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Perceptions of residents of hosting the “Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture”: An ex-ante approach

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Abstract

The European Capital of Culture is an annual mega-event, which can provide a good forum through which to challenge and engage local citizens, thus generating feelings of common citizenship. In addition, it presents an ideal opportunity to promote the restructuring of the hosting urban space. However, the success of both the organization and the city that hosts the cultural event depends on the residents' commitment towards it, the consistency of the tourism attractions and activities supplied, and the capacity of anticipating and monitoring the evolution of tourists' preferences. The present study aims to assess the intention to participate and the impacts perceived by residents of Guimarães from hosting one of the 2012 European Capitals of Culture (2012 ECOC) in the ex-ante period (2011). Through a convenience sample of 471 usable surveys applied to the local population, conducted between October and December 2011, we tried to identify some of these potential impacts. According to the results received, 40% of residents had a low or very low knowledge of the cultural program, although only 11% demonstrated no intention of attending any activity during the event. The comparison of the mean scores of the expected 2012 ECOC impacts by gender reveals that the most valued and least valued factors are common to female and male respondents. With regard to the differences between those that intended to attend the event and the ones that did not, expected participants rated positive and negative impact factors more than did the ones that did not intend to attend.

Keywords: Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture, Perceptions of residents, Impacts of mega-events, Tourism development

Resumo

A Capital Europeia da Cultura é um megaevento anual, que pode ser uma boa oportunidade para envolver e desafiar os cidadãos locais, gerando sentimentos partilhados de cidadania. Além disso, é uma oportunidade ideal para promover a reestruturação do espaço urbano. No entanto, o sucesso, quer para a organização, quer para a cidade que acolhe o evento cultural, depende do compromisso dos residentes relativamente ao mesmo e da consistência das atrações turísticas e das atividades oferecidas, bem como da capacidade de antecipar e acompanhar a evolução das preferências dos turistas. O presente estudo visa avaliar a intenção de participar e a perceção dos impactos percebidos pelos moradores de Guimarães do acolhimento da Guimarães 2012 Capital Europeia da Cultura (CEC 2012) no período prévio ao evento (2011). Através de uma amostra de conveniência de 471 inquéritos utilizáveis aplicados à população local, entre outubro e dezembro de 2011, procurou-se identificar alguns desses potenciais impactos. De acordo com os resultados obtidos, 40 % dos residentes tinham um conhecimento baixo ou muito baixo do programa cultural, embora apenas 11% tenha demonstrado não ter intenção de participar em qualquer atividade do evento. A comparação das médias dos impactos esperados da CEC 2012, por género, revela que os fatores mais valorizados e menos valorizados são comuns aos inquiridos dos dois géneros. No que diz respeito às diferenças entre aqueles que tencionavam participar no evento e os que não tencionavam, os inquiridos que tencionavam participar apresentaram médias mais elevadas, quer nos impactos positivos, quer negativos.

Palavras-chave: Guimarães 2012 Capital Europeia da Cultura, Perceções dos residentes, Impactos dos megaeventos, Desenvolvimento turístico.

1. Introduction

In Portugal, as in other countries, despite growing support from institutions for performing arts, whether by governments or by local authorities, there has been wide variations in cultural consumption according to the social groups and regions considered (Rebelo, Madureira, Cristovão & Correia, 2010). Even so, cultural events are a potential tool for structuring the economic, social, environmental, and cultural development of urban areas. This is due not only to the importance that cultural industries have in the restructuring of the economic basis of modern towns and regions but also to the role which tourism has played in the economy of many cities and countries.

Cultural destinations are among the segments of the tourism industry that have experienced greater significant growth during the last decades (Van der Ark & Richards, 2006; OECD, 2009; Mota, Remoaldo & Cadima Ribeiro, 2012). A new element in the shaping of this type of destination has been the growth of its demand by young segments of people, which, according to some studies, is explained by the free time they have available compared to that of other age groups as well as their travelling opportunities (Silberberg, 1995; Eusébio & Carneiro, 2012). While in the 1990s cultural tourism was a segment consumed mostly by older people, over time younger segments of people have begun playing a growing role in the demand of this type of destination (Richards, 2004; European Travel Tourism. World

Tourism Organization, 2005; Perez, 2009).

Within the various stakeholders in the tourism industry, the commitment of residents is a key element to the success of tourist destinations, and mainly in cultural ones, as they are among the industry's main assets. As such, it is vital to involve residents in the process of tourism planning and to conduct close follow-up of their perceptions, which, in the case of Guimarães, have not been sufficiently addressed so far (Jackson, 2008; Cadima Ribeiro, Vareiro & Remoaldo, 2012).

