.80	.201	.086	.615	The MMVV disrupts the lives of local residents and causes them

				stress
3.40	.305	-.026	.562	The MMVV creates more litter in the vicinity
3.68	.267	-.089	.537	The MMVV generates traffic congestion in the vicinity
<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	.896	.844	.779	
<i>% variance explained (total=48.2%)</i>	30.8	11.0	6.3	

Method of extraction: Principal components. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

Cronbach's alpha obtained for each factor was greater than 0.7 (factor 3), which indicates acceptable reliability, and greater than 0.8 (factors 1 and 2), which indicates good reliability (Hair et al., 2010). To validate the model, the sample was randomly split into two subsets and exploratory factor analysis was performed on them. The results confirmed the stability of factors structure.

4.1 Perceptions and attitudes associated with identity, social cohesion and the projection of the city of Vic

This first factor recognizes that events have the ability to create opportunities that contribute to social and cultural development, promote social sharing, strengthen identity and foster a sense of pride and belonging to the local community. These are elements that have to do with the value and role of social events and would include psychosocial and sociocultural aspects and values.

These perceptions, therefore, show that the MMVV generates a high level of social capital, and it is precisely this social capital that is most valued by residents. This can reinforce the idea that the MMVV is contributing to the consolidation of Vic's social system, and this is just the value most appreciated by residents. Also included are those perceptions related to the image of the city and its projection as a tourist destination, which have much more to do with the type of image that is generated as one of the city's cultural landmarks and promoting the tourist image of the town/tourism in general.

The items belonging to this first set of perceptions with which the citizens of Vic showed a higher degree of agreement (rating scale 1-7) are:

"The MMVV gives me the opportunity to enjoy time with friends" (5.58);

"The MMVV conveys a good image of Vic" (5.34);

"The MMVV creates more opportunities to meet new people" (5.25); and

"The MMVV increases the pride that citizens feel for Vic" (5.20).

4.2 Perceptions and attitudes linked to the economic and urban dimension of the event

The second factor summarizes citizen perceptions that are associated with the generation of positive impacts on the regional economy. It deals with perceptions related to the generation of economic wealth or the influence the event has on infrastructure or services available to citizens (urban renewal and access to services and facilities): the economic dimension (aspects relating to the revitalization of the economy) and the urban dimension (infrastructure development). Therefore, it seems that citizens are aware that the MMVV generates wealth for the city (economic value) and also for the creation and maintenance of public infrastructure (cultural or otherwise) that democratizes that wealth. Perceptions related to the economic and urban dimension with a higher degree of agreement are:

“The MMVV increases local businesses' turnover” (5.09);

“Thanks to the money that tourists and visitors spend, Vic's economy is stimulated” (4.97);

“The MMVV creates employment opportunities” (4.81); and

“Thanks to the MMVV, Vic's population enjoys more facilities being available” (4.39).

4.3 Negative perceptions and attitudes related to economic and environmental impacts

Finally, the third component includes variables related to the negative impact perceived by residents, consisting mainly of economic impacts that can lead to more social or environmental problems. Perceptions related to this factor obtained the following average scores:

“The MMVV increases social inequality because it provides benefits to the rich but none to the poor” (4.08);

“The MMVV has changed the cost of living in general” (4.01); and

“The MMVV has modified the prices of some goods and services” (3.95).

However, the values of this factor do not show a rejection of the event *per se* so much as a certain awareness of the negative effects that an event can generate in a city and draws attention to those points which may be of concern to most citizens.

Conclusion

In light of the results, residents of Vic detect both positive and negative impacts generated by the MMVV. Despite acknowledging its ability to create economic wealth, as pointed out by Finkel (2006) the event is most positively valued by them as a

platform that helps the social and cultural development of the community. However, despite this overall positive attitude toward the MMVV, residents recognize that negative impacts exist in parallel and that most of them have to do with the redistribution of the economic benefits to be gained from organizing the event.

This study also demonstrates that the citizens of Vic highly value the contribution that the MMVV makes to social cohesion and cultural development. It strengthens the collective and regional identity as well as people's roots within the place and the culture (sense of belonging). As maintained by Quinn (2006), the value of events as social and cultural phenomena resides in their capacity to gather people together and consolidate communities and groups. And in this sense, events, as MMVV shows, could act as a cultural fabric of the place (Derret, 2003) and also contribute to maintaining and confirming the social systems of the cities, as Richards (2015) states.

On the other hand, given the information the study has brought to us about intangible impacts of the MMVV and from the residents points of view, this case study can contribute to better understand the usefulness of resident perception studies for public event assessment. It has demonstrated to be functional to obtain information about the knowledge and experience accumulated by residents with respect to events' impacts. In this sense, this kind of study can give "voice" to residents and give them the right to be listened to by public institutions, an important perspective especially with regard to events subsidized with public resources. They could also help to improve the management of events and bring them closer to the needs of the host society. Despite the fact that many events attract a sizable number of people from outside the community, the overwhelming majority of attendees are local residents. Therefore it is crucial that events be consistent with the needs of the local community. Studies on residents' perceptions could help event organizers and public managers to understand and evaluate the effects of their efforts on communities at the local and regional scale and/or to assist them in determining the most appropriate type of events or modify their design to meet the needs of the local community.

Even more importantly, this perspective could allow public institutions to understand the impact and scope of their investment policies, providing them with in-depth knowledge of how they contribute to the construction and configuration of the city through the events they promote and making them see the value in their undertaking (Stokes & Jago, 2007). In incorporating this perspective into event assessment studies, public institutions can be more aware of the social and cultural aspects of the event, and, in the end, help to these institutions in managing matters of local interest more efficiently (Weaver & Lawton, 2013). If an event is sustainable and becomes an institution in the place it is held, this is mostly due to its social and cultural value and its contribution to the welfare of the population, beyond the economic effects it may have. It is then that we can understand at a deeper level how public institutions promote development through the organization of events and how they contribute to the sustainability of the city and the community.

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