Residents' perceptions of the impacts of a carnival in Cape Town

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Abstract

Carnival events have become a significant factor in tourism development initiatives of most destinations. The economic and socio-cultural developments experienced by host communities of tourism attractions and resorts have led to the emergence of carnival events as useful destination products. However, an understanding of residents' perceptions of event impacts on the area where they reside is necessary in order to gain local support for the event and tourism in general. Effects of carnival events at the personal level are increasingly being explored in tourism research. This is an exciting line of research since carnival events are being increasingly used to implement a wide range of public sector policies aimed at enhancing tourism offerings. The aim of this study is to examine residents' perceptions of the impact of a carnival in Cape Town in order to establish the overall value of the event. The study explores the perceptions of Green Point suburb residents on the Cape Town Carnival event highlighting the positive and negative aspects of their experience with the event. This study will add to the understudied event in Cape Town and advance academic discourse on carnival events. The findings show that residents are in support of the event being hosted in their area. However recommendations to the identified problems such as limited parking and traffic congestion, drunk-behaviors and littering associated to the event are proposed.

Keywords: Residents perceptions; Carnival events; Cape Town; local events; events impact

Introduction

Carnival events are part of an instrumentalist discourse in which they are viewed as important tools in tourism, regional economic development and also destination marketing. A discourse such as this is subjected to a quantitative research paradigm in which the behaviours and attitudes of residents prevail as an approach. Carnivals are invariably commodified by tourism, which leads to much reflection and also critical theory development. Carnival events have thus become important destination products and are being used as part of development strategies that bring business and tourism (Getz, 1997; Esu, Arrey, Basil & Eyo, 2011). Most destinations around the world have found the value of these cultural spectacles as useful tools for advancing tourism development (Nurse, 2004; Esu et al., 2011; Booyens & Rogerson, 2015). The well renowned carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2015 attracted an estimate of 977,000 tourists and generated US$431.9 million from

travelers' spending (Atchison, 2015). In Nigeria, the Calabar Carnival Festival; an annual event well known for attracting numerous fun seekers into the state; in 2007 attracted close to one million spectators (Esu et al., 2011). This biggest street party is being used as a strategic business venture aimed at empowering the citizens of Cross River State and Nigeria as a whole (Esu et al., 2011; Ekenyerengozi, 2012). It is evident through planning budget allocations that most destinations have recognised the value of cultural events such as carnivals and festivals (Rolle, 2016). These events are believed to improve the image of the areas where they are hosted as well as stimulate development and attract tourists and investment (Richards & Wilson, 2004).

With the increase in number of cultural events hosted in several countries, one of the fastest growing segments of tourism globally is believed to be that of events (Slabbert & Viviers, 2013). According to Getz (2008), the staging of events has become an important motivator of tourism and has contributed to the development and marketing of most destinations around the world. The role and impacts of planned events of any nature have been well documented and these are significant when considering the destination's competitiveness (Getz, 2008; Santoro & Massiani, 2014).

Several authors have clustered events into various groups using different criteria including size, form and content (Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2005; Getz, 2005; Getz, 2008; Getz, Svensson, Peterssen & Gunnervall, 2012). These authors further categorised events into mega-events (such as the FIFA World Cup, Olympic games, Commonwealth games), hallmark events (such as the Cape Town Carnival, The Rio Carnival), major events (such as the Euro games, Confederations Cup, Oktoberfest, Cape Epic, Jazz Festival) and local or community events (such as the McGregor Wine Festival, Good Food and Wine Festival, Suidoosterfees, Victoria Falls Carnival and many more). Events, regardless of their size are 'created attractions' which every destination aspiring to successfully develop should have (Šušić, & Đorđević, 2011:70). Šušić and Đorđević, (2011) describes events as activities which encourage direct or indirect participation and involvement by visitors and local community members. The staging of hallmark events particularly carnival events has become an integral part of tourism destination marketing due to the awareness and image benefits (Mules & Faulkner, 1996; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Hermann, Du Plessis, Coetzee & Geldenhuys, 2013).

Getz (2008) notes that hallmark events such as the Cape Town Carnival have other important roles including community-building, urban renewal, cultural development, and fostering national identities. Esu, Arrey, Basil and Eyo (2011) added that events such as carnival are important attributes of destination marketing and hence can be used to increase visitor numbers as well as reduce tourism seasonality. A study on host community perceptions of the impact of events by Fredline, Deery and Jago (2006) asserts that the Grand Prix and the Melbourne Moomba Festival in Australia were perceived as having a substantial community level benefit with less negative impacts. Some of the benefits included creation of employment opportunities and social capital type benefits such as the promotion of good values and giving residents an opportunity to have fun with their families and friends.

