

The Social Value of Community Events: A Literature Review



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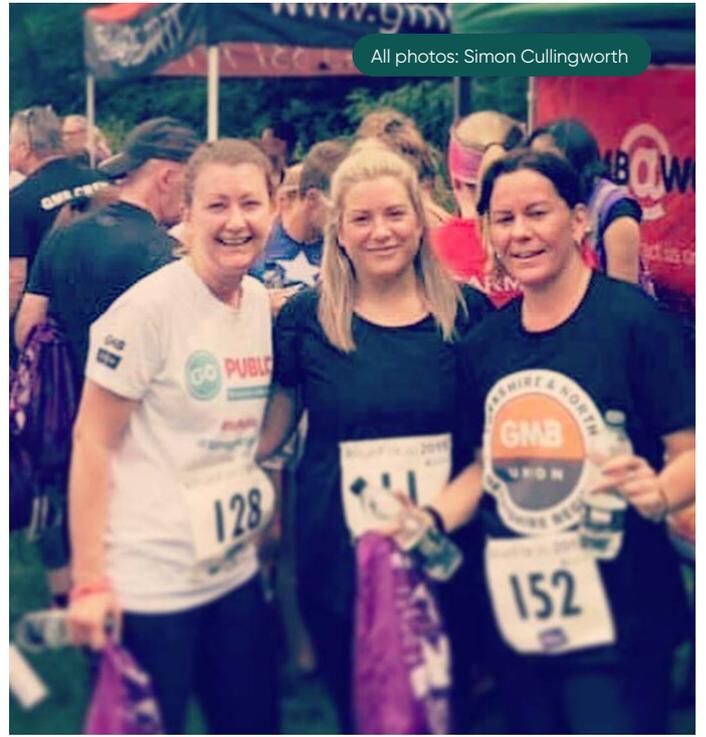
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Spirit of 2012 is the London 2012 Games legacy fund. Spirit awards grants for inclusive arts, sports and volunteering activities in communities that bring people together to improve their wellbeing. The National Lottery Community Fund founded Spirit in 2013 with a £47 million endowment to continue and recreate the spirit of pride, positivity and community that inspired people across the UK during the London 2012 Games. Spirit of 2012's grant holders range from small, hyper-local to national organisations.

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The Social Value of Community Events: Literature Review

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to present an overview of research regarding the social value of community events. The review has been conducted using search terms relating to events, festivals, communities, social impacts and social value. Reference lists accompanying sources identified were also scrutinised to locate any additional material of relevance for the review. As a result, the review presented here covers 100+ research texts.

Many authors note the remarkable increase in the popularity and prevalence of events in recent times. However, until fairly recently, economic implications overshadowed social dimensions in investigations of the values, impacts, meanings and outcomes of festivals and events. As Gursoy et al. (2004:171) note, 'researchers have been slow in directing research beyond economic impacts and motivations' (see also Getz, 2000; Kerwin et al., 2015; Brownnett & Owen, 2020; Wood, 2006; Brida et al., 2017¹). This was the case even when the events in question were small in scale (Kerwin et al., 2015:79; Brownnett & Owen, 2020). As O'Sullivan et al. (2009) highlight, there is an established mismatch between the intended outcomes of festivals and events and the ways they are evaluated. Organisers often foreground socio-cultural objectives but focus on economic impacts and the profiles of visitors in evaluations. However, by 2010 Deery and Jago (2010) felt that research into the social impacts of events had 'come of age'. Over the past ten years, academic research has focused more on the social dimensions of festivals and events (Andrews & Leopold, 2013; Jaeger & Myletun, 2013; Jepson & Clarke 2015a,b; Roche 2017; Piazzi & Harris, 2016) and this is beginning to feed through into event evaluations. Work tends to focus on social impacts, rather than a wider assessment of social value, and this is reflected in the literature review presented here. Social impacts include the ways events affect communities by affecting social cohesion, community capacity and social capital. But work also highlights outcomes for individuals (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017), for example, by enhancing quality of life, by providing inspirational experiences and improving wellbeing.

¹Brida et al. present a novel study aimed at the estimation of the economic or social value of a Christmas market, the authors' measure of social value is, however, framed as consumer surplus.

The literature on the social value of events is growing in size and developing in terms of its conceptual foundations, methodological underpinnings and empirical validation. New directions are emerging, and more critical questions are being asked about the kinds of social change that events can contribute to (Sharpe, 2008). Work on the social dimensions of events is very interesting and growing strongly but it is also quite uneven in terms of its focus (Quinn & Wilks, 2013). The terminology used to denote value includes many different terms such as 'impact,' 'meaning,' 'change,' 'benefit' and 'outcome,' and there are several disparate lines of enquiry and ways of working (Ziakas & Costa, 2010). Accordingly, this literature review aims to develop a clearer understanding of the social value of community events.

Social value is itself a complex and ill-defined term. Jones (2017:22) explains that it is 'variously used to refer to some or all of the following: community identity; attachment to place; symbolic value; spiritual associations and social capital' and notes the problematic tendency for commentators to conflate notions of social value with expert – rather than community-derived – viewpoints (Jones, 2017:33). Getz, Andersson, Armbrecht and Lundberg (2017) bring together the work of several other researchers to present a helpful four-dimensional approach to event values that distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic, and individual and societal dimensions. Their thinking covers values of all kinds and using this framework to interrogate social values alone could be instructive. Nevertheless, potential exists to bring further clarity to this growing body of knowledge and to apply it to a wider set of events, including those at the micro scale which are often overlooked by evaluation studies. There is also scope to interpret and apply knowledge in ways that can usefully inform practitioners seeking positive social outcomes through community events. This literature review has been produced with this objective in mind.



