

From Singular to Multiple: Exploring the Relatedness and Multiplicity of an Event Portfolio

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Abstract

Sport, cultural and other events have been studied predominantly as single events, separately from each other and with a focus on large-scale events. Yet, an alternative approach has emerged. This approach suggests that event outcomes can be optimized if host communities develop a portfolio of different type and scale events that can reach a wide range of target audiences and serve an array of purposes. Such a comprehensive approach seeks to develop synergies among them (relatedness) and synchronize strategies to serve diverse interests (multiplicity). This entails a shift of focus from singular to multiple. Rather than merely focusing on single events or purposes we may focus on multiple events and purposes.

This study employed ethnographic methods to collect empirical evidence for the value of this approach by exploring an actual event portfolio. Fieldwork, including participant observation, in-depth interviews and analysis of secondary data, was conducted in a rural community in South-West Texas that hosts an event portfolio throughout the year. A dramatological perspective viewing events as dramatic stories that express versions of a community's social order guided the analysis of events to identify their innate interrelationships.

Results show that the event portfolio amalgamates sport and cultural performances and creates a symbolic context, hence allowing the expression of different aspects of community life. Events are interrelated both conceptually and functionally. The interrelationships among different events engender and maintain complementarities that facilitate event implementations. Thematic continuities among events in the portfolio reconfirm the metaphoric messages, with each event complementing and reinforcing the claims of the others. Events are functionally interrelated by sharing common resources

and elements, generating complementary markets and transferring practical know-how. This helps mobilize community resources and facilitates the synchronized use of events for achieving economic and social purposes. Finally, the theoretical and practical implications of the study are discussed and directions for future research are suggested.

Keywords: event portfolio, relatedness, multiplicity, dramatological perspective, multi-dimensional analysis

Introduction

Sport, cultural and other genres have been studied predominantly in isolation from each other, as single events that have socio-economic impacts for host communities. In this context, attention has been focused on mega or hallmark events that are expected to bring substantial impacts for host communities (Getz, 2008; Weed, 2009). Yet, the realization of their negative impacts (Gibson, 2007; Hall & Hodges, 1996; Ritchie, 1999) coupled with evidence of the socio-economic value of small-scale/regional events (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003; Higham, 1999; Higham & Hinch, 2002; Moscardo, 2008; O'Brien, 2007) call for another approach. In response, authors suggest that event outcomes can be optimized if host communities develop a portfolio of events including events of different type and scale that can reach a wide range of target audiences and serve an array of purposes (Getz, 2005, 2008; Chalip, 2004, 2006; Schreiber & Lenson, 1994).

Despite the suggested potential of an event portfolio, there is surprisingly a lack of empirical research exploring this phenomenon. This omission can be attributed perhaps to the fragmented realm of different event genres and the tendency to focus on single events and purposes, which in turn limit our capacity to think about events

holistically and consider their manifold dimensions. In contrast, a comprehensive event portfolio approach views all the different event types as resources that can be harnessed according to an integrative event strategy. It considers the relatedness of events, that is how events complement one another and seeks to develop synergies among them. It recognizes interrelationships not only among different events but also among stakeholders so that strategies can be synchronized to serve a multiplicity of interests. In other words, this requires a shift of focus from singular to multiple. Rather than merely focusing on single events or purposes we may expand our focus on multiple events and purposes. That way the strategic and integrated planning of an event portfolio can become a tool for the sustainable development of host communities.

In this context, the purpose of this study is to identify the event interrelationships and the subsequent character of an event portfolio by analyzing its composition of events and examining the intended or unintended ways that events are related with one another. The case of Fort Stockton, a rural community in South-West Texas that hosts an extensive event portfolio, represents a unique setting to investigate the multi-dimensional nature of event interrelationships that form this community's event portfolio.

Theoretical Background

Whilst the literature is rich in studying single events from a variety of disciplines and perspectives, there is little attention in studying multiple events in relation with one another. Thus, there is limited knowledge about how event managers and host communities can synergize sport, cultural and other planned events in an event portfolio in order to attain and magnify their outcomes. The study of event leverage (Chalip, 2004, 2006; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008) instigates the use of strategies and tactics for multiple

events so that they complement one another in order to magnify their outcomes. From this perspective, a series of interrelated events can be synergized to derive outcomes through a holistic planning approach that places in concert the economic and social purposes of different events.