The amount of research conducted dealing with the perceptions of residents in Portugal towards the impacts of tourism is still scarce (e.g., Monjardino, 2009; Souza, 2009; Eusébio & Carneiro, 2010; Vareiro, Remoaldo & Cadima Ribeiro, 2010; Eusébio & Carneiro, 2012). That is not the case at the international level, where numerous empirical studies regarding this issue are available. So far, the present study is the only one focused on a Portuguese territory which has been certified by UNESCO as a World Heritage and recently hosted a European Capital of Culture (ECOC).

Considering the hosting of the ECOC that would be hosted in 2012, the research team decided to initiate a project aiming to capture the evolution of the perceptions of local residents towards the impacts of a mega-event, prior, during, and post-event, taking as the object focus the city and the municipality of Guimarães, located in Northwest Portugal, and the 2012 ECOC.

After its certification by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 2001, benefiting from the national and international exposure as mentioned previously, Guimarães began to emerge as a cultural tourism destination. Indeed, that recognition has to do not only with the value of its historic patrimony but also with the commitment made by the local authorities towards heritage preservation and urban planning (Cadima Ribeiro & Remoaldo, 2009).

The residents of the municipality of Guimarães are the core of our research for which primary sources were used. Namely, a survey was applied in 2011 to the population of the 69 parishes of the municipality in order to evaluate, in the ex-ante period, the intention of Guimarães residents to participate in the mega-event and their perceived impacts of hosting one of the 2012 European Capitals of Culture.

This paper is structured as follows: in the first section, a summary review of the literature is given addressing the main impacts of mega-events and the perception of residents; the following section highlights the methodology used in the empirical research performed; in Section 3, a few results of the survey that was administered to Guimarães residents between October and December 2011 are analysed. The fourth and final section presents the main conclusions and recommendations.

2. The European Capitals of Culture and the perceptions of residents

Culture and economy have long been seen as two separate entities. Over the

years, the trend has been to complement each other, as it has been assumed that culture is a great economic asset (Van Heck, 2011). In the case of the tourism industry, this relation has become more obvious in light of the strong relationship between tourism and culture (Costa, 2005).

In 2004, the Travel Activities and Motivations Survey, as reported by Ontario Tourism (2009), found that 17.6% of all Americans and Canadians believed culture and entertainment activities to be the biggest reason to travel. Following this trend, nowadays it is commonly assumed that cultural events fall within the group of the biggest drivers of competitiveness of territories (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000; Mota, Remoaldo & Cadima Ribeiro, 2012) and tend to be associated with innovation and creativity, including new cultural activities and workshops for creative participation of youth (Papanikolaou, 2012).

Even if we approach the cultural issue from a more passive and traditional approach, the impact of cultural festivals in resident communities in certain places all over the world is indisputable. Therefore, the evaluation of the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts of these events is certainly needed, even if it has not been a common practice in the past.

In the case of large-scale events, such as the European Capitals of Culture, the performance of these events is generally closely monitored by the organizers, sponsors, and the public, in general mostly because of the use of high amounts of public funds, from national

and EU sources (Mota, Remoaldo & Cadima Ribeiro, 2012; Papanikolaou, 2012). Lately, since 2006, the systematic evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture turned to be compulsory by the European Commission (Decision n° 1622/2006/EC).

Even if the impact of cultural events was not always a well-known fact, since the 1980s, several studies have been conducted on mega-events and their impacts. In this regard, we should mention the pioneer work done by Ritchie (1984), Getz (1991), and Hall (1992), as referred to by Gursoy and Kendall (2006) and Langen and Garcia (2009). The previous analyses performed were mainly centred on sport events, such as the Olympics (e.g., Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Ritchie, Shipway & Cleeve, 2009) or the Football World Cup (e.g., Lepp & Gibson, 2011), and very little attention was paid to cultural events (Mota, Remoaldo & Cadima Ribeiro, 2012).

If most of the studies performed addressed mostly the economic impacts, Hall (1992) underlined the fact that the environmental, socio-cultural, and political impacts are probably more important than the economic ones. This view was corroborated by other authors, namely Kim, Gursoy, and Lee (2006) and Ritchie, Shipway, and Cleeve (2009).

