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RESIDENT VALUATION OF PLANNED EVENTS: AN EVENT PORTFOLIO PILOT STUDY

DAVID GRATION,*† MARIA RACITI,* DONALD GETZ,‡ AND TOMMY D. ANDERSSON§

*School of Business, University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia
†School of Business, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
‡University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
§School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

Residents of the Sunshine Coast region in Queensland, Australia, were surveyed on the subject of planned events in their region with the main aim of determining how and why they value events. It was revealed that residents gained considerable use value from events that they attended as audience or otherwise participated in, expressed strong support for a range of events (with a preference for community festivals), and overall did not believe that problems or costs were serious. Residents also indicated strong nonuse values (being existence, option, and bequest values) for events in general. Our findings are positioned within the body of literature concerning impact assessment (specifically, resident perceptions and attitudes towards events), valuation (i.e., the worth of events), and policy and strategy concerning community events and event tourism.

Key words: Resident perceptions and attitudes; Event portfolios; Valuing events; Public funding

Introduction

Cities and destinations have become event full (Richards & Palmer, 2010), with ever-larger and more diverse populations of planned events being accepted as legitimate and expected elements of modern life. Within event tourism and various public policy sectors, portfolios of festivals are being created and managed (Getz, 2013; Ziakis, 2013a). Consequently, there is a great need to examine the nature of populations of events and how they evolve, their use by residents, perceptions of impacts, attitudes towards events, and the overall value of the events sector. As event portfolios have to be planned and managed, attention must be given to cumulative and synergistic impacts—especially as some of these might not be anticipated or evaluated through normal methods applied to single events. Over time it can be expected that resident attitudes, and those of other stakeholders, will change in response to perceived impacts.
In terms of policy, a key issue is that of how governments justify their involvement in the events sector, either through direct operation of events or various grants and subsidies to events and event-tourism sectors. Although the economic and other impacts of a single event can be determined, we do not have tested tools to assess the value (or worth) of a managed portfolio or entire population of events; nor has there been developed a method for valuing a single event measured against all others on multiple criteria. We must ask which event(s) or types of events the community supports most, and which ones do not have public support. Are there marked differences in the value of events between community members? In the context of strategic planning for events and event tourism there is also a dearth of research and methods available for aiding the creation and management of a portfolio of events, whether it be intended to deliver economic, social, or cultural benefits. When multiple objectives are sought from events, as is increasingly the case, the evaluation and planning of portfolios becomes much more complex.

Getz (2013), in the book *Event Tourism*, advocated a portfolio approach:

> The idea is to develop and manage events as destination assets, although the same concept applies to a venue, company or an agency. The key is to expand one’s thinking from single events in an ad hoc approach to multiple events managed strategically. A full portfolio will consist of various types of events, for different target markets, held in different places, and at different times of the year, in pursuit of multiple goals. (p. 22)

Ziakis (2013a), in the book *Event Portfolio Planning and Management: A Holistic Approach*, defined it this way:

> An event portfolio is the strategic patterning of disparate but interrelated events taking place during the course of a year in a host community that as a whole is intended to achieve multiple outcomes through the implementation of joint event strategies. (p. 14)

For the purpose of this current study an events portfolio is defined as a group of annual events within a region that are supported directly or indirectly by government or semigovernment bodies. This working definition narrows the scope to a manageable number of events that are all explicitly recognized by the agencies developing or financing events.

The overall purpose of this research was to test an innovative approach to help determine the value of events and portfolios of events in a community or destination, leading to implications for policy and strategy making. This research fits into evaluation research in general, with an emphasis on interpretation and theory building, thereby distinguishing it from impact assessments that aim to prove cause and effect, and from program evaluations that have the goal of improving procedures and management systems. It builds upon work conducted on a single festival by Andersson and Lundberg (2013) and Andersson, Armbrecht, and Lundberg (2012), who employed measures of use and nonuse value through contingent valuation (i.e., willingness to pay) for both tourists and residents of Gothenburg, Sweden.

In extending research on resident valuation beyond a single event new techniques were required. First, following on from an audit of all planned annual events in the region we selected four specific events to inquire about attendance and perceived value. This selection of four events was intended to represent the geographical and programming diversity of cultural and sporting events held within the Sunshine Coast region. Business events were not included, based on the reasoning that they are targeted primarily at outsiders and can be mostly invisible to residents. Second, respondents to an online survey were asked about their attendance and participation in local events in general, their perceptions of costs and benefits, what they valued about events in their community, and which types they supported. These respondents were sourced utilizing five e-mail contact lists held by the Sunshine Coast Council (residents) and the four event managements (past attendees).