The potential of an event portfolio to be used as a policy tool that integrates economic and social purposes depends on the employment of a comprehensive approach. The rationale for event portfolio implementation is to use multiple events for multiple purposes. In other words, the incorporation of different events into a portfolio requires an integrative way of viewing the different community purposes that events serve in unison. This line of thinking can foster synergies between different events and facilitate efforts for leverage. Furthermore, as Chalip (2006) suggests, from a sport tourism standpoint, events should be studied with reference to the efficacy with which the host destination's product and service mix was employed to enhance the events' impacts. The same logic can be applied on using events for social, cultural or economic development purposes. Events can be analyzed with reference to a host community's overall use of assets and services that impact upon events. In essence, an event portfolio may offer a common ground wherein joint strategies may be taken among different event stakeholders by working together to leverage all the different events that are included in a host community's portfolio. This requires a multi-dimensional understanding of an event portfolio's utility in order to unravel the multiplicity of interests lying underneath layers of meanings that shape conceptual and functional event interrelationships.

But how can we multi-dimensionally study the interrelationships of events? Anthropological literature provides a sound basis for conceptualizing comprehensively

the potential utility of an event portfolio for host communities. Events can be understood as symbolic rituals (Turner, 1974) wherein participants and audiences instantiate shared meanings. In other words, events as symbolic social spaces convey a multiplicity of meanings that express the human need to construct and interpret the conditions that make up their lives (Geertz, 1973; Handelman, 1990, Turner, 1974). Events can be analyzed as texts conveying messages that explain the enactment of dramatic and performative dimensions pertaining to a community's social order. In this regard, events constitute multiple versions and interpretations of a community's social order and may reinforce meanings via the common internal logic that permeates the symbolic use of event elements.

An understanding of the different event genres as manifold cultural manifestations capable of negotiating and (re)developing the symbolic meanings and conditions that make up a community's social order can facilitate the development of a holistic framework for assembling events in a portfolio aimed at reaching and expressing different audiences and achieving multiple purposes. It has been shown in the literature that events have the capacity to strengthen social networks (Kemp, 1999; Walter, 1981) and the social capital of host communities (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Misener & Mason, 2006) and build group and place identity (De Bres & Davis, 2001; Derrett, 2003; Green & Chalip, 1998). These social benefits derive from liminality within the time/space of events wherein *communitas* can be produced by the suspension of social conventions and barriers that bring people together as equals (Turner, 1974). Furthermore, liminality enables metaphoric discourse as event participants and audiences more safely can discuss

contentious issues addressed by an event's symbolic meanings (Errington, 1990; Manning, 1981; Rasnake, 1986).

However, the community building role of liminality in events is rather a mere happenstance as it is often overlooked by the common focus of host communities on economic outcomes. To address this imbalance, Chalip (2006) drawing on anthropological literature developed a strategic framework suggesting the elements of social interaction and sense of celebration as antecedents for creating liminality. Building on this framework, O'Brien and Chalip (2008) proposed a model for leveraging liminality, noting the synergies between economic and social leverage. In addition, the study of event leverage emphasized the role of subculture through which particular audiences express and celebrate in events their values and identities (Green, 2001; O'Brien, 2007). From an event portfolio standpoint, the challenge is how the different meanings and values of events can be synergized and leveraged.

Towards this direction, the dramatological perspective is essentially useful. A dramatological inquiry seeks to understand the meanings that are extracted in events and their manifold dimensions that represent different viewpoints and interpretations of a community's social order in order to identify cultural patterns and interrelationships that shape events. The multi-dimensional understanding of an event portfolio can help prevent, resolve or mitigate unintended consequences of events by prompting and guiding the event planners of host communities to provide equal opportunities for different expressions of social life. Albeit this is commonsensical, event implementations are not often viewed from a multi-dimensional and sustainable prism. In the context of an event portfolio, where multiple interests, values and meanings are met, the danger of conflict

and/or exploitation exists. This raises the critical need for safeguarding authenticity so that processes of commodification, modernization and cultural politics in events (Cohen, 1998; Getz, 2008; Higham & Hinch, 2009; Roche, 2000) do not distort the authentic and balanced (re)presentation of symbolic existential elements that underpin a community's social order.