Dwyer et al. (2000); Shone and Parry (2005); Arcodia and Whitford (2007) study on cultural events and carnivals established that there are other important positive impacts often associated with the staging of events and many of which may directly benefit the local population. These authors further highlighted that events benefits include the development of facilities and infrastructure, entertainment and social opportunities, and a sense of pride and identity brought about by playing host to a major event.

The hosting of cultural events is now often used by tourism destinations and adds on to the destination tourism products thus acting as regional or national tools to attract visitors and create cultural image of the destination (Ezeani, 2016). This has prompted governments in several countries to look at strategies to make the events and tourism industry more productive and sustainable. However, an understanding of residents' perceptions of tourism impacts on the area where they reside is necessary in order to gain local support for event tourism projects and initiatives. The aim of this study is to examine the perceived impacts of the Cape Town Carnival on Green Point residents. Thus, the study objectives were to assess how residents of Green Point perceive the impacts of the annual cultural event hosted by the City of Cape Town. It also seeks to critically examine the influence of the event on the perceptions of residents' quality of life, understand how residents perceive the event and recommend ways to continuously improve the event in the future.

An understanding of residents' perception of the impacts of an event or tourism in their area is critical since it informs planning decisions and development (Department of Tourism, Kerala, 2000). The local government plays a key role in ensuring tourism development and thus having knowledge about how residents perceive tourist activities, helps when formulating development strategies and provides leadership (NTSS, 2011). For example the municipality can identify what needs to be done to change perceptions, more specifically the negative ones. The findings of the study could be useful particularly to local developers since they would be signaled if the event is being perceived positively or negatively and ways to maximise the benefits and at the same time minimising negative impacts would be devised.

Literature review confirms that the nature of the perceived impacts of events vary and are categorised into two groups, positive and negative (Hornsby, 2011). The analysis of residents' perceptions regarding the impacts of events has been studied using the popular social exchange theory (Ap, 1992; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997). The social exchange theory is formed on the basis of costs and benefits derived from an event and in other words, residents create their 'perceptions based on what they expect to occur' (Lorde, Greenidge & Devonish, 2011:350). Basically, the social exchange theory suggests that human relationships are created by the conscious and or subconscious use of the cost-benefit analysis (Crossman, 2016). The central underpinning of the social exchange theory is that interaction that elicits approval from another person is more likely to be repeated than an interaction that elicits disapproval (Andersen, Taylor & Logio, 2014:118). The theory suggests that people engage in an interaction with other people in anticipation of receiving rewards from the other party thereby generating obligations between the parties (Emerson, 1976). In this sense, human relationships is thought to be formed by the use of benefits and costs resulting from the interaction therefore creating mutual obligations, reciprocity and repayment with time (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The social exchange theory appears to be useful when analysing both the positive and negative attitudes of residents regarding tourism (Ap, 1992).

Methodology

Cape Town Carnival: An overview

The first edition of the Cape Town Carnival took place in March 2010 and the one under review was the 7th edition in March 2016. The idea of bringing the carnival event to Cape Town was initiated when the founding members visited Brazil for the Rio Carnival. It came as a way to create space for Cape Town communities to fulfill their social needs by strengthening institutional and family capabilities (Jaftha, 2013). In this case, it is hoped that the preparation of the carnival enhance skills development and transfer, entrepreneurial talent discovery and development thus

leading to long-term social cohesion (Jaftha, 2013). The first carnival in Cape Town was held in Long Street and drew an estimated 11000 spectators who came to enjoy and this number has grown to over 50000 spectators (IOL, 2016). The Cape Town Carnival was however relocated to the Fan Walk, Green Point and it proceeds down the Fan Walk, Somerset Road and to the Main Road in Green Point. This event celebrates diversity, creativity, and cultural understanding through energetic dance routines and remarkable costumes (Cape Town Magazine, 2016).

The Cape Town carnival has greatest potential to expand more into an internationally renowned city event which offer added opportunities for creative expression, job creation, social cohesion and economic development (Cape Town Magazine, 2016). In addition, it fosters cultural understanding whereby various cultural aspects from all over the Western Cape are showcased and displayed by the performers. The Cape Town Magazine (2016) further notes the benefits of the event particularly to the residents such as allowing them to participate by displaying their heritage and pride in the diversified city of Cape Town. According to Cape Town Carnival (2015:1), the long-term vision of the event is as below:

- create a Carnival which showcases and celebrates the diversity of South Africa and which puts the Carnival on the international tourism calendar;
- provide opportunities for community participation in arts and culture and create a significant hub for the clothing, costume and set-building industries in the Western Cape;
- create employment and training opportunities in costume, float design and production as well as large event logistics;
- create an environment of social cohesion where tourists and locals can experience the glamour and creativity of the Carnival throughout the year; and
- develop a tourism offering called "Carnival World" which will be a training and production hub for design, costume creation, float building, dance training, music development and major event production.

