

Football-Tourists and Their Contribution to the Economic Impact - Evidence from EURO 2008 in Austria/Switzerland

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Abstract

Background

Ever more nations and cities apply to stage mega sport events. The most challenging bid procedures are those for Olympic Games and the FIFA and UEFA football tournaments. One reason to enter the costly bidding process is the prospect to attract autonomous money and to speed up the infra-structural development of the host city and region. Häussermann & Siebel (1993) call this strategy "Festivalization of city politics".

It is a fact, that different mega events have different effects for the hosts, partly due to the different infrastructure existent in the city (Hall, 1992, Preuss, 2007, Kurscheidt 2008). Therefore – at the end of the day – each host should check if the mega event staged really had a positive macroeconomic out-come. Only this justifies investments of scarce public resources into the event.

A proportionally important but extremely difficult part of the autonomous expenditures spent in the host city and region is the consumption of the event visitors. Their intention to visit to event location, the attractiveness of the city but also the framework of the event (e.g. countries participating, reach-ability of event location etc.) makes each event unique.

Aim

This presentation will focus on the visitor's consumption at the EURO 2008 in Austria/Switzerland. It will show the visitor's consumption as a significant contribution to the overall eco-nomic success of the EURO 2008 for Austria.

Method

The evaluation the EURO 2008 is very complex. In contrast to other major sporting events football matches attract different interest and nationalities and were played in four Austrian cities. This makes every match an event in itself attracting visitors with diverse consumption behaviour to loca-tions with different economic conditions. Questionnaires were available in 16 languages (all participating nations). The survey was conducted personally (n=6,000) and consists of 11 sub-samples collected in Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Klagenfurt. One week after the EURO 2008 a telephone interview (CATI) (n=3,000) was conducted to approve the data collected.

The data were collected by a randomized multistage cluster sampling in Austria. This type of sampling had to be selected, because no information were available about the population of the public viewings and very few about the stadium visitors. At each chosen matchday the researchers were positioned at one randomly picked location around the stadium or public viewing. There is no reason to believe that the randomly picked locations attracted special groups of visitors with different attributes and attitudes. The only speciality of visitors interviewed was that they all were in stage of waiting and willing to participate in the survey. The interviews started approximately four hours before a match and ended approximately half an hour before the match started. The questionnaire took ten minutes to complete. The research design was based on the very similar survey done at the FIFA World Cup 2006 in Germany (n=9,456) and was coordinated with a similar study in Switzerland. Theoretical roots of the method to ascertain consumption patterns draw back to Gratton, Dobson & Shibli (2000) as well as the study from Preuss, Kurscheidt & Schütte (2008). Results: Among a range of possible variables we identified four variables that differentiate the consumption of event visitors most:

- a) the origin of the visitor
- b) the fact if a visitor is solely at public viewings or also at stadiums
- c) the fact if a visitor is a day tourist or stays overnight
- d) the intention of the visitor to visit the event.

Furthermore, we give an overview about the most important socio-demographic data of EURO-visitors. Finally, we present the overall macroeconomic output of the EURO 2008 by its visitors. The results will be compared with an ex-ante prediction made by Grozea-Helmstein, Helmstein, Kleisser & Moser (2008). It will become clear that each mega event has different visitors consuming different as well as that it is not possible to predict the macroeconomic effect without any information on the consumption and other data of visitors. Therefore, a prediction of any economic impact for future mega events should be done with great care.

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