Overall, a multi-dimensional analysis can be grounded on the dramatological lens of inquiry examining events in relation with one another in order to find the ways to develop synergies among them. Such an analysis can provide the foundation for understanding what shapes event relatedness and the implementation of the event portfolio by discerning the characteristics of events and the factors that influence their organization. For this reason, the major events in this study are analyzed with the purpose of explicating the interrelationships among them. The different events are considered as illustrating multiple versions of the community's social order. Through this perspective, the analysis investigates the means that nurture synergies among events in the portfolio.

Methodology

Ethnographic fieldwork for this study was conducted in the rural community of Fort Stockton, in South-West Texas as part of a larger project investigating the nature and implementation of this community's event portfolio. This community was selected as a suitable site because it hosts an extensive array of events. Its population is about 7,800 of which approximately 70% are Hispanics and 30% Anglos. Given the lack of empirical research on event portfolios, the study was exploratory and employed pertinent methods of data collection including participant observation in events under study and semi-structured interviews with event organizers. By applying a dramatological perspective,

the focus of this study was to provide a multi-dimensional analysis of the interplay between the socio-cultural underpinnings and operational parameters affecting event portfolio planning and management.

Fieldnotes were kept systematically in a journal during the whole fieldwork (Spradley, 1980). Pertinent documents regarding events and the community were collected and treated as secondary data. The sample of events included the most prominent sport and cultural events. The interviews (N=7) lasted 40-60 minutes and were tape-recorded. Questions focused on learning the organizers' perceptions about the meanings and organizational processes/issues of events.

In data analysis, a constant comparative method was applied to examine patterns emerging in the setting under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The fieldnotes, interview transcripts and documents were reviewed in order to identify patterns relating to the character and operation of the event portfolio. These patterns were examined further by returning to the literature for triangulation and conceptual clarification (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The findings are presented by examining each event. In the analysis the community's seminal celebration, Water Carnival, serves as fundamental reference to demonstrate interrelationships with other events. Water Carnival was examined thoroughly elsewhere demonstrating its community building role in Fort Stockton, which makes it the nucleus of its event portfolio (Ziakas & Costa, 2010). This event entails a staged show (different every year) in the form of a musical featuring synchronized swimming and theatrical/dancing acts. The same show is repeated for three days accompanied by beauty pageants and a crew parade that takes place the last day of the

event. The show is written, prepared and performed exclusively by local people contributing thus to the creation of a heightened sense of community and the strengthening of the social fabric through the massive engagement of people. The whole event is a year-round product of collective endeavor fostering a symbolic social space wherein participants share common ideals and values. The coexistence of sport and theater exemplifies that sport and cultural performances have a symbiotic role within the event portfolio.

Results and Discussion

Harvest Fest

Harvest Fest is the area's major festival. Its purpose is to celebrate the local economy and promote its agriculture, aquaculture and viniculture. This festival started in early 1990s in an effort to promote the local wine. Event organizers pointed out:

We wanted to market our wine from Saint Genevieve, so we thought about doing a festival. It started so we could do wine tasting and the following year we started adding the Vintage Dinner and other different sections to make it bigger such as the Fun Run and the Bike Run and then we added the car show and sports.

Harvest Fest is designed to be a family event. The organizers added activities so that families can attend the festival and all their members have something to do. The event serves as a recreational opportunity for locals and attracts visitors from neighboring communities. It is organized by the Tourism Department and thus it also aims to attract visitation to Fort Stockton. Event organizers pointed out:

Harvest Fest is a family event; so there are all ages. Basically, it's more small-town festival environment, gathering in park, kids area, arts and crafts, we do a lot of music, street dance, we have a fun run, a bike tour, a softball tournament, anything that looks good to do in the summer, anybody can go -it's free- and everybody can enjoy themselves. So we target the local market and other people out of town in close proximity.

Sport activities commence the festival including the 5k Fitness Walk, 5K Fun Run, the Wine Pedal Bike Tour and the Men's Softball Tournament. The addition of team sports serves as an attraction to the event for families so that their members have many options during the festival. Event organizers explained the reasons why they added softball to the festival's program:

There are many softball tournaments in this town. So if you can incorporate that with another event going on, then you can increase participation. Because the softball players want to bring their families, then obviously this gives wives and kids something to do while they play softball. And they usually have a break between the games and so they can just stay here and get something to eat, walk around or whatever. There is an option of things to do.

