

ANALYZING THE ROLE OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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While tourism has a long history of use as a tool for regional development, events and festivals are a more recent policy option. In both cases the emphasis is often placed on the potential positive economic impacts. In both cases there has also been little research conducted into a wider range of outcomes or into the factors and processes that contribute to these outcomes. This article examines the potential role of festivals and events in regional development with a particular focus on effects other than economic. The study reported here used a conceptual framework developed to describe regional tourism development to explore 36 case studies describing festivals and events in a regional development context. The content analysis identified 13 themes as associated with the effectiveness of festivals and events in supporting regional development. These themes were further organized according to their connections to the three key constructs of building social capital, enhancing community capacity, and support for non-tourism-related products and services. These constructs are then used to build a preliminary conceptual framework to understand the role of festivals and events in regional development.

Key words: Festivals; Events; Regional development; Community capacity; Social capital

Introduction

The use of tourism as a tool for regional development has a long history (Gunn, 2004). Although tourism proponents such as developers and promoters typically emphasize the potential positive economic outcomes from tourism, the evidence to support these claims is not often available and the effects of tourism can be widespread and not always positive (Gunn, 2004). In the last decade events and festivals have been extensively promoted as a form of tourism particularly useful for regional develop-

ment (Dimmock & Tiyce, 2001). Again events proponents emphasize economic benefits, although more recently there has been some discussion of potential benefits other than economic (Derrett, 2003).

While there is growing recognition of a wider set of potential impacts of festivals and events on their host regions, the existing tourism academic literature has been dominated by four key topics:

1. Measuring the economic impacts of festivals and events (Daniels, Backman, & Backman, 2004).

2. Analysis of attendee or audience profiles and characteristics usually with the goal of improving marketing and service quality (Bowen & Daniels, 2005).
3. Examination of the management of actual events with a concern on enhancing marketing and service quality (Lade & Jackson, 2004).
4. Describing the range of both positive and negative impacts of festivals and events as perceived by residents (Fredline, Jago, & Deery, 2003).

In addition to these four key topics there is also an emerging interest in studying the role of festivals and events in destination promotion (Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules, & Ali, 2003).

The most common method used in the studies presented within these five topic areas is the descriptive case study and the researchers are most often primarily interested in the role that festivals and events play in tourism or destination development rather than the development of the region in general.

This article seeks to broaden our understanding of festivals and events by describing a wider set of potential roles for festivals and events with a specific emphasis on the factors and processes that support festival and event contributions to broader regional development. In this context regional development is seen as consisting of more than economic changes such as increased employment but also incorporates factors related to health, education, welfare, equity, and other social and cultural dimensions of community life. The article takes a conceptual model used to describe re-

gional tourism development processes (Moscardo, 2005) and applies it to case studies of events and festivals with the aim of describing how festival and event programs can contribute to regional development.

Festivals, Events, and Regional Development

Table 1 provides a summary of the impacts that have been discussed for festivals and events in regional locations. This table expands and adapts a taxonomy presented by Fredline, Jago, and Deery (2003). In particular, it includes the additional category of regional community development. Although the importance of community involvement in, and support for, events and festivals has been widely recognized as a factor contributing to the success of events and festivals (Jago et al., 2003; Lade & Jackson, 2004), there has also been some discussion of the potential for events and festivals to contribute to the building of community cohesion and identity (Derrett, 2003; Molloy, 2002). This latter phenomenon has been explicitly recognized in community development programs such as the Mainstreet program (see www.mainstreet.org for more details) and initiatives such as the Towns and Villages Futures program conducted by the New South Wales Department of State and Regional Development (see www.business.nsw.gov.au/ for more details).

Within this realm of regional community development are three major, interrelated constructs: social capital, community capacity, and community well-being. Evans, Joas, Sundback, and Theobald (2005) and Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) discuss a range of defini-

Table 1
Summary of Festival and Events Impacts in Regional Locations

Category	Positive	Negative
Economic	Income/reserve; Multiplier effect from visitor spending; Employment	Loss; Increased prices for locals; Opportunity costs
Tourism	Enhance destination image; Extension of tourism season	Risk of reputation damage
Physical	New facilities & infrastructure; Regeneration of rundown areas	Environmental damage; Overcrowding, congestion
Sociocultural	Social opportunities for locals; Improved social networks	Commoditization of culture; Antisocial behavior; Dissatisfaction with event image
Psychological	Enhanced sense of community; Excitement & pride	Conflict
Regional community development	Enhanced skills for volunteers & participants (Kemp, 2002); Support for other regional products and services (Bessiere, 1998); Development of partnerships and alliance (Coaffee & Shaw, 2005; Jones, 2005)	Conflict with other regional activities

