



Social impact of Formula One Chinese Grand Prix: A comparison of local residents' perceptions based on the intrinsic dimension



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ABSTRACT

Inspired by [Faulkner and Tideswell's \(1997\)](#) seminal work on the social impact of an event on a local community, this study investigated residents' perceptions of the social impact of the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix and examined the relationships between the perceptions of social impact and four sets of variables modified from Faulkner and Tideswell's intrinsic dimension: involvement in sports industry, community attachment, identification with the event, and socio-economics characteristics. Data were gathered from 600 local residents located at five different areas of Shanghai. The results show that perceived social impact included three positive dimensions and three negative dimensions, with positive correlations among several of the dimensions. The results also indicate that positive social impacts were significantly associated with involvement in sports industry, community attachment, and identification with the event. Only one dimension of negative impact (environmental and cultural problems) was significantly associated with involvement in sports industry, community attachment, and identification with the event. Residential proximity was not significantly related to any perceived social impact. Furthermore, the results revealed that perceptions of the social impact of Formula One Chinese Grand Prix differed across socio-demographic profiles.

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1. Introduction

Transition countries have shown increasing interest in hosting mega sporting events. Although the contribution of these events to regional economic development is debatable ([Chou, 2013](#); [Humphreys & Prokopowicz, 2007](#)), enthusiasm for hosting them is evident in the growing number of proposals submitted by cities and countries with developing economies ([Huang & Lou, 2010](#)). Staging a mega event is a complex process that requires a concerted effort from multiple stakeholders. In particular, considerable evidence supports the importance of strengthening community involvement to facilitate the events and create a lasting impact on the hosting society ([Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997](#); [Gursoy & Kendall, 2006](#); [Huang & Zhang, 2012](#); [Kaplanidou, 2012](#); [Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012](#)). First, the support of the local community plays a significant role in

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the bidding process because planners and businesses must consider the views of the host community when assessing the sustainability of their investments (Williams & Lawson, 2001). Second, the transformation of a mega event into a vibrant urban festivity for hosts and guests depends on community involvement (Hiller, 1995). Third, the local people actively shape the event destination image. For example, the friendliness and courtesy of the local people are strongly associated with tourists' positive feedback and expenditures (Xie & Lee, 2013). Because local residents involved in mega events are vital to the short- and long-term success of the hosted event, their perceptions of the social impact of these events are essential to success (Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo, & Alders, 2013).

Social impact can be conceptualized as any force that potentially influences the quality of life of local residents (Balduck, Maes, & Buelens, 2011; Haley, Snaith, & Miller, 2005). The social benefits of sporting events are much greater and more important than the economic benefits, especially to host cities found in transition countries (Huang & Zhang, 2012; Humphreys & Prokopowicz, 2007; Pranic, Petric, & Cetinic, 2012). Social exchange theory (SET) helps explain local perceptions of the social impact of sporting events. Generally, SET postulates that reward-seeking is a key ingredient in the decision to enter into an exchange. The theory has been reformulated by Ap (1992) and initially used to evaluate the social impact of tourism (Ap, 1992). Given the tourism–event nexus and the similarities between them, Ap's social exchange process model has been gradually adopted to evaluate social impacts of mega events (Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997; Kaplanidou, 2012; Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012; Prayag et al., 2013). In the context of mega events, SET suggests that the relationship between event organizers and the local residents is evaluated positively or negatively based on the perceived benefits and costs associated with hosting mega events. The residents are likely to participate in the exchange if they believe that the benefits outweigh the costs (Zhou & Ap, 2009).

However, not all residents perceive the social impacts equally. The perceptions of social impacts of a mega event are moderated by many factors. Faulkner and Tideswell (1997) classified these factors into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic factors, such as the stage of development, seasonality, types of tourists, and tourist/resident ratio, moderate the social impact of tourism or an event on a macro level and have little bearing in case studies of single events (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000). Intrinsic factors include involvement in tourism, community attachment, identification with the theme and socio-economic characteristics (Fredline & Faulkner, 2001a). Because the intrinsic factors consider that the host community is heterogeneous and that residents perceive impact differently, they are more central to the analysis of events (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000).

The current study was inspired by Faulkner and Tideswell's (1997) seminal work on the social impact of events on a local community. This work attempted (a) to investigate residents' perceptions of the social impact of the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix; (b) to test the relationship between the perceptions of social impact and the intrinsic dimension. Specifically, we attempt to explore (a) how do local residents perceive the social impact of Formula One Chinese Grand Prix? (b) what are the positive and negative social impact dimensions associated with the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix? and (c) are the perceptions of social impact of Formula One Chinese Grand Prix related to residents' involvement in sports industry, community attachment, identification with the event, and demographic characteristics? These are important questions for event organizers to understand to fully evaluate the social functions of sport events. This study differs from most recent research in the field because it focuses on an international, annually recurring sporting event (i.e., Formula One Chinese Grand Prix) hosted by a city in a transition country (i.e., Shanghai, China).

2. Review of the literature

2.1. Social impact

Mega events are one-time events that usually have long-term profound effects, both positive and negative, on host communities. These events are significant in terms of attendance, media involvement, and construction of facilities, and they generate a massive flow of people, goods, and information to the host city in a short time. Mega events can promote the identity of a city or region on a global scale (Bull & Lovell, 2007; Chalip & Costa, 2005), shape world tourism patterns (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011), stimulate economic growth (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2004), build social capital (Gibson et al., 2014), and change the quality of life and well-being of the residents (Kaplanidou, 2012; Kaplanidou et al., 2013). Considering the positive externality associated with mega events, many countries, regions, and cities have adopted policies that prioritize bidding on and hosting mega events, even though the task requires a considerable investment of human, financial, and physical resources from the community (Gratton, Shibli, & Coleman, 2005).

City and national governments spend a substantial amount of capital bidding on and hosting mega events mainly because of the economic benefits that they can bring to the host city in the form of tax revenue, employment, and additional income (Getz, 1997). However, the impact of a mega event also involves social benefits such as the changes they bring to the host community and the improvement in the quality of life for its residents (Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Kaplanidou et al., 2013). Mega events tend to create long-term benefits, such as improving the brand identity of a city, enhancing a city's global status, strengthening a city's social structure, improving social cohesion, and enhancing community identity (Balduck et al., 2011; Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012; Walton, Longo, & Dawson, 2008). For individual residents, mega events are also likely to provide new recreational opportunities, create new learning opportunities, inspire interests in sports, improve the availability of recreational facilities, and build civic pride. These social benefits of hosting a mega event, to some extent, are just as or more important than the economic benefits (Huang & Zhang, 2012).

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