Our review is divided into five sections. The first part addresses collective or shared social impacts, which include those related to place (e.g. pride in place, place attachment) and more general community impacts such as sense of community and connectedness. The second section focuses more on effects at the individual level, although the review recognises the interrelationships between community and personal impacts. The third element addresses some of the negative effects associated with events which need to be recognised to ensure balanced analysis that does not presume events only have positive social impacts. In a fourth section, the review explores the methods and approaches that academic researchers have used to assess the social value of events. The document concludes with a review of the overall implications of the literature for the development of evaluation frameworks to assess the social value of community events.



2.0 Collective, or shared social impacts

Empirical studies of events have identified a range of research subjects, including local residents, local communities, event audiences, business stakeholders, festival organisers or cohorts defined on the basis of cultural criteria like ethnicity or sexual orientation, or cultural interests being celebrated by the festival or event under study (i.e. jazz, literature). The literature on the social value of events focuses on collective or shared impacts. The literature shows that the social impacts associated with festivals and events at the collective level are very wide ranging, and in the following sections, we outline the most significant effects that determine events' social value.



2.1 Identity formation, belonging, civic pride, pride in place

That festivals and events help to shape community identities is a clear theme in the literature. Festivals and events can enable creative expression (Matheson, 2005), and generate a shared sense of belonging and identity (Gibson & Connell, 2005; Duffy & Waite, 2011). The identities in question can often be linked to groups that share a cultural identity, particular interest or that belong to a place-based community (Foley, Flinn & McPherson, 2007). In addition, many researchers note that events are intrinsically linked to place identities. Richards (2017:9) observes that 'cities and regions have long been framed as stages on which events unfold, but the relationship is increasingly becoming a recursive one, in which events also make places.' De Bres and Davis (2001) note how events can provide a platform for residents to (re)discover their own locale, revisit memories and look anew on the purportedly familiar.

Collaboratively produced events rooted in culture, heritage, memories and shared experience, can lead to a collective process of placemaking (or remaking) which, in turn, could serve to reduce social isolation at an individual level (Brownett & Owen, 2020:2; also: Lockstone-Binney et al., 2020). As these authors point out, placemaking sits at the intersection of community spaces, the arts, culture and wellbeing (Brownett & Owen, 2020). However, 'to have placemaking effect, events need to add to the meaning of the location,' and this meaning needs to be developed and embedded in a manner that suitably mirrors local capacities and reflects residents' day-

to-day lives (Richards, 2017:12). Misener and Mason (2006:385) point out that such embedded linkages are vulnerable to erosion and replacement by 'new constructed meanings of space attached to tourism, mobile capital, and consumer driven entertainment.' Amid the changes wrought by such global forces, local people can 'struggle to find meaning, a sense of identity and a sense of connectedness in their own neighbourhoods'. Flinn and McPherson (2008) argue that cultural festivals can be used as a tool for engaging disadvantaged and disenfranchised individuals and groups in community life, allowing them to participate in community planning, decision-making and the development of their own communities.

Nevertheless, the potential for community events that are deeply embedded into local contexts and closely shaped by the needs of local people to make a difference is clearly signalled in the literature. While small community events, by virtue of their scale, are unlikely to have significant economic impact, they are important socially and culturally (i.e. Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013:216). Stevenson (2020:2) highlights that the ongoing reduction of 'direct state provision' and the concomitant devolution of relevant roles and responsibilities to communities and their members 'suggests that community activities and events might be of increasing importance'.

All of this points to the importance of villages, towns and cities investing in events that have the potential to become embedded in place. De Brito and Richards (2017) acknowledge the 'questionable effects' of the top-down placemaking elicited by larger, mega events. They note the tendency towards combining the staging of larger (pulsar) and smaller scale (iterative) events to 'generate a range of desired placemaking effects' with the latter helping to 'support the daily life of the location' (de Brito & Richards, 2017:3). By way of example, Stevenson (2020:9, see also Stevenson, 2019) has studied small events in the context of daily life, focusing on street parties, highlighting the 'specific place-based sense of community that is developed in on-street events held in the familiar spaces outside people's homes'.



Photo: Simon Cullingworth

The effects of events can be 'uneven and unpredictable' (de Brito & Richards, 2017:6). Stevenson (2020:5) makes this point specifically in respect of community events, noting that 'the benefits arising from community events can accrue unevenly, reinforce social hierarchies and increase inequalities between and within communities.' This view is reflected in findings reported by other scholars who observe, for example, that benefits for local residents may well differ from those that accrue to incomers/tourists (Snowball & Antrobus, 2020:2), and yet it is 'ordinary residents' who are most likely to be 'responsible for most community celebratory events' (Li et al., 2018:400). Festivals and events provide specific 'moments', bounded in time and space, that give rise to a specific set of temporary circumstances, and generate outcomes that are differentially experienced depending on a host of socio-cultural factors (this point is discussed in more detail in Section 5.0).

While much has been written about events and placemaking / place identity, De Bres and Davis, (2001: 327) and Ziakas (2016:1143) argue that community festivals and events 'frequently celebrate both group and place identity' in tandem. Li et al. (2018:410), for example, discuss the ways in which 'reproducing and retrieving collective memories/narratives' enabled the Heart of the City Festival in Downtown Eastside Vancouver to function as both 'mnemonic device and knowledge-keeper, reminding people of the intertwined cultural and social histories' of the locality. Brownnett and Owen's (2020:2) study of community arts festivals argues that festivals can create a sense of community belonging by tapping into 'local pride and belonging emanating from history and heritage within communities, as well as the memories and stories of those who live there'. In this way, aspects of events' social value can be seen to intersect with notions of civic pride reflecting the processes of 'self-determination, cultural identity, citizenship and belonging' (Collins, 2016:177) related to this notion.² Understanding the ways that 'civic actors [...] express, experience and mobilise forms of pride' can be used to reveal the ways in which 'people create value in where they live and the diverse (and even incongruous) ways people protect or enhance that value' (Collins, 2019:390). The potential for events to play a significant role in both the development and expression of civic pride is clear. While the construct has not always been consistently and clearly defined (Collins, 2016:177 citing Wood, 2006) and, is arguably vulnerable to overplaying positives and ignoring the negative (Collins, 2016:117), it has nevertheless proved useful as an analytical tool (i.e. Wood, 2006).

