

Abstract

Topic: Environmental and socio-cultural impacts of small-scale open-air festivals

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Festivals are great economical contributors and their importance has risen in the previous decades, hence former literature has primarily based its research on the economic factors. However, festivals equally have the power to influence the socio-cultural and the environmental sphere of the area they occur.

Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to investigate positive and negative impacts festivals may have on their socio-cultural and natural environment. These issues will be considered by focusing on the perception of the host community, the festival-goers and the festival organisation. A mixed methods approach was implemented to collect sufficient data and knowledge in order to support the developed hypothesis and the aims. More precisely, a survey targeting festival-goers was developed and interviews with three festival organisers in Austria were conducted.

The findings imply that festivals undeniably have an effect on their socio-cultural and natural environment. However, socio-cultural outcomes seem to be rather positive whereas environmental outcomes tend to be relatively negative. Furthermore, a positive correlation between the condition of the natural environment and the wellbeing of individuals can be detected. Negative environmental outcomes such as a great amount of waste left behind or a higher traffic congestion may lead to a negative perception of festivals.

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