The emphasis put on economic impacts probably has to do with the concerns held by the organizers of the events regarding the expected economic gains and because the socio-cultural impacts are more difficult to quantify. Also, probably because research concerned with the socio-cultural impacts

fails to produce results that can be explored politically by the organizers. Some drawbacks of these results may be the increase of crime or conflict between residents and visitors, which in certain cases can even overcome the perceived economic gains (Langen & Garcia, 2009).

As mentioned, the European Commission made the evaluation of the impacts of each European Capital of Culture hosted a mandatory review (Decision n° 1622/2006/EC). As a starting point, the European Commission ordered the evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture organized between the years 1995 and 2004. This report concluded that these evaluations have been powerful tools for the cultural development of the territories. However, this same study confirms the lack of development of a policy for following best practices (benchmarking) and of comparison among the cities due to the lack of common indicators (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004).

Liverpool is a good example to consider. The impacts of Liverpool 2008 (2008 ECOC) are documented in a series of studies conducted between 2007 and 2009, with the aim of realizing the involvement of residents in the event, among other things. The study produced by García, Melville, Cox, and Rodenhurst (2010) tried to understand the views and perceptions of the residents of four sectors of the city (City Centre, Kirkdale, Knotty Ash, and Aigburth) that participated in the European Capital of Culture. It focused on three main themes. The first referred to the opinion of residents about the Liverpool European

Capital of Culture (i.e., the way the residents were involved in 2008 ECOC and the events; the perceived benefits and disadvantages of 2008 ECOC; the way the residents thought the ECOC in 2008 would influence the future Liverpool city). The second dimension tried to capture the cultural participation of residents in the mega-event (e.g., how residents understood "culture"; their interest in different types of cultural activities; how often they participated in cultural events; and how 2008 ECOC had contributed to it). Finally, the perceptions of residents about the mega-event and what happened specifically in their neighbourhood were considered (e.g., the most positive and negative aspects in Liverpool and in their own neighbourhood; how they felt about the quality of life in their town and neighbourhood; their concerns about crime and about the image of the city kept by visitors; and how this has all changed over the course of the 2008 ECOC).

The results of the study indicate that, in 2007, 57% of the population recognized their reasonable knowledge of the mega-event. After the mega-event, in 2009, about 66% of the respondents answered that they had participated in the event. In the perceptions among residents of the impacts of ECOC collected during the year in which the mega-event was celebrated (2008), respondents reported the urban regeneration, the effects on the image of the city, the increasing number of visitors, cultural programming, the positive impacts on social cohesion, and purchases as the main advantages of

hosting the European Capital of Culture (García et al., 2010).

3. Methodology: Questionnaire design and data collection

In this section we discuss the methodology used to support the empirical work done by the end of 2011. Based on the objectives outlined, we conducted a self-administered survey applied to the residents of Guimarães.

The main objective was to evaluate, during the ex-ante period (the year of 2011), the intention of Guimarães residents to participate in the mega-event and the impacts of hosting one 2012 European Capitals of Culture according to their perception. It used a convenience sample of 471 surveys applied to the local population, conducted between October and December 2011. A total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed, of which 510 were returned, meaning a response rate of 51% of the questionnaires handed out; however, 471 were retained for further analysis after eliminating incomplete responses to core questions.

Respondents from four public secondary schools and one professional school available in the municipality were contacted to obtain the survey sample. The goal of covering the 69 parishes that administratively constitute the municipality of Guimarães was the reason for using the high public schools and a vocational school as a way to deliver the questionnaire. This made it possible to consider three generations of inhabitants (15-24-year-olds, 25-64-year-olds and the 65-or-more-year-old

residents) in our survey. The students who were at least 15 years old were taken as gateways to reach their relatives, such as brothers, parents, uncles, and grandparents. Specifically, we asked the 10th to 12th year students to fulfil the questionnaire and take it home and distribute it to their family members. This was the most efficient way we had for getting both a higher number of responses and a representative sample of Guimarães residents.

A pre-test was conducted among 10 residents on September 29, 2011. The average response time taken was 15 minutes. The respondents indicated that the questionnaire was a little long, and some questions were dropped from the final version designed to be applied to the local population from October to December 2011.

The questionnaire contained 18 questions. In this paper we made use of just a few of the questions raised, namely the question that referred to the intention among residents to attend the event Guimarães 2012 ECOC, the question regarding the motivation to attend and not attend the event, and the question regarding the degree of knowledge of the cultural program of the 2012 European Capital of Culture and their perceptions about the impacts. The gender differences and the differences between those that intended to attend and did not intend to attend the event are the main focus of this paper.

