

# Social impacts essay sample



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## Abstract

Events like the FIFA World cup or the Olympics are well known by everyone and result in a variety of impacts on the host community. Most of the researches towards these impacts are focused on the economical effects, but another important consequence is mostly unexplored, the social impact towards the host community. This paper explores the social impacts of events and describes methods how to do this. Firstly it will outline the Social Impact Assessment method and secondly the Social Impact Evaluation method. Moreover positive and negative social impacts of special events and festivals will be analysed. Furthermore it will emerge these impacts on various examples like the Olympics or the FIFA World Cups. Keywords

Social Impact Assessment, Social Impact Evaluation, Social Impact, Olympics, World cup

Special events and Festivals play an important role in development of regions. The impacts vary from measurably economical and touristic impacts up to intangible impacts, such as social impacts on the host regions. While there are a huge number of scholars developing models to define the economical impact of special events on host communities (Gitelson, Guadagnolo, & Moore 1988; Long & Perdue 1990; Yardley, MacDonald, & Clarke 1990; Faulkner 1994; Mules & Faulkner 1996; Anderson & Solberg 1999; Burgan & Mules 2000; Rees 2000 in Small, Edwards & Sheridan 2005, p. 66 ), there is a lack of empirical research made on the socio-cultural impacts of this events (Ritchie & Lyons 1990; Soutar & McLeod 1993; Mihalik 2000; Fredline & Faulkner 2000; Fredline & Faulkner 2002). This is because “ the success of a festival is commonly measured in terms of its economic

contribution to event stakeholders, the community and the region” (Douglas et al 2001, p. 364). Therefore the purpose of this article is the social impact of special events and festivals on host communities.

But before the social impacts of events and festivals can be analysed it is necessary to define the key words “ social impact”, “ festival”, “ special event” and “ social capital”. Moreover this paper will outline negative and positive social impacts. Furthermore it will explain different models to calculate the “ intangible“ social impact and give an overview of the social impacts on different host communities. The South Australian Tourism Commission (1997 p. 2) defines a festival as followed: Festivals are celebrations of something the local community wishes to share and which involves the public as participants in the experience.

Festivals must have a prime objective a maximum amount of people participation, which must be an experience that is different or broader than day to day living. Special events are explained by Getz (2005, p. 16) who says that special events are events that take place outside of the regular event calendar. They play an important role for communities to create a possibility of social exchange. Furthermore, according to Tassiopoulos (2005), special events enrich the image of communities. The most important social impact and special event can have is the augmentation of social capital, which is defined by Portes (1998, p. 7):

Whereas economic capital is in people´s bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships. To possess social capital a person must be related to others,

and it is others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage. Social Impacts and Events

Even though the economic impact of events has been researched on a great field, the “ intangible” social effects these events have are not measured this much (Chalip 2006; Wood 2006), but there is a growing field of research towards the socio-cultural impact events have to communities. According to Wood (2005) the methods which are used to assess the impact vary considerably. There are two Assessments how to managing social impacts of on the one hand large-scale or on the other hand small-scale or community events. Social Impact Assessment of Large-scale Events

The first one is the forward-looking Social Impact Assessment (SIA), an anticipatory theory, which compares various different options and evaluates its impacts to choose the best of them and to implement it (Finsterbusch, Llewellyn, & Wolf 1983). SIA is explained (IAIA, 2003a, p. 2; IAIA, 2003b, p. 240; Vanclay 2006, p. 10) as including:

The processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans and projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions. Its primary purpose is to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment. SIA therefore can develop social capital and allows the event manager to choose the best option in case of positive social impacts towards the stakeholders. Even if the SIA must be made for each event and has to

include the special nature of it, in general it concludes the following seven components (Tassiopoulos & Johnson 2009):

- \* Screening

- \* Is made to see which impacts need an assessment and if it has to be a full or simplified assessment. It is necessary to avoid ensure that the SIA is used cost-effectively.

- \* Scoping

- \* At this stage the event manager investigate if a full or simplified assessment is required and if a full assessment is required first alternative options are explained.

- \* Impact Assessment

- \* At this point the impact assessment will be researched. Both negative and positive impacts have to be assessed, because otherwise the assessment becomes unbalanced.

- \* Options and M&E analysis

- \* At this stage other possible options are explained and investigated.