Our article is structured as follows. The literature review begins with a discussion of event portfolios and populations, followed by the policy context. Evaluation and valuation concepts and methods are then addressed, leading to the specific consideration of the branch of event impact assessment that concerns resident perceptions and attitudes. Use and nonuse valuation are then described. Next is the methods section where we describe construction of the online survey, sampling, and limitations.
Analysis presented in this article includes the following: respondent characteristics, attendance at events, the value of events, perceptions of impacts, and support for various types of events and event venues. Finally, the main findings are summarized and conclusions are drawn for policy, strategy, and future research pertaining to planned events.

**Policy for Planned Events**

How governments and event development agencies justify involvement in the events sector is a crucial, yet seldom studied issue (Ziakis, 2013b). Intervention can be in the form of direct operation of events or various grants and subsidies. The creation of public goods should be the driving force, and this goal can be achieved when events generate economic benefits including job creation, contribute to environmental conservation and improvements, and help realize a variety of social and cultural policy objectives (Chien, Ritchie, Shipway, & Henderson, 2012; Getz, 2012). But do residents understand and support these justifications and actions?

Policy affecting planned events can be roughly divided between event tourism (and related economic and place marketing goals) and the social and cultural policy domains. Events conceived or managed as instruments of public environmental policy do exist, but are comparatively rare. Although there exists literature and theory on resident perceptions of impacts and attitudes towards events, there has been little attention given to public input to policy formation.

**Literature Review**

**Event Populations and Portfolios**

Only recently have scholars paid attention to populations of festivals and the potential application of organizational ecology to the study of event populations, with pertinent articles by Jaeger and Mykletun (2009, 2013), Andersson, Getz, and Mykletun (2013), and Getz and Andersson (2016). This line of inquiry employs various threads of theory to question the numbers and evolution of events within a given area, and particularly their start up and failure. To date, the question of how residents or other stakeholders perceive and value whole populations of events has not been studied.

The idea of managed portfolios of events is also new, and reflects the trend for cities and destinations to proactively develop portfolios of different types of events, through bidding and marketing efforts, and occasionally through creation of new events. Portfolios can overlap, as with festivals intended to both attract tourists and foster social integration.

Ziakis (2013a) has examined a city’s portfolio (Fort Stockton, TX) and found that “event interrelationships are grounded on the instrumental connectivity of events in terms of sharing common elements, objectives, and resources. This cultivates an organic event relatedness that capitalizes on experiential capacity, maintenance of volunteer pools, and generation of new or complementary markets” (p. 84). In researching resident participation in a series of planned events in the Allarve region of Portugal, Valle, Mendes, and Guerreiro (2012) found that while a substantial number of residents participated in events created primarily for tourists (some 31.5% of resident respondents attended), others reflected negatively on government support for these events. Both these studies point towards the need to have event portfolios that align with the self-image congruity of both tourists and locals (Choo, Park, & Petrick, 2011).
Event tourism policy and strategies are typically narrow and instrumentalist. That is, the purpose is to attract tourists and generate income and jobs for the host community. In pursuit of this widely accepted form of government intervention facilities are built, events bid on, and other events marketed, often with minimal or no public consultations or accountability. It is often done in secret, justified by competition, and by agencies that are not required to fully analyze or report on costs and benefits beyond return on investment (ROI) related to economic criteria (Getz, 2013).

Events within the social and cultural policy domains aim to achieve a diverse range of goals including the creation of new leisure opportunities for residents, social integration, building civic pride or national identity, fostering appreciation and participation in the arts, or encouraging multiculturalism and environmental sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Getz, 2009). However, many of these events are also mandated to attract tourists and favorable publicity for destinations, and even in the absence of explicit tourism goals they are likely to be exploited by destination marketers (Derrett, 2004).

**Evaluation and Valuation**

There are two widely recognized meanings of evaluation (Trochim, 2000):

1. Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the worth or merit of some object.
2. Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object.

 Whereas evaluation is often used in the context of program or policy evaluation, with the specific aims of proving cause and effect (i.e., did the program achieve its aims?) or of demonstrating how to make improvements in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, the term valuation can have a more specific meaning. We use valuation when the aim is to place a value on something, or in this case to determine both the economic value (in monetary terms) and the perceived worth of planned events in the Sunshine Coast region. Although determining economic value most certainly requires a monetary measure, the question of worth is much more subjective and can be expressed as opinion rooted in ideology or perception of costs and benefits. Whether or not an event or event tourism has merit will inevitably reflect the judgment of residents, politicians, and other stakeholders, all of whom may be potentially ill informed or biased.