The questionnaire included structured questions, mainly with a multiple-choice format, using in two questions a Likert scale of 5 levels, from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). It was

divided into three parts: one was connected to the attendance of and participation in the mega-event (six questions), the second related to the perceptions of residents of the impacts of the Guimarães 2012 ECOC (two questions), and the third part envisaged to collect the demographic indicators that would facilitate drawing a demographic profile of the respondents (e.g., gender, age, marital status, education, parish of residence).

In the present paper, several statistical procedures were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS, version 20.0). The following research steps were taken: first, statistical differences, considering the characteristics of respondents with the intention to attend the mega-event, motivations to attend or not, and the adequacy of the diffusion of the event, were examined using *chi*-square tests; second, expected positive and negative ECOC impacts were ranked, and the principal components factor analysis was employed in order to identify underlying dimensions associated to these impacts. Finally, *t*-tests were used to examine gender differences regarding the expected impact factors and individual items. The mean scores of impact factors were also compared across those who intended to attend the event and did not intend.

4. Main results

4.1. Profile of respondents

Table 1 summarizes the profile of the survey respondents, taking into account the main socio-demographic variables.

The majority of the respondents were female (59.2%). This result is close to those of other studies, such as Ambroz (2008), Sharma and Dyer (2009), Richards and Rotariu (2011), Eusébio and Carneiro (2012), and Shariff, Nor, Radha, and Ismail (2012).

Comparing the sample with the population of the municipality (the universe) in order to assess its representativeness, we must conclude that the value found in our sample is quite close, keeping in mind that the figures of the last Population Census (I.N.E., 2011) indicated that 51.4% of the inhabitants of the municipality of Guimarães were female.

The age cohort most represented was that of the 15 to 24 year olds (54.4%), far from the 15% of the universe. This result calls for some explanation: a major reason has to do with the use of the public schools to implement several surveys conducted according to the aim of the ECOC, overloading the faculty and turning hard the implementation of ours. One of those surveys was ordered by the Guimarães City Foundation to the University of Minho and regarded only the perceptions of young students (cf. Universidade do Minho, 2012). Such an occurrence conditioned the insistence we could make for students to deliver and collect the questionnaires fulfilled by their relatives. This feature may also be a clue to understand the missing data found in the socio-demographic characteristics demanded (see Table 1).

The more representative educational level in the sample was that of up to six years of education (50.1%), while the higher percentage in the municipality is

up to four years of education (29.1%). Thus, compared to the general population, the sample collected reveals higher levels of formal education.

4.2. Intention to attend and to participate in the activities of the mega-event

One result that was not surprising, considering the sense of belonging endowed in this community, refers to the high percentage of respondents (89%) that stated their intention to attend the activities of the mega-event Guimarães 2012 ECOC (Table 2), even if only 35.5% declared that they surely intended to watch any sort of activities of the mega-event. Looking to those data according to gender, we found that the intentions expressed were similar. In fact, 89.6% of women and 88.0% of males were planning to attend the mega-event. Only 11% answered that they did not intend to attend the Guimarães 2012 ECOC. In terms of age, we found that younger respondents showed greatest interest in attending the activities of the event (15-24: 91.0% and 25-64: 87.2%), compared to older respondents (65 and more: 75%). However, the chi-square test allows us to conclude that the intention to attend the event is independent of age ($X^2 = 4.129, p = 0.127, N = 471$). With regard to education, this is also a variable that could explain the intention to attend and participate in the mega-event. In fact, the respondents endowed with more education (bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D.) had more intention to attend the 2012 ECOC (96.4%). The less educated (could not read or write and up to four

years of schooling) were the ones that in 23.3% of cases indicated that they would not attend the event. In this case, with $p = 0.004$ ($X^2 = 13.161$, $N = 455$), we reject the hypothesis that the intention to attend the activities of the mega-event was identical to one of the four educational levels. Thus, the higher the education level, the higher the intention to attend the mega event.

The activities mentioned by the respondents that intended to attend were the outdoor performances (79% of men and 81.1% of women), shows of music (54.3% of men and 62.2% of women), and exhibitions (44.4% of men and 50.8% of women). The theatre was the only activity where there was a greater intention to attend by women than by men. This difference proved to be statistically significant.