- \* Decision making and implementation

- \* After analysing the possible options and their impacts the event manager decides which of the options will be implemented.

- \* Monitoring, evaluating and post auditing

- \* At this point a post evaluation is made to see if the chosen option causes the expected impact. If it not causes the expected impacts, a further investigation has to be made to see why differences occurred.

- \* Consultation

- \* The stakeholder consultation is important of any SIA, because every SIA has to fulfil the stakeholder's perceptions of the event (Tassiopoulos & Johnson 2009). Therefore event managers use the SIA to choose the best possible option to maximise the positive social impact and to minimise the negative social impacts. Approaches for managing social Impacts of

Community (small-scale) events But even if a SIA analysis supports decision makers in an appropriate way not every event planner is able to use it because communities neither have the time nor the resources to investigate every possible option and their impacts on the host community. Therefore smaller events use the Social Impact Evaluation (SIE). This framework includes six stages (Small, Edwards & Sheridan 2005):

- \* Describe

- \* Describe the festivals or events characteristics (type, location and time).

Profile

- \* Produce a destination profile which includes the destination itself and the residents.
- \* Identify

- \* Identify the possible socio-cultural impacts the event will have on the host community.
- \* Project

- \* At this stage the possible socio-cultural impacts will be projected and represent the perceptions of the residents of the community.
- \* Evaluate

- \* This stage is made after the festival is done. It shows if the pre-festival perceptions are carried out and outlines the overall impact of the event.
- \* Feedback

Feedback

- \* Feedback towards the event from stakeholders, visitors and planners (Small, Edwards & Sheridan 2005). Concerning to achieve stages four and five a useful tool was invented the Social Impact Perception Scale (SIP).

While there are a few well-known scales concerning the tourism impact, such as Lankford & Howard (1994) and Ap & Crompton (1998) it is difficult to measure the social impact of events towards a community. Especial the work of Delamere, Wankel & Hinch (2001) and Fredline, Jago & Deery (2003) have opening this field of measure social impacts. First Fredline et al (2003)

researched an instrument, which was based on Fredline (2000), to measure the social impacts of three medium to large scale events.

This research was made to validate and test “ an instrument that can be used to compare the social impacts of a variety of events” (Fredline et al 2003, p. 23). This instrument consists of three parts named the overall impacts, the specific impacts and the interdependent variables (Fredline et al 2003). The next milestone was the Social Impact Perception Scale (SIP), which was basically adapted from Green et al (1990) who invented an instrument to evaluate environmental impacts on tourism. Out of this the SIP-scale was invented. It contains three parts. The first is the question if the participant has seen an impact of the event. Secondly they were asked to comment if this impact was either positive or negative. Thirdly the participant could rate the impact from a scale ranged from -5 (strongly disagree) to +5 (strongly agree). Social Impacts

Special events and festivals could include both, positive and negative impacts. Even if the main focus is the economical impact of the events, eg. Sport events (Fredline & Faulkner 2000; Barker et al. 2002; Twynam & Johnston, 2004) this paper focused on the positive and negative social impact and gives examples to provide the findings. To explain the effect these events have on the host community, it is necessary to define what a social impact is. According to Olsen and Merwin (1977, p. 41) a social impact is “ a change in the structure and functioning of patterned social ordering that occur in conjunction with an environmental, technological or social innovation or alteration” whereas Mathieson and Wall (1982, p. 137) describes them as “ the change of quality of life of residents of tourist

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destinations”. According to Ritchie (1984), Hall (1992) and Getz (2005) different social impacts can occur as reason of holding an event.

They defined a various number of social impacts, while this paper just focused on a few impacts all of the authors above mentioned, named the improvement of infrastructure, the support of civic/community pride and the change of the place from ordinary to a place where people share excitement as positive impacts and the disruption of residents lifestyle, crime and vandalism and the negative impacts on housing prices as negative impacts. The first impact that can be identified is the improvement of traffic conditions resulting from hosting the event. According to Kelly (1989) a rejuvenation of urban areas is a long-term affect for the community. This effect was elaborated by Hall (2004) who describes the improvements of the infrastructure and reduction of the air pollution as social benefits due to changes in the traffic system. An example was given by Mintel (2004), who reports that the improvement of the metro system by 17 km of track and 23 new stations in Athens concerning the Athens 2004 Olympics was responsible for deterioration of air quality.