The ability of events to build connectedness between people and draw them into community activities is underscored by several researchers. Citing Werner et al. (1949), for instance, McMillan recognises 'the strong integrative function of collective myths, symbols, rituals, rites, ceremonies and holidays' (McMillan, 1996:323). Richards notes how the development of social and cultural programmes in event-led regeneration can function as a way to involve local communities in processes of regeneration (Richards, 2017:9). Events provide opportunities to 'come together' and serve as a mechanism for reducing isolation (Lockstone-Binney et al. 2020:885).

² Collins identifies civic pride as 'a useful concept for bringing together questions of emotion, place and politics.' As a concept it 'broadly refers to people's positive identification with or strong loyalty to place and local community' (Collins, 2019:389).

Choi, Dalbeko-Schoeny and White (2019) and Jepson (2019) highlight the importance of community events in fostering social interactions and building connectedness among older adults. More generally, others have argued that events help to construct and maintain social identity at the group level (Wood, 2006; Jaeger & Mykletun (2013), and 'play an important ideological role in identifying who makes claims to civic space' (Misener & Mason, 2006:394).

An event's capacity to involve people, bring them together, and sustain group / place-based identities can be particularly important at the community level. Certainly, at this level, these types of impacts can be of greater significance than economic impacts. Scholtz et al. (2019:167-8) report Mahathe's finding that 'a festival's social worth is nearly 1.46 times that of the economic impact.' De Bres and Davis (2001:329) propose that 'community members may view [a] festival not as a money-making tourist attraction but rather as an enjoyable community-based event, which is a reflection of their town's culture and history'. Participation in a festival or event is an opportunity for an individual community member, or a family, to enact their 'commitment to being an active member of the community – good citizen, a potential partner in mutually reciprocal relationships' (Gursoy et al., 2004 173; also see Brownnett & Owen, 2020; Snowball & Antrobus, 2020; Misener & Mason, 2006:392; Stevenson, 2020:3; Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013). In this way, events can function as ways to 'unlock community assets' (Brownnett & Owen, 2020:5); these can include 'social capital, communal solidarity and identity, and leverage [of the] development of infrastructure' (Snowball & Antrobus, 2020:2 citing Quinn, 2010).

One of the key place or space related effects of events is their ability to unsettle social and temporal norms. For Johansson and Kociatkiewicz (2011) festivals can change the routine appearance, ambience and use of space and create what Pløger (2010:853) refers to as 'an atmosphere of potentials'. Comparing neighbourhood events in Milan and Lund, Citroni and Karrholm contend that the spaces where events were hosted in both cities 'were materially and cognitively reconfigured for events through, for example, the building of stages, the staging of arts performances and the production and points of focussed collective attention.' This, they argue, brought about a process of visibilisation³ of elements of everyday life (Citroni & Karrholm, 2019:59), and a sharing of space that encouraged community groups who would not usually intersect/interact, to do so. In a similar vein, in a study of small community events, Quinn and Wilks (2017) identified individual and collective efforts to re-invigorate and renew not only memories, traditions, and social connections but also skills, abilities and capacities that differed from the norm and challenged the shortcomings of the routinely prevailing social order. Likewise, Stevenson (2020:3) observes that 'community events disrupt both physical spaces and mundane social relations, by reworking familiar spaces as sites of pleasure and developing activities to encourage people to participate together [...] they can provide opportunities for experimentation, creativity, hedonism and play, creating short-lived surges of conviviality which can loosen social/spatial relations'. Brownnett and Owen discuss the ways in which 'community arts festivals deploy and liberate access to space, and point to the wellbeing benefits that result', at least in part, from a temporary, permeability which enables people participating in the event to move across 'what might ordinarily be considered fixed and bounded spaces with a set function' (Brownnett & Owen, 2020:2-4).

The temporary erosion or dissolution of everyday social boundaries gives rise to liminoid (Lockstone-Binney et al., 2020:878) spaces that can be considered a defining feature of a festival or event. These authors recognise the significance of ambience in relation to the perceived success of an event. In their ethnographic study of the Noosa Jazz Festival, Duffy and Mair (2018:59) propose that the event 'creates an ambience that sets up expectations about

³ Collins identifies civic pride as 'a useful concept for bringing together questions of emotion, place and politics.' As a concept it 'broadly refers to people's positive identification with or strong loyalty to place and local community' (Collins, 2019:389).

Hastings Street⁴ that extend beyond the day'. Further, these authors foreground ways that the audio dimension of a festival or event can generate ambience, writing that 'we might consider how the sounds of a festival permeate far beyond any gates, fences or ticketed boundaries, creating a more inclusive ambience and allowing experience of a festival by those not able to access the festival itself' (Duffy & Mair, 2018:60). Jaeger and Mykletun (2013:220) make similar arguments about the role of the Joik at Sami festivals and events. Thus, the literature suggests that both ambience and the kind of liminality created by a festival or event soundscape have implications for engagement and inclusion.