According to Rossi and Lipsey (2004), the positivist paradigm dominates contemporary evaluation research, notably through the prevailing emphasis on measuring economic impacts, customer satisfaction, and other quantifiable outcomes. According to Rossi and Lipsey (2004), it includes needs assessment, assessment of program theory and process, and efficiency. In contrast, a set of interpretive approaches has been described by Potter (2006), and these have in common an attempt to work with stakeholders to understand their expectations, experiences, and meanings before making judgment about value or worth. Close links with stakeholders and the community at large will obviously facilitate interpretive event evaluation, with specific qualitative methods including focus groups, interviews, and observation. This paradigm is likely to be more appropriate in evaluating event populations, policies, and legacies, all of which are open to various interpretations of cumulative impacts and values.

Wood (2009) put forward a framework for the evaluation of festival impacts that can be considered interpretive in design. It was:

Intended to incorporate a wider view of evaluation than has been used so far in event evaluation. It suggests that the views of all stakeholders are considered, that evaluation takes place within specific and unique contexts (and therefore cannot be standardized), a wide range of methods and sources of information is required to give a full and balanced view, that outcomes or objectives although important are not the only aspects to evaluated, and that a cost–benefit analysis or economic evaluation is not suitable for this type of festival where many of the effects are intangible, social, and long term. (p. 183)

There is always a measurement problem in science, starting with the rubrics that something does not exist unless we can measure it, and everything is affected by the measurement process. In other words, unless we have measures of the cultural impacts of events we cannot say if they exist or not. Second, by using a particular measure, such as
growth in arts participation as a measure of festival success, evaluators can either deliberately or inadvertently shape future design and consequential attendee experiences. That happens (hypothetically) because managers will be held accountable for arts participation increases in their performance evaluations and they will therefore tend to alter the program to ensure that the desired effect occurs.

Measurement is often complex, employing monetary values plus indicators of tangibles and intangibles, so the use of composites or summaries is common. These include cost–benefit ratios and ROI. How these are constructed is important, because stakeholders might easily get a false impression from summaries. Dwyer and Forsyth (2010) and Song, Dwyer, Li, and Cao (2012) provide advice on costs and benefits in tourism and events impact assessments, while Phillips and Phillips (2002) thoroughly cover ROI approaches and measurement for the events sector.

**Event Impact Assessment**

Impacts are but one category of outcome to measure, and impact assessment does not in itself constitute evaluation. How measures are decided upon and used in assigning value or worth are key evaluation issues. In triple bottom line approaches, it is crucial to incorporate externalities into evaluations, as well as consideration of social equity and justice (see L. Fredline, Raybould, Jago, & Deery, 2005; Gratton, Arcodia, Raciti, & Stokes, 2011; Hede, 2007; Sherwood, 2007). If the distribution of costs and benefits is not measured, for example, it cannot truly be said that a policy, strategy, or event is worthwhile. This is why so many impact forecasts and assessments focus only on purported tourism-generated benefits, because it is either too difficult to be comprehensive, or the proponents do not want to draw attention to potential costs and negative impacts.

Numerous events have been studied regarding their economic impacts, and the theory and methods for conducting such studies are well-established. Pioneering work was conducted by a team of economists on the impacts, including costs and benefits, of the first Adelaide Grand Prix (Burns & Mules, 1986). Soutar and McLeod (1993) examined impacts of the America’s Cup on residents of Perth and Fremantle. In 2000, Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, and Mules published two articles (2000a, 2000b) documenting a valid method for event impact assessment, based on Australian research. This was followed on by Dwyer et al. (2006) in their work on tourism yield and benefits. Further work conducted under the auspices of the CRC for Sustainable Tourism provided case studies of Australian events (Janeczko, Mules, & Ritchie, 2002; Jones, 2001), methods for conducting research (Jago & Dwyer, 2006), and the ENCORE toolkit for conducting triple bottom line evaluations (Schlenker, Foley, & Getz, 2010).

The book *Tourism Economics and Policy* by Dwyer and Forsyth (2010) provides detailed guidance as to issues and methods for single-event impact measurement, including costs and benefits. Economists have been interested in expanding the range of impact measures for events, hence an interest in willingness to pay, consumer surplus, and use/nonuse valuation. Andersson et al. (2012) and Andersson and Lundberg (2013) have tested use/nonuse methods for measuring the economic value of a single event, and for examining its valuation in a triple bottom line context, in Gothenburg, Sweden.