Note: Contents for first five categories are from Fredline, Jago, and Deery (2003) and Xiao and Smith (2004).

tions of social capital noting the key characteristics of networks and relationships that facilitate mutual or collective action, trust, social cohesion, shared norms, and cooperative behavior. It could be argued that regional communities with high levels of these types of social relationships have high stocks of social capital (Molloy, 2002). Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) go on to argue that at the core of social capital are social relationship networks built from positive interactions between individuals. In this system these micro level interactions create reciprocity, trust, and shared constructions of reality (Habermas, 1972). According to Falk and Kilpatrick (2000), shared participation in learning activities is one way to enhance social capital. Molloy (2002) provides evidence that volunteer involvement in festivals and events is a form of learning.

The learning component of festivals and events is not restricted solely to volunteers. Arguably event organizers, performers, athletes, and other participants also gain learning opportunities from events and festivals. This opportunity to learn new skills and enhance existing skills can be seen as part of building community capacity. Here community capacity refers to the skills, knowledge, and mechanisms that support innovation, change, and problem solving (Evans et al., 2005). Not surprisingly community capacity is often seen as relying in part on social capital (Evans et al., 2005). Social capital and community capacity in turn can be seen as contributing to community well-being. According to Cox (1995) and Ulrich (1998) active citizens, equity and justice, and social capital support and sustain prosperous, viable, and attractive communities.

Derrett (2003) argues that festivals and events contribute to community well-being in a number of ways including the creation and enhancement of sense of place which contributes to social identity, and opportunities to build the relationships and networks that create social capital. It can also be suggested that involvement in festivals and events supports learning and skills which contribute to community capacity.

Understanding Regional Tourism Development

Moscardo (2005) provides a preliminary conceptual model to describe the key variables and relationships between them that contribute to effective tourism development in rural and/or remote regions. A simplified version of this model is presented in Figure 1. The model proposes three key phases in regional tourism development.

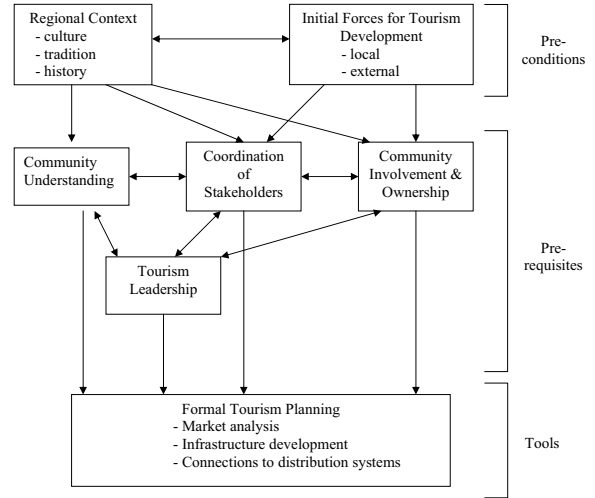


Figure 1. Conceptual model for regional tourism development. Adapted from Moscardo (2005).

- The establishment of the preconditions for tourism development including a consideration of where the initial impetus for the tourism development comes from.
- The identification and development of key prerequisites for tourism development which include the level of community understanding of tourism, the existence of tourism leaders, the coordination of stakeholders, and the development of mechanisms to encourage community involvement in, and ownership of, tourism businesses and development
- Tools to support tourism development including formal plans, infrastructure development, and marketing.

Moscardo (2005) does not make any specific predictions or hypotheses about the ways in which the factors included in the model combine to create positive outcomes from tourism development. It is possible, however, to use information from the analyses presented to suggest that tourism development will be more likely to have positive outcomes for regional communities if:

- The initial forces for tourism development come from within the local community including from local government and local individuals.
- The community understands tourism processes and potential impacts.

- There are tourism leaders or champions.
- There are opportunities for community involvement and ownership.
- There are formal tourism plans including a consideration of markets, infrastructure development, and connections to tourism distribution systems.

