

Factors predicting local residents' support for bidding for mega sporting events

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Aim of abstract

When bidding for a mega sporting event, local residents can be considered as key role-players. Many researchers (e.g. Getz, 1997; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006) have noted the importance of the host community being involved in an event and that attention to community wishes and impacts is essential. In recent years the stakeholder approach, which states that the understanding and participation of all stakeholders is crucial in a bidding process, became more important. There are even situations where residents are probably the most important stakeholder namely if a positive referendum is mandatory for bidding or maintaining a bid. Hamburg, Boston, St. Moritz and Krakow are only some of various examples where support from local residents was lacking and the referendum failed. Hence it is important to assess the level of support and to know by which factors support of locals is influenced. Knowing the basis of both support and opposition will help governments, organizers and policy makers and assist them in developing better strategies for community involvement, communication and service delivery. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to detect factors that influence support of local residents. The study focuses on residents of the city of Hamburg that bid for the Olympic Games 2024 but had to withdraw its candidature after a negative referendum.

Literature review

There has been various interest among researchers to analyze the perceptions of residents towards the impacts of mega sporting events (Guala & Turco, 2009; Zhou & Ap, 2009) whereas studies that link perceived impacts and support are scant. Gursoy and Kendall (2006) examined the perceptions of the impacts of the Olympic Games 2002 and how support is affected by these perceptions. They revealed five determinants of support: the level of community concern, ecocentric values, community attachment, perceived benefits and perceived costs. Another study was conducted by Lee & Krohn (2013) using the 2012 Super Bowl as mega-sporting event. The study aimed to detect which factors of support affect residents' attitudes towards hosting the event. The results show that the perceptions of positive impacts are the strongest predictor for support while the perceptions of negative impacts are also significant but noticeably weaker. Both studies were conducted short before or during the event while there is no study which analyses factors for support during the bidding phase.

Methodology

To gain a better understanding why residents support (or oppose) a mega sporting event the perceptions of local residents of the city of Hamburg were analyzed. The study is based on data from a survey among locals that was conducted in August 2015 by a market research institute. Thus the present study is based on secondary analysis. 1.000 residents were interviewed by telephone and had to answer a questionnaire

regarding the bid and its impacts on Hamburg and its residents. In this survey residents were asked about their attitude towards hosting the Olympic Games, their perception of various impacts occurring by hosting the Games and their information level among other things. To predict support for hosting the Olympic Games logistic regressions using stepwise elimination were employed.

Results

In a first model the perceived positive and negative impacts occurring from hosting the Olympic Games were assorted and summarized to assess the influence of these impacts on support. The results show that the perceptions of positive legacies are the strongest predictor for support ($b = 0.659$). Negative perceptions have a moderate negative impact on the dependent variable support ($b = -0.160$). Overall the first model can explain a high proportion of the variance of support (adjusted $R^2 = 0.595$) and the results are in common with previous findings. In a second model the moderating variables gender, age, information level, net income and IOC image were added. A slight improvement of the proportion of the variance explained could be reached (adjusted $R^2 = 0.623$). The variables net income ($b = 0.089$) and IOC image ($b = 0.067$) are also significant predictors for support whereas no association between gender, age and information level and support was revealed.

More detailed data analysis is still ongoing and will be presented at the conference.

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