2.2 Social capital, networking and community development

If and how events build social capital are key questions for contemporary event researchers. Muir (2011) note that policy makers and politicians have become increasingly interested in how social capital can be enhanced at local, regional and national levels. Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995) both emphasise the collective dimensions of social capital, with the latter defining it as 'features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1995:2). High levels of social capital are associated with shared understandings, a sense of community (Ooi, Laing & Mair, 2015), and strong, resilient, socially sustainable communities (Cuthill, 2010). Accordingly, events often form part of the strategies formulated to build social capital (Smith, 2012). Researchers have long argued that events have a role to play in building trust and strengthening networks and relationships (Getz et al., 2006). This in turn is associated with capacity building, achieved as events encourage social interaction, increase social cohesion, encourage civic participation and build local skills (Edwards, 2015). Accordingly, it is not surprising that an increasing number of studies are uncovering evidence that events help to build social capital.

Misener and Mason (2006) and Arcodia and Whitford (2007) were early advocates of social capital in the events field, using the concept to understand how events contribute to community development, build community resources, create opportunities for public celebration and generate links between individuals and groups. Subsequent studies have found evidence that events help to build social capital among residents (Finkel, 2010), audiences (Wilks, 2011) and organisers (Mykletun, 2009; Liu 2017) with the latter linking events to increases in networking, organisational learning and confidence building. Bonding social capital denotes the strengthening of existing ties and relationships, while bridging social capital is characterised by the formation of novel ties between actors who were previously unknown or less well known to each other. Wilks (2011) discusses bonding and bridging capital, finding the former to be an important part of the festival audience experience. Quinn and Wilks' (2013) study of small music festivals found bonding capital to be prevalent among family and friendship groups within festival audiences, while bridging capital was generated between attendees and performers, performers and music industry personnel. Packer and Ballantyne (2011) and Webster and McKay (2016) observe that music may not be the sole motivation for attending a music festival.

Rather 'cultural enrichment, education and novelty' and the opportunity to generate bonding and bridging social capital in a setting which enables 'temporary social cohabitation' are also important (Webster & McKay, 2016: 10 & 11). Events achieve these outcomes because they involve common causes for celebration, create shared spaces, refashion place associations, and provide reasons to set aside differences in the interest of community advancement (Devine & Quinn, 2019).

⁴The primary site for the Jazz Festival.

This latter point is emphasised by Schulenkorf (2009) who developed an event evaluation framework, based around the notion that sport events were good ways to bring disparate communities together. She utilised social capital as a key concept, which helped to uncover how different levels of participation in events created trust and social cohesion.

The literature on events and social capital is not unproblematic. Cattell et al. record that 'specific neighbourhood characteristics can influence the amount of social capital within a locality [...] or the form it takes' (Cattell et al., 2008:546). González-Reverté and Miralbell-Izard (2011) argue that events may only build social cohesion among those who hold similar worldviews. Festivals and events create fleeting encounters and, although encountering difference is important, it is not entirely clear whether doing so can really provide the basis for greater trust and social bonds. Stevenson (2019) points to the unevenness of social capital development in event settings and called for more research into the role that socio-cultural factors like age, gender, ethnicity, class and religion play in shaping different forms of capital. In addition, there is a shortage of research investigating how the social capital purportedly built through events can be sustained and translated into lasting mutual benefits for all parties. Devine and Quinn (2019) found that a lack of legacy planning and sustained investment in the post-event phase can mean a failure to fully capitalise on the valuable resource that events represent. In terms of learning from previous studies and putting the knowledge into practice, several researchers stress the need for careful, integrated planning and reform to ensure that events can combat the weight of historically and politically embedded factors that act to constrain the building of links between different community groups (Schulenkorf et al., 2011; De Jong & Varley, 2018). Very helpfully, Pickering (2006) argues that institutions, such as local authorities and events organisations, can actively encourage the development of social capital by being culturally diverse, valuing cross-cultural cooperation and encouraging repeated, mutually dependent relationships between different social cohorts. Creating mechanisms to encourage dialogue, share knowledge and resources, and encourage community involvement is important for capacity building at local level. As Smith and Vodicka (2020) emphasise, there is greater scope for social capital creation when the organisation of events is delegated to community groups, particularly if groups who usually operate independently work together to co-produce events. This is reaffirmed by Stevenson's (2020:8) argument that the social sustainability of an event is more likely to be guaranteed 'if power is devolved to community members [and they] have a leading role in event development and delivery'.



Photo: Simon Cullingworth

2.3 Community engagement and inclusion

Building linkages, networks and ultimately social capital, relies on people getting involved and being engaged. The question of how event organisations can best engage people in events is an under-researched topic. However, the literature does suggest that the benefits produced can vary depending on how the event stimulates engagement. Studies suggest that communities and those involved in the preparatory phases of an event (Snowball & Antrobus, 2020:6) or, who volunteer to guarantee its frontline delivery (Kerwin et al., 2015; Gallarza et al., 2013:109; Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013) experience a more protracted and active involvement with the event – potentially including acquisition of novel skills (Snowball & Antrobus, 2020) – than those merely attend events.

Inclusion is another under-researched area in the events field. In this context it is worth problematising the use of the term 'community', and acknowledging that this is a very complex term often used without adequate scrutiny (Laing & Mair, 2015). For Snowball and Antrobus (2020), 'community is commonly used to identify people who live close to one another, but it is also applied to those who share interests, cultures or characteristics but do not necessarily live in physical proximity' (see also Albinson & Perera, 2012). Meanwhile, Shirlow and Murtagh (2006:57) caution against thinking of it 'as a distinctive stakeholder with a shared set of values' and implicitly point to the need to recognise the heterogeneity that characterises all communities with which event organisations seek to engage.