The core attraction of the festival is the Wine Emporium. The local Saint Genevieve winery is promoted in association with other eight Texas wineries. In addition to local wine, a wide variety of local foods and snacks are sold by local vendors in the Farmer Market area of the festival. This aims to promote the agricultural products of the region and farmers have the opportunity to showcase and sell their products. Thus, the festival demonstrates the support of the community to the local agricultural market.

The augmentation of Harvest Fest comprises an array of staged activities including a balloon launching contest, a hot dog eating contest, a dancing and gymnastics demonstration, live music from local bands and a karate demonstration. These activities encourage local people to perform. Arts and crafts booths also join the festivities with various items that are available for purchase. Another activity is the KidzFest Corner (playground area) that entertains children with inflated toys.

A distinct part of the festival is the Car Show, which involves the participation of more than 100 people exhibiting their cars. The emotional investments local people have

in the relationships between their cars, themselves, their families and friends, are deeply materialized in their vehicles on show. This existential issue for the community is also met in other events of Fort Stockton. Cars are a common element of events that establish an apparent connectivity among different events. For example, in Water Carnival there is a parade with cars through which local people demonstrate their sense of who they are. The presence of cars is celebrated in turn in Harvest Fest along with the celebration of local economy.

From an organizational standpoint, Harvest Fest faces challenges. First of all, there is decline in attendance and participation in activities from local people. Event organizers pointed out:

13 years ago we had 8-9,000 people out at the park. And then through the years it went down. Sometimes the weather has a lot to do with it. For instance, when it is hot, people don't come over. This year, it rained on Friday night and few people came out to the park.

The decline in participation of local people and the economic burden that the organization of the festival entails, make the future of the event uncertain. Event organizers are concerned about the decline of local support and interest for the festival:

It's not economically feasible anymore. We struggled the last three years to put it on because it is not being supported the way it used to be. A lot of the struggle pertains to the liability insurance that we have to carry for the whole event and that is almost \$3,000. And this is because we serve alcohol. So attendance is lower and we don't have the support that we used to from the people, our own town, the people attending the Harvest Fest. When you don't see many people out there it tells you something.

The possible reasons for the decline in local attendance and participation in Harvest Fest are explained by event organizers on the basis of conflicting timing with other activities: "There are other activities going on in the community that draw a lot of people. There is so much going on with the school starting and the football season that

maybe some people had a conflict or sometimes they simply forget.” This raises the problem of the timely placement of the event within the portfolio. The possibility of conflict with other events, even contingent activities or weather conditions may cause decline in attendance. Event organizers pointed out: “For two years we moved the event to October, which proved not to be very good. For example, the reason we didn’t have any cook-out participants was because it rained.”

The number of events, which are organized in the community, however, seems to be at the root of the problem. This number is large comprising an extended event portfolio. The danger is that the extended number of events may cause saturation to potential audiences to attend the diverse events of the town. Also, the use of common elements in different events within a portfolio is a double-edge sword because there is a subtle line that separates connectivity among events from repetitiveness. This can be delineated from the analysis of thematic/conceptual interrelationships between Water Carnival and Harvest Fest.

The continuities between Water Carnival and Harvest Fest that illustrate their connectivity and how they complement one another can be summarized as follows: First, the role of performance connects the events. In Water Carnival there is a staged show (rehearsed choreographed acts) performed by local people and children, while Harvest Fest entails a number of stage activities that encourage local people and children to demonstrate their talent in a more liberated/spontaneous fashion. The continuity of performance and “show-like staging” in both events offers different opportunities for enactment and spectation. The car parade in Water Carnival and the car show in Harvest Fest also establish connectivity between the events expressing mediated recollections that

cars convey. Sports and physical activity is another common element between the events. Water Carnival features synchronized swimming, while in Harvest Fest there is a bike tour, running, walking and softball. These sport activities in Harvest Fest offer alternative opportunities for people to participate and audiences to attend. The continuity of sport performance takes place through these two events, which complement each other in terms of sport activities offered and opportunities for participation. Another aspect that bolsters connectivity between the two events is the targeted audiences. Both events target families to attend the events. In Water Carnival, parents along with their children perform in the acts. In Harvest Fest there are activities for all the family to enjoy in the festival.