Respondents who reported that they did not intend to attend the mega-event indicated as a reason their little interest in the activities planned (34.6%), lack of transportation (17.3%), and the ticket price (17.3%) as the main factors for not participating. Among the younger inhabitants (15 to 24 years old), low interest in activities programmed was more largely expressed (56.5%). Among the adults (25 to 64 years old), a variable that has shown to be critical was the price of tickets (19.2%). Regarding the older residents (65 and more years old), the absence of transport (33.3%) was the main reason for not attending.

Regarding the degree of knowledge of the cultural program of the mega event, this knowledge was low (2.68 at a maximum of 5). Only 17% of respondents said they had high or very

high knowledge of the cultural program. The most often mentioned sources of information were word of mouth (45.6%), friends/relatives (42%), and the Internet (38.9%). Considering these results, it is not surprising that, just 3 months before the start of the 2012 ECOC, only 51% claimed that the diffusion of the mega-event was adequate. Of those who responded negatively to the question raised about the appropriate diffusion of the mega event, 77.7% felt that more publicity on TV and radio would be required, 57.1% claimed a greater diffusion and involvement of the local population and 41.6% suggested the need for more news about the mega event in the media.

The latter issue relates to public conflict (mentioned several times by the local and national newspapers) that become visible between the residents, local associations and local authorities, and the official organizer of the mega-event, the Fundação Cidade de Guimarães (Guimarães City Foundation), triggered in the months of May, June, and July 2011. In fact, the resignation of the European Capital of Culture manager in charge of cultural program occurred in May 2011. The resignation in July 2011 of the Head of the Fundação Cidade de Guimarães a few weeks later and the troubles that preceded it can explain the fact that at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the respondents mentioned a need for more general diffusion of the ECOC and the need to attain a deeper commitment of the local population and associations in its planning.

We must remember that, during almost all of 2011, the issues regarding

the model of organization chosen and what we could call political conflicts (conflicts between the local public authority and the Guimarães City Foundation or between residents/local associations and the foundation) were the more relevant issues noted by the local and national newspapers (Remoaldo, Vareiro, Cadima Ribeiro & Santos, 2013).

On the subject of news about the ECOC in the media, it is worth mentioning that, from a study performed by Corte (2012), using a sample of 150 residents in Galicia (A Coruña, Lugo, and Ourense), we gathered information supporting the fact that 63% of the respondents did not take notice of the 2012 ECOC until the date on which the survey was conducted (October 2011). This result turns out to be contradictory with the aims envisaged by hosting such an event and its desirable transforming impact on the city.

The main motivation for participating in the 2012 ECOC was curiosity and discovery (24.6%), followed by contributing to the success of the event (20.6%), and gaining new experiences (15.9%). We are not surprised by the commitment of respondents to the success of the event, as Guimarães residents are known for their attachment to the city and the high pride expressed of being born or living there. Being the cradle of the nation and having the historical center certified by UNESCO as World Heritage since 2001 can be major explanations for this sentiment.

4.3. Perceptions of the impacts of the 2012 ECOC

Question 7 referred to the expected impacts of the mega-events and was one of the main questions that rose, using the three main types of impacts expected: economic, sociocultural, and environmental. Table 3 shows the main results obtained, organized by positive and negative nature. In addition, we have ranked them according to the importance attributed by residents using the mean scores following the five-point Likert scale used.

Concerning the positive impacts, “improves the image of the municipality” (4.28) was the statement that generated a higher mean: 83% of the respondents answered that they agreed or completely agreed with it. This result was followed by “conserves the built heritage” (4.16), which corresponds to 80.9% that expressed a positive answer regarding the issue. “Generates more public investment in culture” was the third statement that received a higher mean (4.06). “Attracts more investment” also got a good average (4.02), just after “presents valuation and recovery of traditions” (4.02). The high mean generated by the last statement is probably related to the wealth of the intangible patrimony of the city and the local gastronomy, thought to be better promoted and preserved after the recognition it could get from hosting the European Capital of Culture. This last statement also fits with the “improve self-esteem of the population of Guimarães,” which got also a high mean (3.86).

The statement “increases the income of residents” got a lower average, and this can be interpreted as the local community tending to see the ECOC as an important opportunity for economic and sociocultural improvements, attracting more investment that will not be reflected in their own incomes. This result is consistent with ours from a previous work of empirical research (Vareiro, Cadima Ribeiro, Remoaldo & Marques, 2011; Vareiro, Remoaldo & Cadima Ribeiro, 2013).

