

On social impact of five festivals

Reidar J. Mykletun
Norwegian School of Hotel Management
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Stavanger
Stavanger, Norway



University of
Stavanger

Background of presentation

- Previous (Nordic) research show
 - Sharp increase in number of festivals over the last 15 years (Jaeger & Mykletun, 2009; Mykletun & Gyimothy, 2009)
 - That visitors generally appreciate festivals and most festivals grow in numbers of attendances (Gyimothy & Mykletun, 2009)
 - That festivals are generally are economical viable (Andersson et al, 2008; DN 2008; Aftenposten, 2008)
- However, the perceptions and appreciation of festivals by local inhabitants are still under-researched (e.g. Small, Edwards & Sheridan, 2005)



Previous research (examples)

- Festivals may create inconvenience like increased traffic, waiting lines, common disorder, noise, accidents and crime (Small, 2007)
- Festivals may contribute to learning, innovation, problem solving, create activity, positivity, identity and belonging (e.g. Derrett, 2003; Jaeger & Mykletun, 2010; Moscardo, 2007)
- Festivals are opportunities for individuals, families and organisations to show social responsibility and contribute to economical turnover (e.g. Rao, 2001)
- Governmental entities stage festivals for their contribution to: recreation /socialization, culture/ education, tourism, internal revenue generation, natural resources, agriculture, external revenue generation, and community pride/spirit (Mayfield and Crompton, 1995)
- Events are arenas for companies to promote products and services through sponsorship (e.g. Gursoy, Kim & Uysal, 2004) and they may be catalysts for new infrastructure (Getz, 2005)

Research problem

- How do the local, permanent residents in rural and small-town remote areas perceive the festivals hosted annually in their municipalities?



Design and method

- **Methods**
 - Documents and web-pages
 - Local newspapers
 - Blogs
 - Interviews with organisers and police
 - Cross-sectional telephone interview with residents
- **For interviews with residents**
 - Population = residents listed in telephone directory in two municipalities
 - Every 47th person from the telephone directory of the two areas sampled
- In case of no response, a new respondent was selected from the listing
- Total sample = 54
- **Interview form**
 - 27 item
 - Open questions
 - Scales ranging from disagree to agree
 - Knowledge about festivals in own and neighbouring town / municipality
 - Own (local) festival experiences
 - Have recommended the festivals to others
 - Demographics

Impact dimensions in the interview form

- Personal and social impacts
 - Coherence and socialising
 - Identity, pride and belonging
 - Entertainment
- Society level
 - Development of culture, networks, engagement, learning options and economy
 - Give locals a great deal of trouble and inconvenience

Based on “Social Impact Perception Scale” (SIP) by Small & Edwards (2003); see also Small, Edwards and Sheridan (2005); and Small (2007)







The festival context: *"The Bible Belt"*



Kvinesdal

5,700 residents; 1,000 km²

Mining, farming, industry, hydro-electric power plants, service, ocean and salmon fishing

Traditionally strong religious society (Pentecostalism)

Large emigration to US from this area



Flekkefjord

Established 1842

9,000 residents, 482 km²

Highest average temperature / year in Norway

Shipyards, technical industry, service, administration

On the "North Sea Road"

Dutch influence

Traditionally strong religious society (Pietistic)



The festivals in Kvinesdal

• The Emigration Festival • The Norway Rock Festival



- Established 1989 to celebrate the successful emigration to the US
- Eight days in July with cultural program, excursions, celebrations, parties and religious services
- Budget = 500,000 NOK,
- 100 volunteers, 5,000 visitors
- Owned by the Sørlandet Emigration Centre, along with the Emigration Monument, The Emigration Museum and the Viking Lodge

- Established 2006 to entertain with Rock and Metal music, employing local resources and providing learning opportunities, three days in July
- Owned by a non-profit organisation
- Budget = 12,000,000 NOK
- 12,000 visitors, 16 sponsors, 150 volunteers
- 2009 program included among others Alice Cooper, TurboNeger, Twisted Sisters



The festivals in Flekkefjord



Fjell Park Festival

- Established 1982 (informally) to give all inclusive music experiences, today for fostering 15-25 years old to rock music and train event management skills
- Owned now by Flekkefjord Rock Club (non-profit)
- Budget= 1,000,000 NOK
- 1,500 visitors, 30 volunteers

The Salmon Festival

- Established 1991 by Flekkefjord Athlete Club as part of their 100 years anniversary, using newly established salmon farming as icon
- Celebrating with dance, athlete shows, meals, walks and music for three days, end of July
- Budget = 250,000 NOK
- 10,000 visitors, 250 volunteers

The Small-town Festival

- Established 2005 by the Municipality to celebrate the good small town life-style, one week in early June, initially for the 100 years anniversary of the resolution of the union with Sweden
- Budget = unknown
- Informal organisation



Findings 1: Knowledge about the festivals and recommendations to others

- Knowledge about all the local festivals: 100 %
- Knowledge about all the festivals in the neighbouring municipality: 60 %
 - Least known is the Small Town festival (new 2005)
- Visited one or more of the festivals: 94 %
- Visited all the local festivals: 42 %
- Most visited: The Salmon, the Emigration and the Small Town Festivals
- Reason for not visiting the festivals:
 - lack of interest in the themes
 - had no opportunity to attend
- Recommending one or more festivals to others: 76 %
 - (With pride) “...and they came all the way from Biri, Bykle and Bergen”
 - “A couple from Sarajevo, lived here for a while, and they return every year for the Salmon Festival just because it is so nice”