Finally, Harvest Fest serves as a paradigm transferring knowledge and experience towards the organization of other events in Fort Stockton. Event organizers pointed out: “Other events try to follow the footsteps of Harvest Fest as far as having the booths and activities. For example, there is a new event coming this weekend, the Labor Day Fiesta. And they are inviting all the booths to come out again.”

Labor Day Weekend Fiesta

The Labor Day Weekend Fiesta is a new event organized by a portion of the Hispanic population. The purpose of the event is to keep locals in town from visiting events in neighboring communities. Fort Stockton thus strives to maintain local income through the spending of residents in local events.

The Fiesta encompasses elements of Hispanic culture such as Mariachi music and demonstrations of folk dancing. The influence of Harvest Fest is explicit in this new event, which is essentially a mini version of Harvest Fest. It features similar activities such as a car show, sport activities, games, arts/crafts and food booths. The creation of

this event illustrates a capacity for replicating events in Fort Stockton's portfolio. Thus, new events can be created on the basis of a successful one. The advantages of such a process are clear: the knowledge and expertise that people gained through the organization of a successful event may be transferred to another event and similar activities that are popular may be offered to target audiences. This is the case with the Fiesta. However, this process has disadvantages that mainly lie in the mimetic characteristics when events are replicated. If a new event is just a mimesis of another event this may not cause any interest to potential audiences due to the repetitiveness of similar activities and may constrain a mindset for novelty in the creation of new events. For this reason, replicability in events should seek to address a new need or issue by offering similar activities, which attract event attendees. In the case of the Fiesta, this is illustrated through an analysis of the similarities and differences with Harvest Fest.

First, both events include a range of activities for all family members. Thus, there are sport activities and games in both events. The Fiesta includes a Girls Fast-Pitch Softball Tournament and a Washer Tournament. The commercialization in both events is part of the intention to support local economy with local vendors selling their products. The celebratory character of both events is amplified by music, singing and night dance. As in Harvest Fest, a car show features the local car club. The Fiesta, like Harvest Fest, provides another recreational opportunity for locals to come together and celebrate, enhancing the social/family networks of the community.

What mainly distinguishes the Fiesta, however, is that it is targeted towards Hispanics. The inclusion of folkloric Hispanic features indicates that there is a need to celebrate the Hispanic culture since it is not represented in major community events. In

relation to other events, the Fiesta is a complementary event within Fort Stockton's portfolio providing the same activities but mainly for Hispanic audiences.

Pioneer Days

The Pioneer Days is a historical/reenactment event featuring recollections of the area's life in the 19th century. The event projects the pioneer spirit that characterizes the local history of the area as part of the West. The event takes place at the Historic Fort (garrison/museum) aiming to reflect the military history of the area. Event organizers explained their intent of embracing and projecting the history of the whole region:

The Buffalo soldiers' history is important to our area, the Pioneer history, the Indian history, the Hispanic history. That's the most important thing to us. That is not forgotten and children are educated through being in the cultural place that they can see where history took place and see people demonstrating the way things were at that time.

The activities of the event comprise a set of projections that represent a selective imaginary of the conditions in the past. The event is organized in different sections, each projecting a particular aspect of pioneer life. For example, there is the section of genealogy/herbs & plants/pioneer women that illustrates the agricultural products and how were used by women in the daily life of families. Another section includes the re-enactors meals where local people re-enact the preparation and consumption of a traditional meal. A major section of the event includes the military row where local people re-enact the soldiers' military activities. They are dressed as soldiers and perform military exercises. There are also sections of civilians, a petting zoo, children's games, horse care and roping.

Overall, the community utilizes the event as an occasion showcasing the fort as the area's major tourism attraction. This coexists with the educational use of the event as

more than 400 students from area schools, including 150 students from Fort Stockton attend the event and visitors are encouraged to tour the grounds.

Big Bend & Road Runner Open Road Races

The Big Bend Open Road Race (BBORR) is the most important sport event in Fort Stockton's event portfolio. It was first organized in April, 1998 and since then it has grown rapidly. The race is co-organized by the cities of Fort Stockton and Sanderson, which are connected by a highway. The total mileage of the race is 118 miles. The race gives the chance to participants to legally drive as fast as they like on a U.S. highway and do so in relative safety. The success of the race encouraged event coordinators to organize a second race every October in the highway from Fort Stockton to Marathon. The total mileage of this race is 80 miles. The name Road Runner Open Road Race (RRORR) was given to the second race to differentiate it from the BBORR.