Taking into account the negative impacts, the statements that showed a higher mean were “creates difficulty in parking” (3.83) and “increases traffic” (3.68).

The lower mean appreciation was the eventual “increases crime” (2.69) and the “degrades physical and natural environment” (2.94), perhaps expressing low concern with their possible occurrence.

Since we had several variables (20) to measure the expected impacts of the 2012 ECOC, the 20 items were submitted to factor analysis using principal components as the extraction method, with varimax rotation to assess the number of underlying factors and to identify the items associated with each factor. Five factors with eigenvalues of greater than one were extracted. These factors explained 56.02% of the total variance, as presented in Table 4. The first factor was labeled *Investments and immaterial benefit* and accounted for 22.56% of the variance. It had a reliability alpha of 0.82 with an eigenvalue of 4.51. The second factor, labeled *Economic, social, and*

environmental costs, comprised 6 items (all negative impacts other than items related to “changes the habits” and “changes the traditional practices” which constitute factor four). With an eigenvalue of 2.44, it captured 12.21% of the variance and had a reliability alpha of 0.69. The third factor, named *Safety and infrastructures*, explained 9.35% of the variance, with a reliability alpha of 0.64. The fourth factor was related to *Changes in traditional practices and habits*, with 6.55% of variance explained and a reliability alpha of 0.63. With a reliability coefficient of 0.57, factor five, namely *Economic and social benefits*, accounted for 5.36% of the variance.

The internal consistency of the items within each dimension as measured by examining the Cronbach reliability alphas is shown in a high level in factors 1 and 2 but reasonable for factors 3, 4, and 5. In fact, Nunnally (1978) suggests that the reliability of alphas close to 0.70 indicate a high level of internal consistency between the individual scale items and the related factors.

Under the structure of the five-point scale for the expected impacts used in the survey, 3 can be interpreted as an indifferent point which does not allow a perfect distinction between agreeing and disagreeing. The higher the mean score, the greater the agreement on the impact factor. With the highest mean importance of 4.02, *Investments and immaterial benefits* was the most significant factor to residents. This factor was followed by *Safety and infrastructures*, with a mean of 3.67, and *Economic and social benefits*, with a mean of 3.28. This

suggests that residents expected more positive than negative impacts.

4.4. Gender and attendance comparison of impact factors

After the impact factors were delineated, their mean scores were compared in order to investigate gender differences and differences between those who intended to attend the event and those who did not intend (see Tables 5 and 6).

The *t*-test results indicated that female respondents had lower mean scores than men with regard to economic benefits and costs, although these differences were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The mean analysis also showed that women had a higher mean score in factor 1, *Investments and immaterial benefits*, than men, and this difference was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Female respondents presented higher means on all items of this factor, with statistically significant differences for 5 of these 7 items. These results demonstrate the greater concern of women vis-à-vis the social impacts of the event.

The rank of the impact factors was equal among those in the two groups. Both groups ranked *Investments and immaterial benefits* as the impact factor more expected by residents, followed by *Safety and infrastructures*. Also, both gender groups put *Changes in traditional practices and habits* as the least expected among the impact factors.

With regard to the differences between those that intended to attend the event

and the ones that did not intend (Table 6), expected participants rated all factors more than did the ones that did not intend to attend. However, only the differences in positive factors (factors 1, 3, and 5) were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The impact factor that gathered greater consensus in both groups was factor 1, *Investments and immaterial benefits*, followed by *Safety and infrastructures*. However, those who intended to attend the event had a higher mean score in *Economic and social benefits*, and those who did not intend to attend had a higher mean score in *Economic, social and environmental costs*. Also, both groups indicated *Changes in traditional practices and habits* as the least expected among the impact factors.

5. Conclusions

In this paper we have analyzed the importance of the Guimarães 2012 ECOC using a quantitative evaluation of the residents' perceptions, approached during the year before its hosting of the event. The evaluation of the perceptions of the residents of Guimarães of the impacts of the 2012 ECOC extracted from the survey data enables us to conclude that, overall, the residents of Guimarães expected the event to have more positive than negative impacts, particularly of social-cultural nature.

With regard to the intention to attend some of the activities of the mega-event, we weren't surprised by the fact that only 11% of the residents answered that they did not intend to attend the event, even if only 35.5% declared that they surely

intended to watch any of the activities. Taking into account the high self-esteem of the Guimarães residents recognized at a national level, this last result may be considered a surprising result. Nevertheless, this could be explained by the delay in turning public the programme of the Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture, which occurred only at the end of 2011. In fact, when asked about the degree of knowledge of the cultural program of the ECOC, the average of the responses was 2.68 (on a 5-point Likert scale). This means that the average knowledge about the event was the most representative one (43.3%).