Findings 2: Coherence and socialising

- The festivals create coherence: 96 %
 - Norway Rock and Fjell Park caused the exceptions
- The festivals create fun: 92 %
 - Norway Rock and Salmon Festival caused exceptions
 - “The salmon stands still, no innovation, everybody are not happy for all these festivals”
- The festivals create reasons to socialise: 98 %
 - “I meet people I haven't seen for ages”
 - “My grown-up kids love to come home for these festivals”
 - “Quite a few people call me asking about when the Salmon is on, because they would like to come to Flekkefjord...to meet with many people they know on that occasion”

Findings 3: Identity, pride and belonging

- The festivals create pride for the people here: 96%
 - Norway Rock and Salmon Festival caused exceptions
 - “The achievements of Norway Rock are unbelievable “
 - “All of them are fine, but the Salmon is just extraordinary”
- The festivals protects the heritage: Ambiguous
 - Depending upon which festival and what type of relationship the person had to each of them: The Emigration Festival and the Small Town Festival are the winners, while the rock festivals are the losers
 - “I remember the Fjell Park had exhibitions at their 20 years anniversary... they have culture and history to present”
 - “The small Town Festival had guided walks through the town, and they organise art exhibitions and use the museums”

Findings 4: Entertainment

- Festivals create entertainments that is worthy of your participation: 98%
 - “I cannot reach it all, and I do get fed-up with these repetitious types of entertainment”
 - “Many attend because of the others – not for the music, but for the Tivoli ambience”
 - “The Salmon and Small Town contribute with concerts and quite big names... Small Town lasts for a whole week and arranges lots of happenings around the town”
 - “Absolutely, so varied with something for everybody”
 - “Festivals are important because they create a lively atmosphere in our dead small townships”
 - “Fjell Park is fabulous, still going strong although run only by youngsters, and so many of them! It is of great importance to the young ones”

Findings 5: Development of culture, networks, engagement, learning options and economy

- Festivals contribute in positive ways to our municipality: 82 %
 - “Local artists get exposure and may be discovered”
 - “They are important – they create coherence and well-being”
 - “They mobilise people, and that improves our community”
 - “So much initiative in such a small place! And it gives us a name and face outside our municipality”
 - “Every social and cultural activity contributes”
 - “Indeed, they attract people to our place and where human beings congregate, there will be evolution and development of business and networks... meetings between people create activities, which is important ”
 - “Festivals are a great way for marketing of our township”
 - “We used to be known only for “Saron’s Dal”, but now we get known for Norway Rock and the Emigration Festival – it is great”



Findings 5 (continued):

- Positive effects from the work of organising festivals: 100 %
 - “Indeed, voluntary work creates coherence and learning opportunities – almost a “must” for developments”
 - “Of course! Otherwise nothing would happen. They are clever in all the festivals. The spirit is amazing at the Salmon Festival. Locals can also get exposure”
- Learning opportunities in organising festivals: 96 %
 - “... although the learning outcomes depends on the type of job one actually does”
- Beliefs in positive economical outcomes of the festivals: 94 %
 - “Of course, but the shops should keep open in the late afternoon and evening hours”
 - “Everyone earns on these activities, and we stay more in our own place and spend our money here”

Findings 6: Trouble and inconvenience

- Traffic problems: 30 %
 - “Cars driving up and down”
 - “Takes half an hour to drive through the town centre “
- Noise: 50 % (Especially Norway Rock and Emigration Festival)
 - “Acceptable, otherwise they may leave for their second homes”
 - “Noisy for the neighbours, should be offered free tickets “
 - “It lasts so short, people should tolerate it, it is a natural festival impact”
- Crowding: 5%
 - “I thought that was the idea with festivals”
 - “Good to see people in this sleepy”
- Festivals ruined the place: 2 %
- Crime: 40% (Especially for the Norway Rock and Fjellparken Rock)
 - “Thieves are found where people congregate”
 - “Sure, but no problem, really”
 - “Probably drugs, belongs to the music festivals”
 - “Nothing to do with the festivals as such, but criminals are coming to the area”



Conclusions - 1

Dominant perceptions were that the festivals

- created growth and development in the society
- created learning opportunities
- contributed to conservation of culture and history
- created income for merchants and the tourism sector
- created positive image to the place
- contributed to unity and team-spirit
- facilitated socialising
- created entertainment and fun
- gave pride to the local residents and bolstered their self-esteem
- were perceived as well integrated in the society

Negative impacts were

- traffic congestion and jamming
- crime, noise and disturbance of public order

Conclusions - 2

- The festivals were in conflict with the traditional religious spirit of the area, and competed with the religious communities on attention, resources and visitors
- Nevertheless, they were tolerated and to some extent also welcomed and appreciated as alternatives and supplements to “old school” religious cultures
- They may become sustainable due to high local involvements, appreciation and anchorages in some parts of the culture
- Limitations:
 - Difficult to collect data on this topic by telephone interviews as some respondents were reluctant or refused to participate. Hence, the results may be positively biased and a limitation applies on the generalisability of the findings.
 - Also, the study is undertaken in remote areas and the results may not apply in central urban places

Thanks for listening – questions and comments, please?



reimykle@gmail.com