**Event Use and Nonuse Value**

Residents might value events for many reasons, some related to their actual experiences and others that can be called *psychic benefits*. A monetary value can be placed on each, if desired. According to Andersson et al. (2012), use value is a direct measure of the maximum amount that event visitors and participants (both residents and tourists) might be willing to pay and still be satisfied with the value experienced. Nonuse value stems from recognition by residents that they might attend in the future (option value) and that events are good for their community (i.e., existence value) or for future generations (bequest value) (Andersson et al., 2012). Nonuse values can be quantified by asking people if they would be willing to pay an increase in taxes in order to preserve events in the community. Conversely, residents might want a tax refund to compensate them for the inconveniences or losses generated by events.

This use/nonuse technique greatly expands the scope of placing value on events, but it has been
applied to only a single event. When applying it to an entire population (or portfolio) of events a number of additional challenges arise, and these are discussed in the methods section.

Progress has been made on assessing resident perceptions of event impacts, and attitudes towards events, including articles by Delamere (2001) and Delamere, Wankel, and Hinch (2001) on development of resident attitude scales as social impact indicators. E. Fredline and Faulkner (1998, 2001) and Xiao and Smith (2004) have researched resident perceptions of event impacts, while L. Fredline, Jago, and Deery (2003), Small (2008), and Robertson, Rogers, and Leask (2009) have all worked on development of social impact scales for events. A Social Impact Perception Scale was tested by Small, Edwards, and Sheridan (2005). Wood and Thomas (2006) measured cultural values and residents’ attitudes towards the Saltaire Festival in England. Ritchie, Shipway, and Cleeve (2009) also examined the factors that influenced resident perceptions and support of the 2012 Olympic Games (including commitment to the event, media portrayal, sociodemographics, and tourism involvement).

We know enough about tourism and event impact perceptions, and related attitudes, to understand the typical positives and negatives that people associate with event tourism. Exchange theory has been applied to the study of resident perceptions and attitudes, for example, as reported by Ye, Scott, Ding, and Huang (2012) regarding the Shanghai exposition. It suggests a clear correlation between perceiving a benefit and forming a positive attitude towards events and tourism. However, cause and effect relationships between attendances at events, or the presence of events, and the specific social/cultural impacts (either positive or negative) have not been established.

It is clear that the nature of events can result in increased pollution, congestion, erosion, or other environmental negatives, with consumption and travel being responsible for much of the ecological footprint, but we need to find out how citizens think about these in a broader and longer-term context, and relative to other effects. Quantification of the ecological footprint of events, as developed by Andersson and Lundberg (2013), enables formulation of a monetary value, but is quite a different approach to finding out if residents feel they are negatively impacted by events.

Methods

The full research project was in two stages, the first consisting of a complete inventory and analysis of all planned annual events in the Sunshine Coast region. A full audit, collecting data from secondary sources, determined that 58 events within a total event population of 231 annual events could be considered a managed portfolio based on receipt of financial assistance from some level of government at a local and/or state level. That work will be reported elsewhere, but it can be noted here that the region has a population of about 330,000, covers 3,130 km², and contains a number of nodes of seaside urban and tourist development, as well as rural areas with small towns and villages. One of the issues facing local politicians is how to unify such a diverse population, and events are part of their strategy (Sunshine Coast Council, 2013).

Stage two included an online survey directed both at residents and visitors. Reported in this article are results of questions for residents concerning the following: personal profiles; attendance at four named events; perceptions of event impacts; support for events; preferences for events and venues of different types; and values attached to events in their community. The rationale for singling out four events was as follows. First, with over 200 annual events in the region it would be virtually impossible to collect data on attendance at all of them. Furthermore, it was thought that certain questions would have more meaning if respondents could relate to a specific event, and this also permitted questioning of expenditure and willingness to pay (which will be reported elsewhere). The four selected events are held in different subregions, so that broad geographical coverage of the Sunshine Coast region was achieved, and represent some of the most popular events and festivals in the region.

Ethics approval was obtained through the normal University process. A pilot survey of residents (n = 253) was first undertaken, which resulted in elimination of a few questions, some rewording, and rescaling. Invitations to participate in the online survey were arranged through publication of two advertisements in the Sunshine Coast Daily.
Analysis

As with all social research, there are limitations that affect generalizability. We do not have a random sample of residents. Those aged 18 and younger were explicitly excluded because of legislation that prevents canvassing of children without written parental permission. Analysis also suggests a response bias favoring more educated, middle-aged and older females, and those who attended events. Researchers seeking unbiased input to important policy issues will have to devise a method for covering all segments of the population, but this will almost always be impeded by legislation (e.g., regarding age of consent and access to special groups), or the practicalities of securing a high response rate. In the context of this exploratory research the limitations are not critical. As well, it could be argued that the sample reflects those segments most likely to engage in a political dialogue about events, tourism, and other social issues in their community.