A number of parallels can be drawn between this model of regional tourism development and both the literature on regional development in general and the success or failure of events. In the former situation the importance of community involvement is part of this commonality. In the latter case the importance of community involvement in terms of organizing, volunteering, participating, and/or attending has been recognized as a key component in the success of festivals and events (Jago et al., 2003; Lade & Jackson, 2004; Molloy, 2002). In addition several event management authors have emphasized the need for more formal approaches to festival and event planning and management (Getz, 2002; Lade & Jackson, 2004).

Research Aims

It has already been noted that the role of communities in successful festivals and events is recognized in the academic event management literature. What has not been examined in detail is the role successful festivals and events can play in regional development. One exception is Derrett's (2003) analysis of event contributions to social capital through enhanced sense of place. Typically, event management research has studied the factors that contribute to successful events where success is seen as longevity of the event, numbers of tourists attracted, and/or economic success (Getz, 2002; Lade & Jackson, 2004). The present study seeks to explore success from the point of view of contribution to regional

development in general and to identify the factors and/or processes that might underpin this type of success.

Methodology

This study sought to achieve the aim by analyzing a sample of 36 case studies of festivals and events in regional destinations. The methodology can be seen as taking an inductive approach consistent with general guidelines provided by Douglas (2003) and Eisenhardt's (1989) steps for using case studies to build theory. Table 2 provides a summary of Eisenhardt's steps.

In terms of getting started, the research question has been set out in the previous section and the a priori constructs are those identified in Moscardo's (2005) model of regional tourism development and in the literature on social capital and community well-being. The population was set as publicly available descriptive case studies of festivals and events in rural/peripheral regions. The cases were selected using two methods: a traditional search of the academic literature using a range of electronic databases, and an online search of the World Wide Web. This resulted in a sample of 36 case studies from the event management academic literature, the regional development academic literature, and government reports on regional development projects. A case study was included in the sample if it provided some assessment of the role of the event/festival in regional development in general.

Table 3 summarizes some of the key features of the sample. As can be seen, half of the cases were from Australia reflecting both government funding of events as a regional development option and academic interest in this topic. There were, however, cases from a range of different countries and a wide variety in the types of event or festival described. Nearly all of the cases were of regular or recurring events, usually annual, and in

Table 2
Eisenhardt's (1989) Steps in Case Study Analysis

Main Steps	Key Researcher Activities
Getting started	Define research question; Identify useful a priori constructs
Selecting cases	Specify population; Select sample
Crafting protocols	Use multiple data collection methods; Combine qualitative and quantitative methods; Use multiple investigators
Analyzing data	Conduct within cases analyses; Explore and identify cross-case patterns
Shaping hypotheses	Cycle between finding themes from the analysis of individual cases and checking for these themes in other cases
Enfolding literature	Compare findings to a priori constructs identified in the literature
Further development towards theory	Extend and test hypotheses in other samples of case studies

Table 3
Descriptive Profile of the Sample of Case Studies

Key Feature	Number (%) of the Total Sample
Geographic location of the case	
Australia	18 (50%)
Europe	9 (25%)
North America	4 (11%)
Asia	4 (11%)
Africa	1 (3%)
Type of event	
Arts/cultural festival	9 (25%)
Seasonal/religious festival (e.g., Easter, Christmas)	7 (19%)
Sports events	6 (17%)
Music festival	5 (14%)
Food/agricultural event	4 (11%)
Other	5 (14%)
Recurring event	34 (94%)
One-off event	2 (6%)

all of these 34 cases the event was ongoing at the time the case study was published. This is not surprising given the tendency noted by Getz (2002) for published information to be biased towards to successful events that were ongoing.

The next step in Eisenhardt’s (1989) case study methodology is concerned with the protocols for data analysis and here it is suggested that researchers use multiple data collection methods and investigators and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. The use of a sample of existing published case studies meets all these requirements, although, it should be noted that most of the case studies were based on qualitative methods especially unstructured interviews and participant observation.