Among the sources of information about the ECOC and its program, the sources of information more used by residents of Guimarães were word of mouth, friends and family, and the Internet. Meanwhile, residents expressed that more advertising on TV and radio was missing, as well as to getting more news through the press, gaining more knowledge from the ECOC website, getting greater presence on social networks, and achieving more involvement of the local population of Guimarães in the planning and programming of the mega-event.

The principal component factor analysis allowed the identification of 5 main impact factors that were labeled *Investments and immaterial benefits*, *Economic, social and environmental costs*, *Safety and infrastructures*, *Changes in traditional practices and habits*, and *Economic and social benefits*. With the highest mean importance of 4.02, *Investments and immaterial benefits*

was the most significant factor to residents, followed by *Safety and infrastructures* (3.67) and *Economic and social benefits* (3.28). This suggests that residents expected more positive than negative impacts.

The comparison of the mean scores of these impact factors by gender revealed that the most valued and least valued factors were common to female and male respondents.

With regard to the differences between those that intended to attend the event and the ones that did not intend, expected participants rated all factors more than did the ones who did not intend to attend. Although only the differences in positive factors (*Investments and immaterial benefits*, *Safety and infrastructures*, and *Economic and social benefits*) were statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Another result to report is the fact that those who intended to attend the event had a higher mean score in *Economic and social benefits* compared to *Economic, social, and environmental costs*, and those who did not intend to attend had the opposite result.

This kind of study can provide important support to the action to be taken by the municipal authorities, as it focuses on the residents' perceptions. Namely, it can help in the design of a more collaborative decision-making process in terms of the planning of cultural events. It can also be helpful as the only study ordered by the Guimarães City Foundation concerning residents' perceptions occurring at the end of 2011 (Universidade do Minho, 2012), and gave the authorities a limited vision of the perceptions of the local community, as it

intended to capture just the vision of the young students vis-à-vis the hosting of the 2012 ECOC.

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Table 1

Profile of respondents

	N	%
Gender		
Female	279	59.2
Male	192	40.8
Age		
15-24	256	54.4
25-64	203	43.1
65 and more	12	2.5
Education		
Up to four years	73	16.0
Up to six years	228	50.1
Secondary	126	27.7
University	28	6.2
Income		
Less than €500	54	11.5
Between €500 and €1000	167	35.5
Between €1001 and €2500	115	24.4
More than €2500	24	5.1
No answer	111	23.6

Source: authors` own survey data.

Table 2

Intention of residents to attend the mega-event and knowledge of the program of the Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture

	N	%
Intent to attend		
No	52	11.0
Yes	419	89.0
Degree of knowledge of the cultural program		
Very low	62	13.2
Low	125	26.7
Medium	202	43.3
High	63	13.4
Very high	17	3.6
Adequate diffusion		
No	231	49.1
Yes	239	50.9

Source: authors` own survey data.

Table 3

Perceptions of residents towards the expected impacts of the mega-event Guimarães 2012 ECOC: Positive versus negative impacts

Expected ECOC impacts (%)	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Positive impacts						
Improves the image of the municipality	0.6	3.2	13.2	33.3	49.7	4.28
Conserves the built heritage	0.4	3.4	15.3	41.4	39.5	4.16
Generates more public investment in culture	1.5	2.1	15.7	49.9	30.8	4.06
Presents valuation and recovery of traditions	1.1	2.8	19.7	45.6	30.8	4.02
Attracts more investment	0.6	3.8	18.9	46.5	30.1	4.02
Improves self-esteem of local population	3.0	3.6	25.3	41.2	27.0	3.86
Improves local infrastructure	1.1	4.7	26.8	50.5	17.0	3.78
Increases the supply of cultural events	1.1	4.9	30.8	45.6	17.6	3.74
Creates and/or increases employment	4.7	7.2	28.7	45.0	14.4	3.57
Increases public security	1.5	10.2	32.5	41.4	14.4	3.57
Increases quality of life	4.9	11.7	39.3	34.6	9.6	3.32
Increases the income of residents	6.4	21.7	47.3	19.7	4.9	2.95
Negative impacts						
Creates difficulty in parking	2.8	5.9	24.4	39.3	27.6	3.83
Increases traffic	1.9	7.9	31.0	38.9	20.4	3.68
Raises prices of goods and services	4.2	16.6	34.6	32.5	12.1	3.32
Changes the habits of Guimarães residents	5.9	18.7	40.6	26.3	8.5	3.13
Changes the traditional practices	7.9	17.6	36.3	32.5	5.7	3.11
Increases waste produced	11.9	20.8	28.2	28.2	10.8	3.05
Degrades physical and natural environment	8.9	21.4	42.7	21.0	5.9	2.94
Increases crime	17.8	28.2	29.3	15.9	8.7	2.69

Source: authors` own survey data.