Profile of Residents

The online survey obtained a total of 1,085 usable resident respondents, over three quarters (75%) of which were female. As presented in Figure 1, respondents were primarily between the ages of 40–49 (21%) and 50–59 (25%).

Respondents tended to be tertiary educated (Bachelor’s degree: 28%; TAFE or trade qualification: 27%; postgraduate qualification: 26%). The top three occupations were professionals (26%), managers and administrative workers (10%), and community or personal services worker (5%); 23% were retired. Two thirds (67%) replied that they lived or worked in close proximity to one or more event venues. Approximately 70% of resident respondents perceived no direct or indirect benefit from tourism or events in the Sunshine Coast region. Over three quarters of resident respondents were married/partnered (76%) with most indicating that they currently did not have children under 18 years old living with them (69%).

**Figure 1.** Age groups of resident respondents.
To obtain a measure of nonuse values, residents who had attended any of the four events were asked the following question:

- The Sunshine Coast hosts a wide range of arts, culture, music, and sporting festivals and events. If you were asked to accept rates or tax increase to support the events in future years, what is the maximum amount that you would accept? Please write an amount in dollars or indicate nothing.

Two thirds (67%) of resident respondents who answered this question indicated an unwillingness to pay more (see Table 3). One third of resident respondents indicated a willingness to pay an increase in rates or taxes to the average amount of $42.65. These responses are quite different from the Swedish data reported by Andersson et al. (2012), and it appears that Australians are much less likely to accept tax increases to pay for events. It is possible that a better question would be to ask about how existing taxes should be distributed, rather than to suggest (even hypothetically, as specified in the questionnaire) possible increases.

The one third of resident respondents who indicated they would be willing to accept an increase in rates or tax to support events were then asked to indicate “what percentage of that amount is attributable to each of the following reasons (total must sum to 100)?” Option and existence values were highest (see Table 3), and no doubt these reasons were perfectly clear to respondents. Even if residents did not want to attend events they could see their value in attendance and involvement with local events.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attended Events on the Sunshine Coast</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real Food Festival (Maleny)</td>
<td>266 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caloundra Music Festival (Caloundra)</td>
<td>317 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooloolaba Triathlon (Mooloolaba)</td>
<td>254 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noosa Long Weekend (Noosa)</td>
<td>285 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of above</td>
<td>282 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1404 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Participants can choose more than 1.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement With the Four Named Events</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience member</td>
<td>605 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant (athlete, artist, etc.)</td>
<td>88 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>6 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>65 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>25 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>794 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendances and Involvement With Local Events

Respondents were asked which of the four named events they had attended, and the one most recently attended. As shown in Table 1, 20% of respondents had not attended any of the named events, while each of the four events attracted approximately equal proportions. Twenty-three percent of 1,404 respondents most recently had attended Caloundra Music Festival, making it the most popular.

Table 2 makes it clear that most respondents attended as audience members (76%), but they were also involved as volunteers (8%) and active participants as athletes, artists, etc. (11%).

As well, 40% of respondents indicated they had some other form of involvement with Sunshine Coast events. Overall involvement ranged from direct work on events (e.g., Real Food Festival volunteers) through to active co-creation in events (e.g., Triathlon competitors) and finally to those who attended as either paid or unpaid staff or officials (e.g., Triathlon observers).

Residents’ Valuation of Events

Seventy percent of resident respondents said they derived no direct or indirect economic benefit from events. That suggests that their valuation of events in the Sunshine Coast region is linked more to their engagement with the events and overall perception of public good. As evidenced by a high level of attendance at the four specified events it is clear that many residents of the Sunshine Coast region greatly value their local events as opportunities for entertainment and participation in many different ways, from volunteers and organizers to artists and athletes.
Table 3
Option, Existence, and Bequest Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It gives me the opportunity to visit or participate in this event in the future (option value)</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This event is beneficial for the reputation, image, and economic development of the Sunshine Coast (existence value)</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This event is beneficial for the social and cultural development of younger generations in the Sunshine Coast (bequest value)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For other reasons</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

this tourist destination community. Bequest value, defined in the survey as “This event is beneficial for the social and cultural development of younger generations in the Sunshine Coast,” attracted somewhat less support. Another way of looking at bequest value would be to suggest that certain traditions should be passed along to future generations.