The use of existing case studies also addresses the first component of the next step in the methodology, that of analyzing data which is concerned with describing within cases patterns. The main analysis approach in this step in the present study was to use standard content analysis procedures (Cooper & Schindler, 2001) for each case study to identify the key issues or topics reported with a particular emphasis on factors considered to have contributed to regional development in general. As the list of themes was extended, earlier cases were reexamined in light of the new themes. Two coders worked independently with agreement on nearly all of the themes identified (98%). Once a complete list of themes was determined it was compared to the factors identified in the literature review.

Results

A total of 13 key themes emerged from the content analysis and these are outlined in Table 4. The table includes information on the frequency of the themes to provide a rough indication of the relative emphasis placed on different themes. This distribution highlights the importance of community involvement and the building of networks as two commonly identified factors in positive contributions of festivals and events to regional development.

It is important to note that the themes were not all independent; clusters of themes recurred in several cases. These clusters were identified by creating a co-occurrence matrix where each theme was examined in each case to see what other themes were associated with it. An examination of these patterns of co-occurrence suggested that there were three main categories or groups of themes: one associated with building social capital, one related to increased community capacity, and one connected to support for other activities.

Building Social Capital

A number of the themes were related to processes for building social capital. Some were directly related in that the festivals or events described were seen as providing enhanced opportunities for regional residents to interact and develop the relationships and networks that are at the core of social capital (Carter & Shaw,

Table 4
Key Themes Identified in Content Analysis

Themes	No. of Cases in Which Theme Was Identified
Level of community involvement in the event	15
Building of networks in planning the event	10
Support for non-tourism-related regional products and services	8
Fun and entertainment for residents/participants	8
Opportunities for residents/families to socialize	8
Celebration of achievements	8
Event connections to a specific place	7
Contributes to stronger shared local identity	7
Can use tourism to maintain traditional culture/heritage sites	6
Coordination/partnerships needed to run the event	6
Leadership	5
Opportunities for locals to develop skills	4
Relevance to the local community	4

1993; Derrett, 2003; Jones, 2005; Larsom & Wikstrom, 2001; Long, 2000; Mules, 2004; World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2001). In particular several case study authors argued that the opportunity to socialize together having fun and being entertained was particularly valuable in creating positive social relationships (Van Zyl & Botha, 2004; Xiao & Smith, 2004). Some case studies (Kenyon & Black, 2001; Rao, 2001) highlighted the role that festivals and events played in enhancing family bonds with a particular emphasis given to reunions that were associated with the events (Derrett, 2003; Ekman, 1999).

Several cases included a discussion of the importance of using events to celebrate achievements and support community pride. There were two approaches to this theme. One was an emphasis on events that were designed solely to celebrate various community achievements (Kenyon & Black, 2001). The other approach focused on the pride that residents and event participants derived from others seeing the community or region in a positive light (Kenyon & Black, 2001; Van Zyl & Botha, 2004). These others could be tourists attending the event (Tomkinson, 2004) or coverage of the event in the media (Gibson & Davidson, 2004; Long, 2000).

Two other related but more indirect pathways were identified with regard to social capital. One was related to the role that events can play in enhancing sense of place (Derrett, 2003; Ekman, 1999), while the other emphasized the importance of festivals contributing to shared local identity (Ekman, 1999; Gemie, 2005). These two themes were related in that it was argued that events with a strong emphasis on a specific place or setting enhanced sense of place which in turn contributed to greater community support for a shared social identity (Derrett, 2003). Within these discussions several examples were given on how festivals and events could be used to strengthen local or regional identity as separate from national identity (Gemie, 2005).

These discussions of local identity and sense of place highlighted the importance of events being seen as relevant to the local residents with several authors noting that problems can arise when an event is altered to better suit the needs of tourists (Mules, 2004; Xiao & Smith, 2004). This seemed to be more of a problem when an event grew out of traditional activity or the event was originally meant to be mainly for local participation (Mules, 2004). Such alterations were often associated with a perceived need to attract external visi-

tors to justify government funding or to become financially viable (Mules, 2004). Another problem identified in some of the case studies associated with local or regional image was conflict over what that image should be. In some cases it was noted that not all residents agreed with the local images they believed were associated with the event highlighting the need for event planners to consider ways to reach consensus over the image to be portrayed in regional events and festivals (Xiao & Smith, 2004). Finally, several cases highlighted the role of events and festivals in maintaining or reviving traditional cultural activities that further contributed to enhanced local identity (Ekman, 1999; Hiroyuki, 2003).