In the literature reviewed here, inclusion is most often discussed in terms of whole community engagement in the process of (co-)producing the festival or event. Piazzi and Harris (2016:398-9) argue that the very ethos of contemporary folk festivals in Australia 'give voice to folk ideals of: inclusion [...and] celebration of cultural production grounded in community,' and their findings establish the central role that community support and engagement can play for the success and sustainability of a festival or event (Piazzi & Harris, 2016:402, 398). However, they also note that levels of engagement can vary depending upon the approach taken by event organisers with regard to the degree to which the local community are involved in the events (i.e. reflecting the range of possibility spanning inclusion throughout planning and delivery phases versus an invitation to participate as an "audience member" only) (Piazzi & Harris, 2016:405-6). These findings are echoed by Jepson and Clarke who argue that 'it is difficult for a meaningful sense of cultural diversity to be produced and packaged without inclusive involvement' (Jepson et al., 2008: 14). In turn, this echoes Pickering's (2006) point regarding the need for institutions to actively encourage diversity.



3.0 Social impacts at the individual level

By definition, many social effects associated with staging events are shared, and thus felt at the group or community level. So far, the discussion has focused on these shared effects. However, the literature also identifies that social effects can be experienced individually. These effects are divided into two main categories in the sections below. First, the effects of events on individual wellbeing; and secondly, the effects on what can be loosely described as human capital; incorporating skills, education, confidence and motivation, employability and attitudinal changes.

3.1 Wellbeing and quality of life

The personal and individual impacts of events are under-researched, although recent studies have attempted to address this deficiency (Jepson et al., 2019). Jepson and Stadler (2017) mention psychic benefits, health and wellbeing impacts, and educational/attitude change as possible personal advantages in their conceptualisation of individual benefits of community events. Their work focuses quality of life (QoL), the broadest measurement for individual impacts, of which more specific measurements such as wellbeing, life satisfaction, and happiness can be part. Recently, links have been drawn between social capital and well-being in festival settings. Ahn (2021) finds that bonding social capital is strongly associated with festival participation, and that both are associated with subjective wellbeing. Ahn's (2021: 11) study further found that people who frequently 'participate in traditional local festivals in their communities show higher subjective wellbeing than those who never attend'.

Individual effects on quality of life (and its subcategories) can be gauged with Subjective Wellbeing [SWB] (Diener, 2009). This approach is grounded in happiness research and hedonic psychology, with SWB increasingly becoming part of national statistics (such as Office for National Statistics, 2020). The basis of the method is self-reported data based on the current experience of life, such as a Likert scale with questions on the current mental or physical state. It may encompass several of the QoL indicators or definitions depending on the method used, such as domains of life satisfaction (Kahneman 1986). Kahneman's volume (1999) describes and discusses the widely different results achieved by posing different questions about wellbeing and happiness. Hedonic methods can be used for gauging individual effects of events in several ways, such as (before-and-after) longitudinal assessments (Bravo et al. 2020), or comparisons between those who participate in events and those who don't (Ioannis & Nelly-Eleni 2018).

Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) is used as a central indicator of QoL in several of the theoretical frameworks for event impacts, such as Snowball and Antrobus's (2020) and Yolal et al. (2016). The results of studies based on these frameworks tend to be positive, showing that subjective wellbeing can be enhanced by participation in festivals and events, especially demonstrable in the short term. Yolal et al. (2016) use this as a lever to indicate broader QoL gains. Yolal et al. (2016) show 'a significant positive relationship between community benefits and subjective wellbeing of residents,' indicating that many individual social benefits may be dependent on collective social benefits.

The 'wellbeing' perspective can be used as a broad, but delimited indicator of individual effects with more commonly agreed variables. Wood et al. (2018) create a framework for wellbeing associated with participatory events for the elderly based on key aspects of individual's wellbeing: belonging, inclusion, reduced loneliness, reduced isolation, self-worth and self-esteem. They also note that there is some confusion in existing studies as 'terms such as social isolation, social inclusion, loneliness, self-worth, quality of life, and well-being are often used interchangeably with little consideration of their appropriateness within the context of the research being undertaken.' This is also shown by comparable studies which use different

concepts to assess individual effects. Publications by Fujiwara (Fujiwara, 2013; Fujiwara et al. 2014) estimate the monetary value of individual engagement in art-related events in the UK, based on indicators of SWB. They note that the engagement is 'valuable to the individual and this value will differ somewhat depending on whether we focus on happiness or more evaluative measures of wellbeing such as life satisfaction,' and that the happiness indicator gives almost double the result (2014).

Wellbeing is also linked to the entertainment, education and satisfaction gained from attending events. George (2015) highlights that festivals give people 'something to do' by providing entertainment, alongside learning and personal improvement (Derrett, 2003). Some of these effects can be tied to satisfaction with the service or location. 'Personal satisfaction' is a typical indicator of SWB derived from festival experiences, as shown by Gursoy et al. (2010) and Hede et al. (2005). This work conflates positive social experiences with customer satisfaction, which is usually considered to be an economic indicator rather than a social one. For example, the work of Andersson et al. (2017) explores 'links between quality, satisfaction and expenditure in an event context to find out whether a high event quality, satisfaction and a high use value of event experiences lead to larger economic impacts.' Wood (2005), adapting Dwyer et al.'s (2000) list of potential event impacts, adopts a different position which could be described as an intermediate use/non-use value position on social impact. Her assessment of 'social impact' includes the ways events provide 'something to look forward to' and an 'opportunity for family fun,' finding that these are some of the most prevalent positive effects.

3.2 Skills and individual development

The experiences gathered at events may lead to individual development, such as increased skills, motivation, or change in attitude. While a lot of research on the value of events assume beneficiaries are passive recipients of value, some research has pointed out that people can actively develop skills through more active involvement in events. People who become involved in events through volunteering or organisational roles are cases in point.