Residents who never attended any of the four events were asked about their willingness to pay more each year on their taxes to support a “diverse program of festivals and events and related facilities on the Sunshine Coast.” Two thirds of respondents indicated they were unwilling to pay more. Of the 12 respondents who were willing to pay more per year on their taxes and rates, an average amount of $43.00 was indicated. Just over one quarter (3 responses, 27%) indicated they were uncertain.

When making an economic estimate of nonuse values, an adjustment should be made by subtracting an amount equal to perceived nuisance value of events. However, 97% of respondents did not want any compensation. Only 12 respondents wanted some compensation, with the average being $81.66 per year (note that 1 outlier of $5,000 was removed from the dataset).

Support for Local Events and Venues

Although 70% of our sample reported that they received no direct or indirect economic benefit from events or tourism within the Sunshine Coast region, it is clear that a large proportion of our respondents received a benefit in terms of attendance or participation, and that undoubtedly helps explain the overall positive attitude revealed in this study. By examining reasons for supporting events we can also elaborate upon option, existence, and bequest values (Table 4).

Option value is clearly revealed in the high mean score (5.94 out of 7) given to the first statement in Table 4: “It is good to have lots of events locally to choose from.” Existence value considers the overall value of events to the community, including their economic and social/cultural benefits. It is noteworthy that residents mostly support the idea that tourism events are good for the community, and that one major event is needed. However, this does not translate into a high level of support for subsidies and direct government provision of events and facilities.

Levels of resident support for specific types of events were also examined (see Table 5). Means of 5 or more are considered to be a high level of agreement, and so the results of this question demonstrate considerable support for all types of events—both resident and tourist oriented. The highest agreement (mean = 5.85) went to major permanent festivals and cultural celebrations that attract tourists, which fits one definition of a hallmark event. Also very highly supported (mean = 5.83) is entertainment events aimed at families.

Table 6 results show a high level of support for a full range of planned event facilities, including sports and business facilities, but with festival sites (outdoors) getting the highest mean (5.77). This appears to reflect and overall emphasis on family use valuation. However, it should be cautioned that support would not necessarily translate into a willingness to see taxes increase to pay for such facilities. Residents expect a range of venues and events but how they are to be financed is a different policy issue.
The literature is replete with lists of perceived event and tourism impacts, but perception and attitudes can be context specific. In this case, being a beach-based tourist destination community with a well-known and attractive rural hinterland, there is certainly an overall high level of awareness of tourism and events among the residents and an appreciation of the economic importance of tourism.

The top perceived negative impacts of events (from 470 responses) were: parking problems; public transport availability and accessibility; road closures and traffic congestion; cost (of entry fees); and concerns about litter, crowds, noise, and alcohol consumption (Table 7). Ecological or natural-environment impacts were not highlighted and this might be attributable to the largely built-up nature of the beach-based tourist destination communities and the relative smallness of events in the hinterland communities.

As shown in Table 8, the perceived positive impacts of events on Sunshine Coast residents were mostly related to boosting tourism and the economy (421 of 817 responses, 50%), followed by community building and spirit (133 responses, 16%) and cultural effects through the variety and quality of events (124, 15%). In some communities there might be a debate about the value of events and tourism, but in a tourist destination environment it is much more likely that their benefits are obvious and compelling because of the number of businesses and jobs that cater to tourists. The Sunshine Coast region has separated community-oriented events from tourist-oriented events in a strategic sense, with funding targeted at each, and this approach appears to reflect resident perceptions of the multiple roles and benefits of planned events (Sunshine Coast Council, 2013).

Additional Statistical Analysis

Two statistical tests were conducted to assess the influence of various factors on willingness to pay increased taxes to support events and venues. Firstly, a contingency table analysis was conducted to establish whether there was a significant
was statistically more important by females (mean = 5.65, SD = 1.11; the mean for males was 5.33). Note that female respondents dominated in this survey.

2. The level of support to have “Major international events—one time only” and “Major permanent events for tourists and business travelers” was statistically more important for those living in close proximity to event venues (mean = 5.58, SD = 1.37; mean = 5.75, SD = 1.11) compared to those who do not (mean = 5.33, SD = 1.26; mean = 5.42, SD = 1.06).

3. This finding seems to reflect a high degree of acceptance of tourism and events on the part of residents, and this in turn is likely to be a function of living in a tourist destination environment.