Increased Community Capacity

The most direct link between regional events and festivals and community capacity was that of increased skill development. Participation in the planning and running of the event (Dunn, 2004; Merritt, 2004) or participation in an event, especially for sporting events (Lade & Jackson, 2004) and cultural performances (Hiroyuki, 2003) were seen as providing opportunities to learn new skills and enhance existing skills. One particular area of skills development highlighted in some cases was that of leadership. Three aspects of leadership were noted in the case studies analyzed. The first was the importance of having a local champion to lead the event planning or organizing committee (Derrett, 2003; Mules, 2004; Tomkinson, 2004). The second aspect was the opportunity for event organizers to learn general leadership skills that could be used in other areas (Tomkinson, 2004), while the third highlighted the opportunities that events gave to young residents to develop leadership skills (Merritt, 2004).

Some of the discussions of the networks associated with event planning and management also noted the value of these networks for other regional activities. This particular role of events and/or festivals in regional development was, however, more clearly linked to discussions about coordination mechanisms and partnerships built between different organizations. The argument here is that the creation of partnerships for an event enhances community capacity to respond more effectively to other regional development opportunities. It was noted in several case studies that the processes put in place to coordinate input into the event or festival and the partnerships built with organizations, both

within and outside the region, became valuable after the event in pursuing other types of development options (Carter & Shaw, 1993; Jones, 2005; Lade & Jackson, 2004; Long, 2000). It was noted, however, that for this role to be effective the organizing or coordination group needs to be community-based and the local community needs to retain control over the event (Horne, 2000; WTO, 2001).

Support for Other Activities

The final set of themes concentrated on the support that events and festivals provide for both other types of tourism development and other non-tourism regional products and services. In the case of tourism, examples were provided of the development of infrastructure for the event that could then be used to support tourism development in general (Ekman, 1999). In the case of nontourism activities, a number of the events or festivals studied concentrated visitor attention on the agricultural products of the region, offering opportunities for consumers and suppliers to directly interact with small producers in the region (Carter & Shaw, 1993; Derrett, 2003; Ekman, 1999; Kenyon & Black, 2001), and increasing awareness of specialist regional products (WTO, 2001). Not all the benefits were restricted to agricultural products. Jones (2005) noted that the influx of visitors associated with events creates a larger market for local businesses to trial new products and services. Other benefits of events and festivals were the development of spin-off businesses initially created to support the event (Merritt, 2004).

Toward a Conceptual Framework of the Role of Events and Festivals in Regional Tourism Development

The second stage in the analysis of the case studies compared the list of key themes identified from the cases with the concepts and factors noted in the regional tourism development model and the literature on social capital and community capacity building. The three main points of overlap between the list of themes in the present study and the ideas presented in Moscardo's (2005) model of regional tourism development were tourism leadership, community involvement, and coordination of stakeholders. Although these three factors were common to both the present study and the Moscardo model, they were conceptualized in different ways in the two different situations. In Moscardo's

model, tourism leaders, community involvement and coordination of stakeholders were necessary prerequisites for effective regional tourism development, while in the present study they were seen as valuable outcomes of successful events. It should be noted, however, that these three factors have also been recognized as important contributors to the success of festivals and events (Lade & Jackson, 2004). This duality suggests that successful regional festivals and events happen when local communities get organized into effective coordination bodies, with leaders who encourage maximum community involvement in the event. So it can be argued that it is the mechanisms that are used to create these successful coordination bodies and to encourage community leadership and involvement in festivals and events that contribute to better outcomes for regional development in general.

In addition, the pattern of results identified in the present study suggest that events and festivals may be useful tools for developing the prerequisites or community capacity to better manage and control other forms of tourism. Successful regional events and festivals can enhance other aspects of community capacity to benefit from tourism such as increasing community awareness of tourists and their expectations and infrastructure creation.

These connections between events and festivals and regional development highlight the central role that events and festivals can play in enhancing regional community capacity and social capital. Events that encourage regional community residents to interact in positive ways and develop effective relationships contribute directly to social capital. Such events, when connected to the regional setting or traditional culture can also indirectly contribute to social capital through developing and strengthening local sense of place and regional social identity.