Study area, design and data collection procedure

Green Point is a middle class suburb located at the foot of the Signal Hill which is a key geographical landmark in Cape Town. Specifically the area lies between the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and Signal Hill on the Main Road that continues to Sea Point. Green Point displays a community set-up with narrow villa-lined streets, sidewalk cafes and fashionable shops (SA Venues, 2016). Most of the houses depict Victorian architectural style with balconies and fencings as well as lovingly reconditioned original features of this period. In terms of the demographic profiles of the area, it is historically a white residential area which is few minutes away from Cape Town's central business district (Bob & Swart, 2009).

The target population of the study was Green Point residents that resided within two kilometer radius from where the event was started and ended. The parade starts from Somerset Road into Main Road in Green Point and proceeds all the way to the Cape Town Stadium. The map on Figure 1 illustrates the Cape Town Carnival route clearly showing the starting and ending point as well as points where the roads are closed and the times.
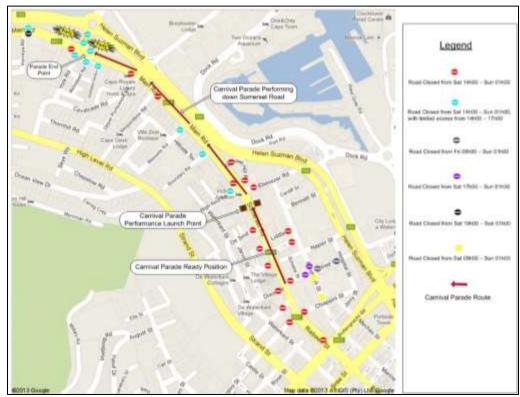
Figure 1: Map of Cape Town Carnival route, Source: The Green Table (2013).

Face to face interviews with residents were conducted within a two weeks period after the 2016 Cape Town Carnival event using a spatially based stratified random sampling method. In order to reach a 95 percent confidence level from the study, a sample size of at least 382 respondents was required (Isaac & Michael, 1981). However, for this study only 318 residents participated. Residents were interviewed in homes and flats situated on both sides of the street. In trying to ensure the integrity of the study and comply with research ethics, permission was obtained from the Green Point Ratepayers and Residents Association (GPRRA). In addition, Cape Peninsula University of Technology provided the researchers with an ethical certificate as approval to proceed with the study. The collected data was analysed through the use of SPSS version 24 whilst open ended questions were examined using constant comparative method and presented on concept maps indicating conceptual categories.

Results

This section sets out the findings, analysis and discussion of the responses of residents from the primary data collected. Tables are used to present the findings.

Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents (*n* = 318) is presented in Table 1. The gender of the respondents was almost equal, with 52.8% males and 47.2% females. In terms of historical racial category, a higher proportion of the respondents were White (38.1%), followed by African (30.8%), Colored (30.2%) and Indian (0.9%). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to over 70 years with an average age of 36.9. Most respondents (78.0%) were between the ages of 21 and 50 years.

Table 1: The demographic profile of the respondents, *n* = 318

Gender	Frequency	Percent (in %, *n*=318)
Male	168	52.8
Female	150	47.2
Historical racial category		
White	121	38.1
African	98	30.8
Colored	96	30.2
Indian	3	0.9
Age		
<21years	22	6.9
21 – 30years	90	28.3
31 – 40years	106	33.3
41 – 50years	52	16.4
51 – 60years	26	8.2
61 – 70years	20	6.3
>70years	2	0.6
Average Age		*36.9*

In terms of the occupation types of the respondents, the findings showed that 15.2% were students or learners, 14.0% considered themselves as professionals, 13.3% were running some businesses, 12.9% were self-employed, 10.2% were skilled, 9.8% were unemployed and 7.9% were retired. In addition, the study found out that 7.9% of the respondents were either sales or marketing personnel whilst a small 5.1% indicated that they were artisans or technicians. A very small proportion (2.5%) of the respondents was house executives whilst only 1% indicated that they were unskilled.

