

Profiling visitors of non-hallmark events: three stages of the 2012 Giro d'Italia in Denmark

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Aim and research question

Sport events might act as a catalyst for regional economies (Wilson, 2006) but not always and not with the same significance in all settings. Research related to (sport) event impact studies has increased noticeably in recent years (Getz 2008). However, the vast majority of literature refer to major (hallmark) events, particularly taking place outside Europe and dealing with Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, and the Commonwealth Games. Small-scale or medium-scale sport events – which will be named as non-hallmark events in the following – are still underrepresented within the existing literature (see, for example, Wilson, 2006).

Using the first three stages of the Giro d'Italia 2012, which took place in Denmark (Herning and Horsens) between May 5th and 7th, 2012, this paper examines different aspects of the economic impact generated by the non-hallmark sport events. We address three questions: (a) what is the composition of event-affected persons at the non-hallmark sport events? (b) what are the consumption patterns of the sport event visitors? and (c) what are the changes in the residents' consumption caused by the event? Therefore, particular emphasis will be placed on the socio-economic composition of spectators and consumption patterns associated with different spectator profiles. The Giro d'Italia case has been chosen because: (a) it is the first time ever that this race took place in Scandinavia; (b) it is *one of the three* Grand Tours attracting enormous fan attention; (c) it represents a non-ticketed, open access event.

In doing so, this project tries to partly fill the identified research gaps and to contribute to a better understanding of the many dimensions of non-hallmark sport events' economic impact on host regions. The results are of importance since reliable estimates of the economic impact of sport events facilitate more effective sport event management and political decision making. Furthermore, better knowledge about sport event visitors of small-scale, open access events allows improved event management and marketing activities.

Theoretical background and literature review

The project builds on Crompton's (1995) pioneer works as well as their further extension carried out by Preuß (2005, 2007). This framework has been chosen due to its theoretical consistency and previous successful empirical examination with respect to mega-sporting events. Essentially, this framework theoretically defines which behavior of residents and people from outside the region will cause crowding-out, re-distribution, and deterrence effects and it can be used as a guideline for constructing a theory

based survey in order to obtain data necessary for further consistent exploration (Preuß, 2007).

In order to estimate the economic impact of non-hallmark sport events ex ante it is necessary to identify and segment persons who are affected by the event ('casuals', 'time switcher', 'extentioners', 'home stayers', etc.). Moreover, only if we have precise estimates of the event induced consumption patterns of all segments, reliable ex ante estimates of the primary economic impact can be given.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The empirical analysis is based on the collection of primary data. Therefore, a questionnaire has been developed to assess – among others – visitors by: (1) the intention of their visit; (2) the length of stay; (3) their expenses pertaining to the event; (4) their geographical profile; (5) their other tourist activities within Denmark if they are non-locals; (6) their further socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, origin, education, income, marital status, etc.). The questionnaire is based on the Paper-and-Pencil Interview (PAPI) technique and has a classical structure including (mostly) closed-end questions (#21). Subsequently, exploratory data analysis techniques are employed using a variety of data mining techniques like multiple regression analysis and principal component analysis. The multiple regression analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of relations between several independent variables built upon socio-economic characteristics and/or event affected persons' typology and one dependent variable – consumption pattern. The principal component analyses will promote reducing the dimensionality of a dataset consisting of a large number of interrelated variables, while retaining as much of the variation present in the data set as possible. Consequently, the statistical elaboration uncovers existing patterns within the collected data sets.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

The research project is currently ongoing and will be finished in early August. The data collection took place in May 2012. The project will present a relevant input to a number of ongoing debates in terms of the management of non-hallmark sports events. Undoubtedly, many of the results from this project will be of analytical and general character for the management of sports events.

References

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