Both races are regarded as some of the most challenging open road races in the USA. They are a cooperative endeavor between the cities involved, the Texas Department of Transportation, local law enforcement and emergency teams and the more than 100 volunteers who help ensure the racers' safety. The Tourism Department being the coordinator of the races seeks to integrate them with the community's tourist product mix and offers optional tours of the area to racers as part of the event's schedule. Additionally, it posts in the town's main street entrance a big banner saying: "Welcome Racers." Local hotels and restaurants welcome them with enthusiasm and also post "welcome racers" signs on their doors and premises. Besides they embrace common theming putting racing posters and photographs to create a celebratory atmosphere that entices racers' spending.

Event organizers promote the West Texas hospitality and the local food. The projection of Fort Stockton's friendliness and hospitality serves also to cultivate the image of Fort Stockton as a friendly and nice place to live. Thus, the races confirm and accentuate to outsiders the claims of Water Carnival and Harvest Fest. They demonstrate the capacity of the community to host a national caliber event taking advantage of its natural resources and willingness of local people to help as volunteers.

Cars are a common element of events in the portfolio representing a cultural means of expression. The car shows in the races, Harvest Fest and the Fiesta exemplify a rich set of symbols, objects and artifacts, which can be assembled and reassembled by different groups in numerous combinations. This multiplicity of meanings freely constructed by different people within the community to express their own identities prompts their inclusion in the different events as common elements that complete a meta-language pertinent to the messages of the events.

The car show and parade enable racers to celebrate and parade their identity. This also creates excitement about the race and locals come to watch the cars, talk with the racers and attend the parade. The car show and parade take place on Friday afternoon. After the drivers' meeting, all the cars and drivers line up at the Park for the pre-race car show. Right after the car show, the racers parade their cars from the park through downtown and end at the Civic Center. There, a meeting with the volunteer gate-keepers takes place. The main purpose is to instruct them on their tasks and safety issues. On Saturday after the race, there is a post-race car show where local people may visit again with the racers. Also, there are opportunities to interact with the racers, picture taking,

autographs signing and just chatting. In the evening there is the banquet that brings the visitors and community together for the awards.

Another interrelationship of the races with the other events in the portfolio is the involvement of volunteers. Like Water Carnival there is a substantial amount of people who volunteer to help in the organization of the event. Hence, collective effort towards the accomplishment of a common purpose is projected by the local authorities. It is often stated that the only way to watch the race first-hand is to volunteer and sign up as a course worker. Local people and out-of-town race aficionados take this opportunity to volunteer in order to watch the race. Many of them choose particular gates every year and volunteer in groups. They point out that they have good time drinking beers and sharing their fascination about fast cars.

The last interrelationship between the races and the other events in the portfolio is the intention to make the race, more enjoyable for the whole community by including activities for the whole family as in other events such as booths and a party. One year, a local company gave racing fans a chance to watch the race by offering a live feed for viewing in the park.

Synopsis

Event relatedness in the portfolio represents the ways that events complement each other. In the case of Fort Stockton's portfolio, events are naturally interrelated through volunteerism, generation of markets and transfer of proprietary knowledge. In particular, a core volunteer pool is maintained providing volunteers for the different events, new or complementary markets are engendered through hosting different events

in the portfolio, and the proprietary knowledge in the organization of events aids the effective use of shared resources and replication of successful event elements.

The event portfolio encompasses common elements that permeate the staging of all events creating synergies among them. In particular, a common market for all the events in the portfolio is local families. There is, in all events, a consistent inclusion of activities for the whole family such as games, booths and parties. Also, most of the events include sport activities to their program. Sport is an integral part of the community's life and its inclusion in events is deemed as a necessity to increase attendance and participation. Most importantly, resource sharing in hosting events is facilitated through the incorporation of events into the tourism and social development efforts. Attracting visitation and providing opportunities for recreation to local people are viewed as essential priorities for all entities, which cooperate and integrate events with the overall mix of Fort Stockton's products and services. This helps mobilize community resources such as providing funding, using the same facilities and offering volunteers in events.