Awareness of and involvement in the 2016 Cape Town Carnival

All the respondents who participated in this study were aware of the Cape Town Carnival. An overwhelming majority of respondents (92.8%) indicated that they attended previous editions of the Cape Town Carnival. Of the 92.8% who indicated that they had attended the Cape Town Carnival in previous years, 22.4% had attended once, 32.0% twice, whilst 45.6% attended more than three times. This result indicates that the residents of Green Point are supportive of the event as shown by their attendance. This is further supported by the result obtained when the respondents were asked whether they will be involved in future editions of the Cape Town Carnival by attending. An overwhelmingly majority (89.3%) of the respondents indicated that yes they will attend whereas a smaller (10.7%) respondents will not attend. Reasons for not willing to attend future editions of the Carnival included personal reasons and concern about the negative impacts associated with the event such as overcrowding, increased crime, price increase and pollution.

The respondents were asked to indicate the sources of information that made them aware of the Cape Town Carnival. The findings show that radio was the main source of information about the carnival (31.4%) followed by word of mouth (30.8%), Television (26.1%), Cape Town Carnival Facebook page (15.1%) and the Cape Town Carnival website page (10.4%). It is also interesting to note that social media such as Whatsapp also played a role in raising awareness about the event and for this study, one responded knew about the Cape Town Carnival through Whatsapp messages.

The respondents were also requested to indicate whether they were happy with the Cape Town Carnival being in Green Point area and an overwhelming majority (87.1%) indicated yes whereas only a few (12.9%) favoured the carnival to be hosted somewhere else. The researchers also asked whether the respondents were in favour of the carnival being hosted in another location in Cape

Town or being discontinued altogether. The findings show that the majority (85.2%) of the respondents still favoured Green Point as a location for the Cape Town Carnival and 9.5% indicated that yes they wanted a different location whilst 5.3% wants the event to be discontinued altogether. Of those who indicated that the Cape Town Carnival should be hosted at other venues, they were prompted to specify the locations where they wanted the carnival to be moved to. Their responses are tabulated on Table 2. The top three locations which emerged from the responses were; Cape Town CBD (22.3%), Waterfront (20.0%) and Civic Centre (16.6%). It is clear from this study that from those who favour the Cape Town Carnival being hosted in other locations, most (14 respondents) preferred the Central Business District (Cape Town CBD, Civic Centre and Long Street).

Table 2: Suggested locations for the Cape Town Carnival, *n* = 30

Suggested venue/Location	Frequency	Percent (*n*=30)
Cape Town CBD	7	23.3
Waterfront	6	20.0
Civic Centre	5	16.7
Camps Bay	2	6.7
Long Street	2	6.7
Stellenbosch	2	6.7
Khayelitsha	1	3.3
Kraifontein	1	3.3
Newlands	1	3.3
Northern Surbubs	1	3.3
Townships	1	3.3
Wellington	1	3.3

Impacts of the 2016 Cape Town Carnival

In trying to determine the perceptions of residents, respondents were asked to show by rating their level of agreement with a range of statements relating to the impacts of the Cape Town Carnival (Table 3).

Table 3: Respondents' level of agreement with impacts of the Cape Town Carnival (in %, n=318)

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Economic Impacts					
The event is good for the economy as it created jobs	2.5	3.8	30.2	43.4	20.1
The event is good for local business (increased turnover)	2.5	3.1	31.1	43.1	20.1
The event attracted tourists to the area	2.2	4.1	33.2	39.9	20.6
The event gave increased media coverage for the area	3.5	11.0	34.3	33.3	17.9
The event was a waste of public money	12.0	18.7	22.2	28.2	19.0
The event increased the price of items such as food and transport	6.9	14.5	28.7	33.1	16.7
Social Impacts					
The event made locals feel more proud of their city and their community	3.1	7.2	36.2	36.8	16.7
The event provided an opportunity to have fun with family and friends	2.8	4.4	35.8	35.2	21.7
The event provided an opportunity to meet new people	4.4	3.8	28.7	42.0	21.1
The event increased entertainment opportunities for locals	3.8	4.4	28.0	41.5	22.3
The event increased interaction between locals and tourists	4.1	7.6	28.5	38.3	21.5
Unruly behaviour of visitors because of excessive drinking or drug use	8.2	12.6	37.4	29.6	12.3
Environmental Impacts					

The event caused traffic congestion and parking difficulties	5.0	13.2	35.6	32.2	13.9
The event created excessive noise	6.6	11.7	36.9	30.6	14.2
The event resulted in excessive littering	5.7	11.6	38.7	29.6	14.5

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

A Likert-type scale measurement was used to establish the degree of responsiveness of residents to predetermined event impact-related aspects. The following options were available as responses: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. In trying to simplify understanding of the results in the explanations, responses were merged for example, SD and D to make disagree result whereas SA and A making agree result. Eventually, the descriptions had three options which were; agree, neutral and agree. The findings are further presented in relation to economic, social and environmental impacts of carnival events.