Event volunteers' motivations are well-studied, and many frameworks exist to examine them. Clary's et al. (1998) article is widely cited in later publications on the subject. They suggest six main motivations, of which several are strictly individual: Values (humanitarianism and altruistic reasons), Understanding (skill development), Ego Enhancement (psychological growth), Career (gaining experience that will advance one's career), Social (improving social relationships), and Ego Protective (providing an escape from negative feelings and personal problems) (Warner et al. 2011).

Work by Barron and Rihova, (2011) and Derrett (2008) suggest that skills gained from volunteering at events enhance individuals' confidence, esteem and employability. Personal development also results from other types of learning. Wood (2005) in her modification of Dwyer et al.'s typology (2000) asked respondents about learning at cultural events, but weaker results from learning were observed compared to other indicators. Substantial learning is also possible for other event participants. Mair and Lang (2013) use a transtheoretical model (TTM) to assess the process of change that an individual goes through when attending an event, and speculate that the relaxed/carnival atmosphere at some events may mean attendees are in the mood for learning something new. Other researchers have identified events as opportunities for sharing ideas which create opportunities to open dialogues and learn about, for example, other people and cultures (Merfeld-Langston, 2010). This is particularly the case for literary festivals with Johanson and Freeman (2012: 312) arguing that they confer 'cultural capital on attendees', function as 'alternative education providers' and as sites for self-education which promote reading (Driscoll, 2014:153). Several studies, such as Miragaia et al. (2018) show that a strong motivation for participants in studied community events is gaining career skills.

Though there may be increased opportunity for personal development, Mair noted that 'very little empirical research has considered whether event attendees are open to learning while at events' (2014), adding that messages perceived as too educational or political may be poorly received. Some events are more specifically geared towards promoting learning. In a study of literary festivals, Rossetti and Quinn (2019) found that in attending literary festivals, people live out their engagement with literature, practise their habit of reading and writing, and acquire all kinds of information and knowledge that pertain to the literary field and more widely. Johanson and Freeman (2012) argue that festivals provide audiences with time to reflect, debate, and have communal dialogue, while others have described festivals as communities of practice where learning occurs through social and interactive participation (Karlsen, 2009). Writing about literary festivals specifically, Rossetti and Quinn (2019) suggest that these can be understood as learning environments where participants can enhance their cultural knowledge, tastes and skills through participation. Individual personal development seems to emanate from increased social cohesion and similar factors related to social capital. This highlights the difficulty, and perhaps even the futility, of trying to differentiate between personal and collective impacts.



4.0 Negative impacts and social costs

Many small-scale and community events are purposefully planned to achieve positive social impacts. However, it is important to recognise the potential for negative impacts or social costs too. Like positive impacts these can occur at either the individual level or at the wider community level (Small, 2007); and comprise both short-term impacts and longer term legacies (Deery & Jago, 2010). Confusingly, any negative impacts can be equated with equivalent positive effects. If an event can affect levels of civic pride, community cohesion or trust there may be instances when events can affect these collective resources negatively. Accordingly, most of the scales developed to assess impacts quantitatively (e.g. Delamere, 1997; Fredline et al. 2003; Small, 2007); allow social impact statements to be rated positively or negatively.

There are also specific event impacts that seem to be inherently negative. Delamere (1997) included 9 in his pioneering Festival Social Impact Attitude Scale (FSIAS): disruption of routines, intrusion, overstretched facilities, reduced privacy, community overcrowding, traffic, noise, over taxed human resources, and litter. These can be subdivided into two categories: quality of life concerns and community resource concerns (Deery & Jago, 2010). A similar list of negative social impacts was developed by Fredline et al. (2003), although their work also incorporated other forms of anti-social behaviour such as rowdiness and excessive drinking. Fredline et al. (2003) also highlighted opportunity costs (i.e. the resources used to stage events which could have been spent on other things) as a potential negative impact of events, and treated damage to host sites as a social impact rather than merely an environmental one. In a paper which focuses on negative social impacts, Deery and Jago (2010) grouped these into two categories: antisocial behaviour and injustice/inconvenience. Their work not only highlighted the potential for negative impacts, it demonstrated that these could undermine some of the positive outcomes of events – particularly host community pride. This, they argued, was particularly significant as it might represent a 'lasting legacy of the event' (Deery & Jago, 2017:17).

Negative impacts seem to be more relevant to larger events organised by outside interests, as these can generate resentment and opposition from some community members, particularly when public spaces or social amenities are used to stage them (Smith & Vodicka, 2020). However, it does seem important to incorporate negative impacts into the frameworks used to evaluate community events to ensure balanced assessment. In Small's (2007) influential work on the social impacts of festivals, the author used quantitative festival evaluations to identify 'a useful structure for analysing the social impacts resulting from community festivals' comprising six factors (Small, 2007:53). While Small is reluctant to label any of these factors as essentially positive or negative, three of her six factors seem to describe social costs: inconvenience, personal frustration and behavioural consequences. The first two of these refer to obvious issues with disruption, traffic, noise and litter, while the latter is linked to underage drinking, delinquent behaviour and vandalism. However, Small also acknowledges that many of the impact statements used in her research are not applicable to all festivals and events, concluding that it is necessary 'to select the range of social impacts that are specific and relevant to the community under study' when designing evaluation instruments (Small, 2007:54).