On this basis, events in the portfolio serve overlapping objectives. In particular, Water Carnival celebrates a sense of community and attracts VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourism from former residents of Fort Stockton. Similarly, Harvest Fest celebrates local economy and attracts visitation from the local area. Likewise, the Fiesta celebrates Hispanic heritage and attracts Hispanic visitors from neighboring communities. Pioneer Days projects local history and attracts schools as visitors. The races demonstrate that Fort Stockton is a vibrant community and attract the respective sport tourist subculture.

Operational decisions concern primarily the timely placement of events. The weather conditions, audience preferences and the avoidance of conflicting scheduling with other events are taken into consideration by event organizers. However, even a close placement of events (one or two weeks after) may cause decline in participation considering the small population of Fort Stockton. For example, the Fiesta was placed closely after Harvest Fest and the limited participation may also be explained on this basis.

The functionalist need to attract more visitors and tourism revenues to the community through events has led to the proliferation of events in the community without considering market saturation. Whilst the multiple events can attract diverse audiences, hence engendering new markets, the innate similarities and repetitiveness of common elements/activities throughout the portfolio may lead to loss of market interest. This issue is also connected with the number of events included in the portfolio from the perspective of exhausting local resources, especially use of funding, facilities and the volunteer base.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that a metaphoric context is shaped by the events in the portfolio. Viewed as dramatic stories the events make a complete story that speaks about Fort Stockton by itself. Thus, each event is like an episode of this dramatic story. The event portfolio is not merely the sum of its parts. What makes it fundamentally a meaningful context and enduring symbolic space is that each event complements and reinforces the claims of the others. This also allows the expression of different aspects of community life that synthesize the whole semantic essence and functional basis of the

portfolio. In particular, Water Carnival affirms and celebrates a local sense of community. Harvest Fest celebrates the local economy. Pioneer Days commemorates the historical past of the community. The Fiesta celebrates the Hispanic heritage. The Road Races project the capacity of Fort Stockton to capitalize successfully on events attracting visitors and illustrating to the world Fort Stockton's spot on the map.

The organic interrelationships among different events engender and maintain complementarities that facilitate event implementations. Thematic continuities among events in the portfolio reconfirm the metaphoric messages within and outside the community. On this basis, events in the portfolio are interrelated both conceptually and functionally. This facilitates the synchronized use of events for achieving economic and social purposes, and hence, addressing the web of problems that a remote and small rural community faces.

Overall, the event portfolio amalgamates sport and cultural expressions of performance that reassemble the whole range of local existence and celebrate its unique aspects. Although there are divisions in the community, the event portfolio provides an enduring platform for the symbolic expression and resolution of the community's concerns. The West-Texan Pioneer ideal is projected consistently as a meta-message throughout the event portfolio fostering a thematic connectivity among the different events. By practicing and illustrating the value of collective action in organizing a series of events, Fort Stockton exemplifies that it is a community in which relatively autonomous and equal individuals of Anglo-American and Mexican-American origins live and work together. Therefore, the resonance of issues and challenges that Fort Stockton faces is addressed through using events in the development of the community.

Theoretical Implications

The application of a dramatological perspective on event portfolio planning and management derives a number of theoretical implications. An event portfolio can be viewed as a sequence of dramatic stories in which people proclaim and demonstrate their sense of who they are. The different events represent symbolic social spaces that illustrate multiple versions and interpretations of a community's social order (Handelman, 1990; Turner, 1974). Yet, different events may complement and reinforce meanings via symbiotic theming based on conceptual continuity and a common internal logic that permeates the symbolic use of event elements. In terms of event planning, it is important to cultivate thematic/conceptual continuities among events in a portfolio. For example, the use of events for achieving social purposes may employ continuities to cultivate an integral liminality connected by symbolic meanings among different events that will foster social interaction and a heightened sense of celebration (Chalip, 2006; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008) to all the events of the portfolio. For event and tourism marketing, continuities among different events may facilitate the development of theming synergies among them and strengthen the consistency of their messages, thereby building the desired image of a destination (Chalip, 2005; Chalip & Costa, 2005).