Table 4

Factor analysis for 2012 ECOC expected impacts

ECOC impacts factors (Reliability alpha)	Loading	Eigen-values	Explained variance	Mean
1: Investments and immaterial benefits (0.82)		4.51	22.56	4.02
Generates more public investment in culture	0.75			
Conserves the built heritage	0.75			
Presents valuation and recovery of traditions	0.75			
Improves the image of the municipality	0.70			
Attracts more investment	0.69			
Improves self-esteem of local population	0.50			
Increases the supply of cultural events	0.44			
2: Economic, social and environmental costs (0.69)		2.44	12.21	3.25
Creates difficulty in parking	0.71			
Increases traffic	0.68			
Increases waste produced	0.68			
Increases crime	0.67			
Raises prices of goods and services	0.48			
Degrades physical and natural environment	0.48			
3: Safety and infrastructures (0.64)		1.97	9.35	3.67
Increases public security	0.79			
Improves local infrastructure	0.68			
4: Changes in traditional practices and habits (0.63)		1.31	6.55	3.12
Changes habits of Guimarães residents	0.83			
Changes traditional practices	0.74			
5: Economic and social benefits (0.57)		1.07	5.36	3.28
Increases the income of residents	0.78			
Creates and/or increases employment	0.60			
Increases quality of life	0.51			
Total variance explained		56.02		

Source: Authors' own survey data.

Notes: Extraction method – Principal component analysis; Rotation method – Varimax with Kaiser normalization; KMO=0.808; Bartlett's test of sphericity: p=0.00.

Table 5

Gender differences on expected 2012 ECOC impact factors

ECOC impact factors	Female	Male	t-value	Sig.
1: Investments and immaterial benefits	4.09 (1)	3.92 (1)	2.853	0.005
Generates more public investment in culture	4.14	3.95	2.425	0.016
Presents valuation and recovery of traditions	4.11	3.89	2.853	0.005
Attracts more investment	4.10	3.89	2.658	0.008
Improves self-esteem of local population	3.93	3.74	2.093	0.037
Increases the supply of cultural events	3.82	3.63	2.449	0.015
2: Economic, social and environmental costs	3.22 (4)	3.29 (4)	-1.064	0.288
Degrades physical and natural environment	2.86	3.05	-1.980	0.048
3: Safety and infrastructures	3.71 (2)	3.63 (2)	1.156	0.249
4: Changes in costumes and habits	3.15 (5)	3.08 (5)	0.857	0.392
5: Economic and social benefits	3.27 (3)	3.30 (3)	-0.548	0.584

Note: Scale ratings: 1= Completely disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Completely agree. The parentheses beside the mean scores indicate the rank of the mean values.

Table 6

Intention to attend differences on expected 2012 ECOC impact factors

ECOC impact factors	Attend the event		t-value	Sig.
	Yes	No		
1: Investments and immaterial benefits	4.05 (1)	3.81 (1)	2.711	0.007
Generates more public investment in culture	4.10	3.81	2.2.383	0.018
Presents valuation and recovery of traditions	4.06	3.69	2.625	0.011
2: Economic, social and environmental costs	3.25 (4)	3.25 (3)	0.055	0.956
3: Safety and infrastructures	3.70 (2)	3.44 (2)	2.401	0.017
Improves local infrastructure	3.82	3.42	3.338	0.001
4: Changes in traditional practices and habits	3.14 (5)	2.90 (5)	1.885	0.060
Changes traditional practices	3.15	2.75	2.694	0.007
5: Economic and social benefits	3.33 (3)	2.92 (4)	3.960	0.000
Increase the income of residents	2.99	2.62	2.562	0.013
Creates and/or increases employment	3.62	3.17	3.152	0.002
Increases quality of life	3.37	2.98	2.717	0.007

Note: Scale ratings: 1= Completely disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Completely agree. The parentheses beside the mean scores indicate the rank of the mean values.