5.0 Evaluating and measuring the social value of community events

The literature reviewed here is drawn from a number of different disciplines and includes empirical studies that have used a range of quantitative and qualitative tools to gather data. Many of the papers reviewed have used qualitative or mixed methods approaches, for example, case studies, ethnography, depth interviews, focus groups and participant observation, sometimes in combination with a survey, to gather data. In studies where qualitative approaches dominate, the intention is usually not to measure, *per se*, but rather to understand the value and outcomes of events, and what they mean to those people involved. Studies can focus their attention on one or more kinds of stakeholders (i.e. audiences, residents, volunteers, organisers, local business owners, policy-makers), and ask them questions about – for example – the extent and nature of their support and engagement, and about their perceptions, views and opinions of how the event fosters change for them personally, for the community, and for the host place more generally. The contribution of such studies is to identify and yield deep insight into the wide array of social values that can be ascribed to events at individual, collective and place levels.

One problem with the literature on the social impacts of events is that many studies base their analysis on just one type of event, or one edition of an event, or one type of social impact. This limits the applicability of the methods / frameworks used to other events. The data gathered is too often simply a post-event reflection and refers to a snapshot of a moment in time. There is also a relative lack of longitudinal studies or events that assess social dimensions before and after events to provide a more robust assessment of change. As O'Sullivan et al. (2009) state, few evaluations are undertaken before events, or in the longer term, with pre-event research usually limited to informal analysis. Wood (2006) recommends more longitudinal and follow-up studies and some researchers have responded to this call (Citroni & Karrholm, 2019). There have been some before and after studies which allow a more robust assessment of impacts. For example, Jepson and Stadler (2017) interviewed participants one month before and one month after attending community events to ascertain their effects. Key questions included: do you feel connected to your community; do you feel proud of where you live, and has attending the event changed the way you think or feel about the world? However, the issue of attribution – the extent to which events have caused any social changes – remains a key problem for event researchers, especially when analysing small events which may occur regularly. As Brown et al. (2015:152) conclude in their review of event evaluations: 'the greatest challenge for event evaluators is to establish cause and effect'.

There is still a need to develop broader based, perhaps comparative, understandings of the impact of event activities, rather than merely individual case studies. As a result, Wallstam, Ionnides and Pettersson (2020) suggest that the data produced may not be meeting policy-makers' needs. Certainly, there is scope for collaboration between event researchers, event organisations and other interested stakeholders to work collaboratively to co-create research frameworks and methodologies in the future. However, researchers have also realised that the quest for universal criteria for assessment or standard evaluations tools is futile (Nordvall & Brown, 2020). Instead, there is a need for flexible frameworks and evaluation tools, perhaps involving separate modules that can be customised for specific events (Pasanen et al., 2009).

Alongside the increasing volume of research on the social value of events is a further body of work that has developed and tested frameworks, tools and techniques that focus on measurement. Deery and Jago's (2010) summation of the literature identified three dominant lines of enquiry: the development of scales to measure social costs and benefits, the influence of residents' perceptions on resident support for events, and policy recommendations for enhancing social impacts. Furthermore, the question of who should be involved in evaluation

research is an interesting one. Whilst some studies have researched a range of stakeholders (organisers, enterprises, policy makers), most event evaluations assume that event attendees and/or local residents are the relevant subjects to study. Accordingly, measuring resident perceptions is the most commonly used method in studies that measure the social impact of events (Wallstam et al., 2020). One of the earliest and most commonly cited examples is the Festival Social Impact Attitude Scale (FSIAS), developed by Delamere (1997). This research identified 25 items that could be used to assess the social impacts of festivals: 16 positive impacts and 9 negative impacts. Like many similar scales that have been developed subsequently, these were designed as quantitative instruments even though many of the items seem difficult to measure quantitatively (i.e. personal sense of pride). Nonetheless, Delamere's FSIAS remains influential, and has apparently continued to yield very high reliability (Van Winkle & Woosnam, 2014). Other examples of frameworks developed to quantitatively assess the social impacts of events include Small's (2007) Social Impact Perception (SIP) scale.

Fredline et al. (2003) developed an instrument to assess social impacts that included 45 statements, which were assessed using 80 questions in a 12 page survey. Similarly, Small's (2007) survey instrument asked participants to provide opinions on 41 social impact statements. These prominent pieces of research highlight a key issue associated with evaluation tools: the large number of items included provides very comprehensive analysis, but this type of approach does not suit community event organisers who would struggle to persuade participants to consider such a large number of questions. It also makes analysis and interpretation of the resulting data more difficult. This was recognised by Fredline et al. (2003), who expressed an aim to develop an instrument with 12 items in the future. However, recent research has also adopted large numbers of items – for example Deery and Jago's (2010) framework which included 32 indicators and Yolal et al.'s (2016) research which included 40 items: 20 for socio-cultural benefits and 20 for social cultural costs.

One of the most important aspects of Fredline et al.'s (2003) assessment tool was the way it distinguished between impacts experienced at the personal level and those that affected the community. The authors aimed to provide an overarching assessment of both by asking respondents to assess the overall impact of the event under consideration on a) their quality of life and b) their community as a whole, using a 7 point Likert scale (-3 to +3). Interestingly, their work found that impacts were rated more positively at the community level. Pasanen et al. (2009) attempted to develop a similar tool that could be used to assess events in Finland. Their Finish Event Evaluation Tool (FEET) incorporated an assessment of socio-cultural impacts alongside economic impacts and attendee profiles. They incorporated statements taken from Delamere's, Fredline et al.'s and Small's work; and shaped them into questions to be answered by a range of event stakeholders - not only attendees, but also organisers, entrepreneurs, residents and policy makers. Participants were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with statements that certain impacts occurred. Like Fredline et al.'s (2003) research, Pasanen et al.'s (2009) instrument addressed impacts at both the personal level but also the community/municipal level, and there was scope for participants to explain answers in their own words.