This study sheds light on the ways events in a portfolio are conceptually and functionally interrelated complementing each other. It builds a foundational ground towards understanding the symbolic and contextual dimensions of event portfolios. It illustrates the potential of developing a holistic approach wherein multiple events are used synergistically to achieve multiple purposes. To do so, we need to search for the best means to foster synergies and complementarities among different events and theorize

the constitutive factors that facilitate event portfolio implementation. Towards that end, this study conceptualizes the following implementation parameters that enable the organization of an event portfolio with an integrated mindset.

In particular, a common sense of purpose that legitimizes event strategies is the unifying factor that brings different event stakeholders together to use events for the same purposes. This “functionalist scope” is an expression of the host communities’ needs and problems and its conscious effort to utilize different events for a defined set of purposes. Furthermore, since events appeal to the existential needs of their participants and the community at large, their expressive practices relate to an ontological public discourse in search for meaning(s). This fosters a meta-language or “dialectical expressivity” to convey sets of messages that frame a metaphoric dialogue through event symbolisms. In turn, the sustainable multiformity of events in the portfolio links different event elements, themes, functional domains and metaphoric meanings into a coherent whole. This kind of “symbiotic polymorphism” can help establish continuities between different events while appealing to diverse target audiences and can also reinforce polysemy enabling people to instantiate the meanings of events. Finally, the capacity of tapping into the same resources for different events within the portfolio is practically essential. “Resource interchangeability” requires communication, flexibility and common understanding of resource interdependencies.

However, the complexity of event portfolios as a phenomenon and the different contexts (e.g., urban vs. rural, cultural or socio-economic, etc.) in which they may operate, encompassing a nexus of different dynamics and processes affecting them, entails significant challenges to understand or theorize their nature and operation. To

shed light on this phenomenon, further research is needed to explore the underlying rationales, motivations as well as driving forces that determine event portfolio planning and implementation and examine the involvement (and multiple interests) of actors responsible for the design, development and delivery of an event portfolio. An ultimate goal of this line of research would be to understand how event relatedness can be shaped and multiplicity of meanings and interests be served without compromising the authentic development and (re)presentation of different identities, values and subcultures expressed through an event portfolio.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of the study pertain to the strategic decisions that need to be taken in an event portfolio. First, the portfolio's reach concerns what target markets the host community wishes to reach. The selection of target audiences can be as diverse as the variety of events that are included in the portfolio. Second, the events' frequency concerns how often events should be organized. The rate of recurrence must respond to market demand and sufficiency of local resources so that it does not cause market saturation or exhaustion of resources. Third, the portfolio's quantity concerns the optimal number of events in the portfolio. The equilibrium in the number of events is required to ensure that a community does not exceed its capacity to host events and that there is no oversupply of events in the market. Fourth, the events' placement concerns when events should be organized. The timely organization of events requires that they be placed in the portfolio so that they do not conflict with each other or other major circumstances in the host community, there are suitable weather conditions and other happenings in the community, while off-peak timing or seasonality considerations are equally important.

Fifth, the events' fit concerns how the different events can be harmonized. Connectivity among events may enhance the value and meanings they convey and build the "personality" of an event portfolio. The use of common elements, themes, narratives, symbols and conceptual or activity continuities are some means that can be used to cultivate a common character and logic that the events are grounded.

The management of an event portfolio entails the balancing of event characteristics in order to regulate its design, composition and character. Primary areas concern events' replicability, polysemy and connectivity. Event managers need to decide what events or certain event elements to replicate, what array of symbolisms and multiple meanings to cultivate and in what ways to connect events in the portfolio. These areas comprise important questions for future research, which needs to start discerning the interrelated or complementary characteristics of events and the synergistic processes that facilitate the implementation of an event portfolio.

According to Handelman (1990) events are constituted through their design or structure and through their enactment or performance. Event design is a dynamic process, which constantly evolves and adjusts according to contextual changes. The examination of such a dynamic process merits attention in event portfolios. There is a great deal to be learned regarding what would be the optimal composition and character of an event portfolio that serves a host community's leverage objectives (concerning the reach, frequency, quantity, placement and fit of events in the portfolio). Another area that needs examination is the role of sport events in relation with other events. Similarly, the role of the arts needs to be examined. Finally, it would be heuristically useful to identify the combination of event elements that optimize the portfolio's strategic objectives.

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