The level of support for four of the six event facilities was found to statistically vary in terms of relationship between demographic factors (i.e., gender, living in close proximity to the event venues, and those with children at home), and participation in an event, on the willingness to pay. Results show that there were no statistically significant relationships, so it can be concluded that there was a broad reluctance to accept tax/rate increases among the Sunshine Coast population.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with (1) gender, (2) event attendance, (3) living in close proximity to event venues, and (4) those with children at home as the independent variables and dimensions of (1) level of support for events and (2) level of support for event facilities as dependent variables. Three significant findings occur:

1. The level of support to have “Small scale events for locals (young people, families, and seniors)” was statistically more important by females (mean = 5.65, SD = 1.11; the mean for males was 5.33). Note that female respondents dominated in this survey.

Table 5
Level of Resident Support for Types of Events (N = 875)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Events</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major, permanent festivals and cultural celebrations that attract tourists</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment events aimed at families</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale entertainment events mainly for locals</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale festivals and cultural events mainly for locals</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, permanent entertainment events that attract tourists</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment events aimed at young people</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business events such as conferences and trade exhibitions that attract business travelers</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, permanent sporting events that attract tourists</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale sporting events, mainly for locals</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, international festivals and cultural celebrations (one-time only)</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, international entertainment events (one-time only)</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment events aimed at senior citizens</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, international sporting events (one-time only)</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Based on a 7-point scale where 1 = totally not support to 7 = completely support.

Table 6
Level of Resident Support for Event Facilities (N = 869)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should the Sunshine Coast Have the Following Event Facilities?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festival sites (outdoors)</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major regional performing arts center</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention and exhibition center</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, multipurpose sports facility (outdoor)</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major regional gallery</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, multipurpose sports facility (indoor)</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Based on a 7-point scale where 1 = totally not support to 7 = completely support.
Although the sample was biased in a number of ways, there are good reasons to accept the overall veracity of major findings. The highly developed nature of the beach-based tourist destination communities, which dominate in population terms, and the obvious importance of tourism in this region’s economy have no doubt influenced those who live there as to their habits and attitudes. In general, we can conclude that residents of the Sunshine Coast region greatly value their planned events, with substantial direct use value accruing from attendance, active participation (e.g., as athletes and artists), and volunteering. Respondents also gave strong recognition to the economic, personal, and social values of planned events, regardless of whether they used them or not. Option value (i.e., having more to choose from) was clearly high, followed by existence value (i.e., events are good for the community in multiple ways, especially the economy).

Bequest value (in this survey defined as benefits for younger generations) was recognized but at a lower level, and this might be a matter of wording. Bequest value could also be expressed as passing on valued traditions to future generations, and these differences should be explored further. Certainly other findings show strong support for family-oriented festivals and facilities, which does indicate that residents valued events for youth.

Residents especially support festivals and cultural celebrations, and a range of events and event venues are supported. However, support in principle

The respondents’ most recently attended event. Of the four recent events examined in the research, recent attendees of the Caloundra Music Festival had the highest support for a “convention and exhibition center” (mean = 5.88, SD = 1.47) and “festival sites (outdoors)” (mean = 6.35, SD = 0.95). Furthermore, recent attendees of the Mooloolaba Triathlon demonstrated the highest support for a “major, multipurpose sports facility (outdoor)” (mean = 5.96, SD = 1.24) and a “major, multipurpose sports facility (indoor)” (mean = 5.63, SD = 1.45). Although there were no statically significant relationships between the level of support for a “major regional performing arts center” and a “major regional gallery” and recent event attendance, these findings suggest an alignment between people who attend certain events and the event facilities they would support as they seemingly provided option value.

Summary and Conclusion

This article has presented selected findings from research concerning events and tourism in the Sunshine Coast region of Queensland, Australia. The principle aim is to contribute to theory, policy, and strategy related to events and tourism, and in particular to test methods for measuring the value of event populations and portfolios from the perspective of residents.
might not translate into a willingness to pay more in taxes. Rather than suggest, even hypothetically, that respondents should accept tax increases, it might be better to focus on the distribution of existing government funds. Residents largely believed that planned events were not causing significant social or environmental problems, although there was acknowledgement of specific issues related to events such as noise, parking, costs, etc.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

As cities and destinations develop and manage more and more events, many of which will be permanent or recurring, attention to event portfolio management and population or organizational ecology will naturally increase. The current research findings allow for some practical advice to be given to event strategists and policy makers, starting with the major recommendation that benefits to residents should always be emphasized and made clear. By inviting various forms of input and conducting periodic surveys, it is possible to demonstrate exactly how residents perceive and value events. The use and nonuse valuation methods explored in this research and similar studies are potentially important tools in the process.