The most recent example of an attempt to produce a research instrument that could be applied across different events to assess their social effects is the one produced by Wallstam et al. (2020). Their work aimed 'to pinpoint those indicators that are most universally applicable (in terms of event type and destination context), but also user friendly' (Wallstam et al., 2020:128). Accordingly, they selected items to assess social impacts based on three criteria: they had to be easy to obtain, the dimensions needed to be relevant to all types of events; and they needed to be relevant to all types of organisations. They used a Delphi study to help identify the most salient dimensions which were ultimately deemed to be: community quality of life; community or civic pride; social capital and network; sense of community; and community capacity enhancement.

Rather than seeking to cover every aspect of social impact, some researchers have tried to assess specific dimensions of the social impacts of community events. Van Winkle and Woosnam's (2014) research focused on 'sense of community' and tried to break this down into its consistent elements by using the work of McMillan and Chavis (1986) and McMillan (1996). Their work differed from other studies in that it tried to not only identify impacts but sought to explain them by considering the relative influence of community variables. Their research showed that 'sense of community' was not merely an outcome of staging events, but a factor contributing to the way that people regarded the social value of festivals. They found that certain dimensions that underpin a sense of community, particularly 'influence' and 'needs fulfilment', positively affected perceptions of social impacts. Yolal et al.'s (2016) work on the socio-cultural impacts of a film festival focused on how it affected subjective wellbeing: something that was measured using 3 items: the festival has enriched my life; the festival was rewarding; I feel better about things and myself with this festival. Choi et al.'s (2020) study focused on social interaction and connectedness, and asked event participants to evaluate the extent to which they felt connected/disconnected to their communities and related to this to their access to community events.

Overall, the task of measuring the social value of events is very complex. Evaluation is too often regarded as a post-event activity (O'Sullivan et al., 2009), and it is still rare to find thorough post-hoc evaluations of an event's success (Wood, 2006). Decisions on how best to gather data involve trade-offs between the amount and the depth of data generated. Assessing the social value of events is complicated by the fact that social constructs such as civic pride, quality of life and social belonging are nebulous and there is 'little published discussion of methods for measuring' these (Wood, 2006:168; also see Taks et al., 2015). As O'Sullivan et al. (2009) highlight, everyone agrees that evaluation is important, but what should be evaluated and how, generates less agreement. Existing research lacks explicit consideration of the applicability of existing approaches to small-scale, community run events. In these instances, robust measurement of outcomes is perhaps less important than evaluation that provokes learning and reflection.



6.0 Six Dimensions of the Social Value of Community Events

This literature review has identified a series of core ideas and issues that could be built into an evaluation framework. The first, and most obvious implication of the review is that any evaluation needs to take into account the diverse range of potential social impacts that events may cause or contribute to, which we have divided into six categories.

At the shared level:

1

Pride in place / civic pride / place attachment / place visibility

Events can affect the ways places are perceived: they can affect people's relationship with their place of residence, making them feel more proud of it and / or connected to it. This may lead to further positive effects, for example it may encourage people to contribute more to local projects, or take more care of local environments. Events can also make places more visible, something which may also feed back into feelings of pride and belonging.

2

Sense of community / belonging / identity / cohesion / togetherness / connectivity / social capital / trust / inter-group relations

The established role of events as vehicles for bringing people together also creates social value. Encouraging social contact can lead to enhanced individual wellbeing, but also shared benefits that result from building better connected and more resilient communities. This leads to a range of benefits including increased levels of trust, reduction in conflicts, better integration of isolated people and, ultimately, better support networks.

3

Involvement and participation / things to do / chance to meet people / capacity building.

Events not only bring people together, they give people something to do and this involvement also creates social value. People benefit by participating in events, but also by volunteering and getting involved in planning and organising them. These experiences not only give people the satisfaction of being active, and working together, they help to build the capacity of communities to organise events and other projects in the future.

At the individual level:

4

Wellbeing / quality of life / standard of living / happiness

Involvement in events, can enhance people's quality of life and, ultimately, their wellbeing by providing enjoyable, sociable experiences that lift people's spirits: giving them occasions to look forward to, and reflect on. Whilst there might be a limited effect from one-off small-scale events, a regular programme of events may enhance the wellbeing of participants.

5

Opportunities for learning and nurturing new skills / training / confidence / self-esteem / inspiration and attitude change.

Events can encourage personal development and equip people with the skills, confidence and knowledge that may help them in their everyday lives. These effects can emanate from the programme and content of events, but also from the organisation of events and from incidental encounters and interactions with different people.

6

Disruption to everyday life, anti-social behaviour, over stretched resources

Events are not universally appreciated and there may be some associated negative effects that diminish their social value. There may be disruption to everyday routines and events may affect the availability of amenities and resources for other uses. Sociable occasions can sometimes encourage inappropriate or antisocial behaviours and there is a possibility that they may cause or exacerbate community conflicts or disputes. If the people involved in organising events are overburdened, taken for granted, or criticised this may also cause negative effects.

Alongside identifying these six key determinants of value, our review has also highlighted how associated social impacts might be best assessed. Any instrument needs to be user friendly – the comprehensive academic instruments cited in this review need to be translated into a simplified framework. Any evaluation framework also needs to be flexible, to take into account the specific qualities and ambitions of a certain event. Ideally, evaluations need to include a longitudinal dimension so that the social effects of the event can be robustly assessed. Although quantitative instruments can be usefully applied in the context of social value research, it seems important to have a qualitative dimension to any analysis given the nebulous and subjective nature of many of the potential impacts. One significant research gap we have identified in this review is the strong propensity towards analyses of one-off events, usually at a significant scale. There needs to be more consideration of how regular, small and micro-scale events can be evaluated.

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