The study also wanted to ascertain whether Green Point residents experienced some problems which are associated with the Cape Town Carnival. More than half (67.0%) of the respondents experienced no problems linked to the carnival whereas 33% indicated that they experienced problems. Of the experienced problems were; limited parking space (19.8%), drunkenness (12.9%), road closures (11.3%), littering everywhere (11.0%), people swearing (11.0%), people misbehaving (8.2%), event attendees lacked respect (6.6%), unruly behaviors of visitors (5.3%) and stampede (4.1%). Some other specified problems which were experienced included the following; shoplifting (3.1%), police were unable to control crowd (1.9%) and too much noise (6.5%). To the identified problems, 43.8% had some suggestions of addressing those problems while 56.2% of the respondents indicated that they do not have suggestions despite them identifying the problems.

A number of suggestions were offered to the identified problems and these included the need for having bigger parking spaces to accommodate the large numbers of the fans' vehicles. Some residents were also concerned about the drunken behaviors which included swearing hence suggested that alcohol be restricted during the event time. In addition, in trying to address the problems, residents suggested that police visibility during the event time should be increased, educate people on waste management (no littering and more bins), reducing of noise, not allowing kids to the event for fears of getting lost or hurt by drunken fans and acquainting event attendees of the *"dos and don'ts of the area"*. Although there were problems with the carnival, the respondents tend to support the event.

The study also intended to find the ways of reducing negative impacts on the residents in the future therefore the respondents were requested to suggest the methods. A number of residents were concerned with underage drinking therefore restricting alcohol at the carnival was one of the suggested ways. One concerned resident pointed out the following, *"alcohol age restriction must be taken more important to all the young stars, It gets embarrassing to see young kids drunk…"* Misbehaving was also pointed as one of the negative impacts of fans at the event and in addressing this, a responded indicated that those who misbehave at the event should be arrested. Some additional suggested ways were that the event should start earlier and finish earlier *("event must start early so that everyone can attend")*, increase police visibility/tightening security, enforce the use of bins by fans, increase space and parking *("just give people more space next time for parking…they parking in front of my gate please")*. Some residents revealed that they were not aware of the event hence suggested that they are informed in advance and also make them understand the event.

The residents were further requested to indicate what they thought were the best ways of increasing positive impacts on them in the future. It was pointed out that despite the event attracting more fans each year, more adverting still need to be looked into using channels such as posters, flyers, television and radio. Encouraging more local participation in the event planning was also pointed out as key for the sustainable existence of the Green Point Carnival. Some respondents pointed out that the area needs to be maintained clean and safe. In addition, security presence should be felt in the area in the form of police officers and the neighborhood watch committee *("it will be good next time by having neighborhood watch…")*. The event is noted to attract international visitors hence residents suggested that more foreign visitors are attracted to the area *("bring more foreigners into our country to experience the life we are living…")*. Creating jobs for local people, those residing in the area where the event is hosted was seen critical for residents *("create more jobs for the unemployed people in the community")*. The other suggested ways to increase positive impacts on the residents were; continuing the event in the future, keeping the environment clean, advertise the event more internationally, control use of liquor at the event and take residents suggestions seriously *("…residents suggestions must be taken more seriously")*.

Conclusion

Conclusively, cultural events such as carnivals have contributed to the development of cultural tourism as a large number of tourists are attracted to the hosting community. The Cape Town Carnival has seen an exponential increase in the number of attendees to the event and the city can use the event with other home-grown events with cultural underpinnings to advance tourism development to the City of Cape Town. This helps to promote cultural exchanges between residents of the hosting area and visitors (Ezeani, 2016). Cultural tourism is noted to bring several benefits to the hosting community and these cannot be underestimated since they enhance the image value of the destination, creates jobs and promotes skills development. The study suggests that home-grown cultural events such as carnivals have undoubtedly major effects on the local economy which could be positive or negative as well as direct and indirect. It is therefore important to plan careful especially on the management of these cultural spectacles so that they get the support of the people residing in areas where they are hosted.

Despite the support of the event to continue being hosted in Green Point, the study highlighted those areas which the residents feel the Cape Town Carnival can be hosted to generate more economic impacts on the local economy and the community. However, because perceptions change with time, longitudinal studies are therefore recommended since they seem useful when trying to get an in-depth understanding of the extent of the different perceived impacts of the carnival events over time.

Acknowledgment

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