Knowing what residents want and support is a good starting point for policy and strategy. Residents of the Sunshine Coast region already benefit from a dual event strategy targeting community events on the one hand and development of event tourism on the other. The research shows support for this approach and in particular support for maximizing joint use of events, a range of venues, maximizing opportunities for residents to both attend and participate in other ways, keeping costs as low as possible, favoring family oriented festivals, and developing one or more major hallmark events. Specific problems such as congestion, noise, rowdy behavior, crime, or pollution need to be addressed, and while they appear to be minor in our survey they could prove to be major detriments to event development in other settings.

Because public authorities and publicly subsidized events need to demonstrate the creation of public goods (that is, benefits that are realized and appreciated by everyone, or at least by all taxpayers), it is important to be able to show levels of public support and to identify and deal with issues raised; care should be taken to obtain the input of specific segments of the population that might be excluded through typical survey methods, including seniors, youth, and economically disadvantaged groups.

For tourists, direct measures of demand and expenditure are useful for evaluating overall portfolio health. Otherwise, we suggest that the health and sustainability of event populations will be reflected in resident use and nonuse values, perceptions of impacts, and attitudes towards events in their community. Measuring use and nonuse values worked well to capture the attitudes of residents and to explain their support for events and event venues in the Sunshine Coast region. Results make it clear that a substantial portion of the resident population (taking into account the nonrandom nature of the sample) derives considerable value from attending and participating in events and assigns high value to the economic and social/cultural value of events. A related approach, employed by Andersson et al. (2012), is to quantify use and nonuse values in monetary terms through the technique of contingent valuation (i.e., willingness to pay). Although monetary valuation on its own might appeal to those who prefer the traditional economic impact assessment of events, to be theoretically relevant it must be based on an understanding of the reasons for support and willingness to pay. In particular, for evaluation of event populations and portfolios it is essential that use and nonuse valuation is supplemented with measures of perceived impacts and expressions of attitudes towards events and venues, plus consideration of related issues like funding.

Further attention should be given to the meaning of bequest value and how it is to be measured. One suggested approach is to frame it in terms of traditions that should be passed down as authentic legacy to future generations. It was not really a surprise to learn that most residents do not want to pay additional taxes for events, but they do strongly support a full portfolio of various events in their community. Accordingly, it might be better to ask residents how they think existing government funds should be allocated rather than to imply that support might translate into higher taxes.
Researchers should continue to refine methods for measuring the valuation of planned events by residents. This study was successful in identifying the strength of support and reasons for valuing planned events. But an important challenge is to get a random or systematic sample of residents so that results from the sample are representative. Alternatively, a case can be made for quota sampling within distinct segments of the population in order to reflect the full scope of stakeholder experiences and views. This will prove especially challenging for youth, those in care facilities, and disadvantaged groups that typically will not respond to surveys.

The concept of a managed portfolio of events is becoming accepted practice, especially within an event tourism context. Overlapping portfolios, reflecting the involvement of multiple levels of government, are also becoming a bigger issue with events being increasingly seen as legitimate tools for many public policy initiatives. The current research demonstrates that the approach taken in the Sunshine Coast region does reflect (at least in tourist destination based communities) resident understanding and support for both tourism and community-oriented event policies. Answers to questions posed to Sunshine Coast residents do provide measures of asset value, at least for political consideration, as events use and explicit support for types of events and venues might be all that governments need to justify action. Nevertheless, additional measures of asset value and overall portfolio value will have to be developed, such as current and future value in generating positive image and attracting incremental tourist expenditure, financial viability, market share, and growth. More attention is definitely needed on the worth of events from different stakeholder perspectives, and for balanced integration of tangible and intangible asset valuation.

Finally, we can add a note on the relevance of exchange theory. Our analysis considered how willingness to pay increased taxes or support for events was related to several variables: proximity to event venues, perceived economic benefit from tourism and events, gender, having children at home, and attendance at one of the four specified events. Results of those tests were largely negative, showing no correlation. But the significance of a few correlations and the overall findings strongly suggest that gender plays a role, and that use values (actual attendance and participation in other ways) as well as option values (in this case perceived option to attend or participate in desired types of events) can be important factors in explaining perceptions of impacts, attitudes towards events, and support for intervention or funding. It is also clear that living in a tourist destination will influence the valuation of tourism and events so that comparisons among communities and destinations will be necessary to further this line of theory development and evaluation.

Acknowledgments

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References