Moreover during the FIFA World Cup 2010 there took a development in infrastructure place. Ngonyama (2011) describes the construction of infrastructure during the FIFA World cup 2010 in South Africa and named the built of huge stadiums and the improvement of traffic conditions as positive aspects. Another important social impact that can be observed is the support of community/civic pride. Events can be used to bring ceremonies or rituals of host communities to new life. This can provide civic pride of the host community and create social capital, because it creates social networks



which are often long-term benefit (Arcodia & Whitford 2006). This could lead in best case to urban renewal (Henry & Gratton 2001). Urban renewal in this case, according to Hall (2004), is a long-term impact on the community where old traditions are reintroduced. Moreover festivals and events give a community the opportunity to change from an ordinary place into places where people share excitement, such as seen during the FIFA World cup 1998 (Choi 1999) or four years later during the World cup 2002 in South Korea (Horne & Matzenreiter 2004).

This can happen because while celebrating people forget their cultural backgrounds and get a feeling of “communitas” (Salomon 2000). But only if the event planner is able to convince the host community through outlining the benefits and advantages, the event will create a long-term benefit and social capital. But hosting festivals or special events can also lead to negative social impacts, which are recognized with greater attention.

Ngonyama (2011) argues that the FIFA World cup 2010 in South Africa also had negative social impacts, because many South Africans felt abused by the organisers and they could not see any benefit for them. He claims that many event stakeholders are only interested in their own, most economical, benefit. A huge crowd of people after the Riverfire festival (Brisbane)

Moreover Sherwood (2007) names increases in noise and traffic as an example of disruption of resident’s lifestyle. Furthermore huge events are attractive to a huge group of people. This could lead to overcrowding in the cities and noise during the event (Mules and Dwyer 2005).

Another negative social impact is crime and vandalism. According to Mathieson and Wall (1982) large crowds of event visitors carry huge

amounts of money with them and this will conduct to illegal activities such as robbery, vandalism and violence. However most of the criminal activities occur in areas which are outside of the main event, for example nightclubs, bars or hotels because the surveillance there is less distinct (Barker et al. 2002). While urban renewal gives a community the opportunity to a positive long-term social impact, it also can conclude negative impacts. According to Wilkinson (1994) large scale events, such as FIFA World cups or Olympics the improvements of infrastructure generate a fast increase in housing and rent prices. He reports for example the increase of housing prices in Barcelona by 240 % because of the Olympic Games 1992 in Barcelona. The same can be observed after the election of Sydney to host the 2002 Olympics (Hall 2001). Thus events have the potential to get both, positive and negative impacts on the host community.

But impacts cannot be seen as universal. Rather they are different from each event and the host community. Barker (2004) suggests that the impacts of events will be different concerning to the scale, location and duration of the event, while Fredline (2005) explains that the social impacts of events are inserting by the destination, the cultural and environmental background. Finally special events and festivals give the host communities an opportunity to get positive impacts, concerning economical, environmental, political and social impacts. To measure the economical impact is lot's of data be available but to measure the social impact of festivals and special events some methods were developed during the last years. This paper outlines the Social Impact Assessment method to evaluate the social impact of large-scale events such as FIFA World cups or Olympics. To measure the social

impact event managers investigate different possible options and discuss them to find the perfect solution.

But this way of assessment is not practicable to small-scale or community events because of the high costs and effort. To assess social impacts of these community events decision makers look back to the past and try to learn from gone events to evaluate the social impact of the planned event. While doing this, they will see positive and negative social impacts of events. Positive impacts can be seen in improvements of infrastructure or support of civic pride, while negative impacts can be observed such as the increase of traffic and noise, the increase of crime and vandalism or the increase of rent prices.

The best case of positive social impact is the generation of social capital, which is generated if the long-term impacts of the events towards the host community are greater than the negative ones and if the life of the residents has changed in a positive way. Therefore is the 2010 FIFA World cup in South Africa a good example because due to changes in the infrastructure and the housing the life of the residents has changed positively. But negative impacts can occur as well. Therefore special events and festivals have to be planned carefully and the assessments of the following impacts have to be accurate to avoid negative results of hosting the event.

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