

“Panem et Circenses”: Realizing Social Value in the Strategic Management of Events

Social value has been historically overlooked in the practice of strategic event management. By this thesis I hope to stimulate debate and improve the standing of social value in this domain. To do so, multiple aspects of value are addressed. I incorporate perspectives from different stakeholder groups such as researchers, policymakers, organizers and community residents. I also explore value through the three stages of conceptualization, operationalization and instrumentalization, to build a full picture of how value is perceived, measured, and used in the events sector. The synthesis of these different aspects then informs a discussion about social value in the strategic management of events in tourism- and public policy.

I built the thesis on the case of Jämtland, a peripheral region in the northern parts of Sweden that is known for its diverse and relatively forward-thinking event portfolio. I incorporate elements of both qualitative and quantitative methods to address the research problems presented in my papers, effectively making the thesis as a whole a mixed-methods study. Social constructionist theory underlies the synthesis of the four papers, assuming that multiple realities exist and that perceptions of value are co-created between individuals, within stakeholder groups and between the groups themselves.

The thesis highlights the omission of social value from strategic event management and therefore also from the use of events in community development, ultimately suggesting ways in which this omission could be addressed. The specific events that feature in this case study are major sports events, but it is hoped that findings can inform the wider theory and practice of strategic event management based on disparate types and sizes of events.