Figure 2 summarizes the findings of the present study in a preliminary conceptual framework to understand the role of events and festivals in regional tourism development. At the center of this model is community involvement. The framework proposes that an event may attract substantial numbers of visitors and generate revenue, but if it does not create community involvement it is unlikely to contribute much to regional development. It is this community involvement that enhances social capital and community capacity that are the two core components of positive regional development.

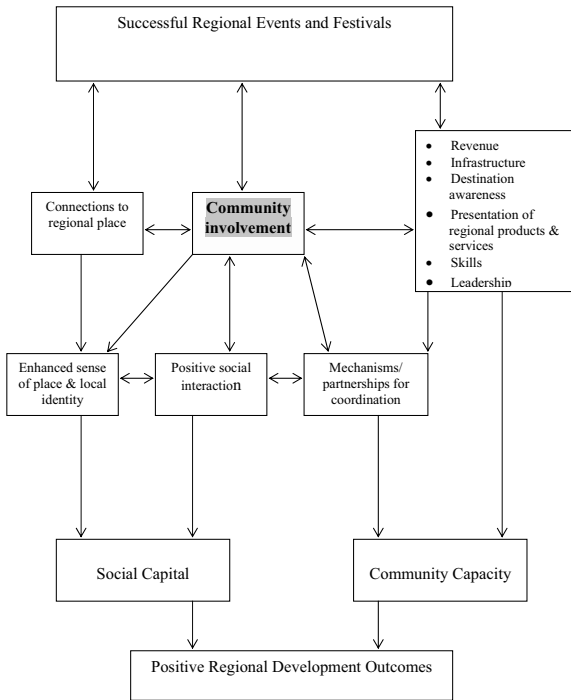


Figure 2. A preliminary conceptual framework to understand the role of festivals and events in regional development.

One key aspect of this framework is that it gives a much smaller role to the economic benefits and tourism marketing benefits than has traditionally been the case in the events management literature. The analysis of the cases in the present study found few links between the revenue generated by the event and regional development as in most cases the event was essentially a non-profit activity. In some cases it seemed that the need to demonstrate economic benefits in order to gain and maintain government event funding may have directly resulted in changes in the nature of the event. In turn these changes resulted in limited community involvement and thus detracted from longer term positive regional development outcomes.

One limitation of this model is that the cases on which it was based were all considered to be successful by the authors and/or stakeholders interviewed in the case study, and in all but two cases the events were ongoing. But what happens to social capital and community capacity if an event is perceived as a failure? In some of the cases the event was planned specifically for local involvement only and so success was not dependent on

its ability to attract tourists, but in others success did rely on tourist participation. This second situation raises the challenge of balancing external market needs and forces against community involvement and resident needs. The present study provides no answers to address this challenge.

This limitation raises two questions for further research. Firstly, what happens to social capital and community well-being when events fail? Secondly, how can the needs of local and tourist markets be balanced? In addition to these questions, it can be argued that further research which specifically measures factors such as the number and quality of social relationships developed through the event, the level and types of learning from participation in the event, and the contribution of event coordination partnerships to other regional activities, could be valuable in improving the ability of festivals and events to contribute to positive regional development outcomes. A number of possibilities exist for developing more systematic measures of the impacts of festivals and events on these noneconomic aspects of regional development. First, it may be possible to adapt existing general measures of social capital such as those provided by De Silva et al., (2006), Lochner, Kawachi, and Kennedy (1999), or Van der Gaag and Snijders (2005), for a festivals and events context. Secondly, such a measure could be paired with similar adaptations of measures of social and cultural impacts of tourism in general (Langford & Howard, 1994, provide an example of such a scale). Together these could be used as the basis of a survey of local residents and participants in regional festivals and events. A third possibility is the structured recording and reporting of various aspects of community involvement in regional event planning and management such as numbers of local resident volunteers or participants, numbers of repeat volunteers or participants for regular events, and numbers and type of local organizations represented on the various committees associated with the coordination of a regional festival or event.

Conclusion

This article presented an analysis of 36 case studies of festivals and events in regional situations. In particular, the article explored the factors associated with the effectiveness of festivals and events in enhancing social and cultural aspects of regional community development related to social capital, community capac-

ity for development and support for non-tourism-related services. The results of these analyses were used to develop a conceptual model describing the processes that connect festivals and events to a broad range of regional benefits. The challenge for future researchers is to develop ways to more systematically measure these regional benefits and use such measures to test aspects of the model.

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