

## CHAPTER 14

# Public Value Outcomes of Festivals: Well-Being and Economic Perspectives

Niclas Hell and Gayle McPherson

### Introduction

The values attributed to events and festivals are multifaceted and complex. The most commonly used concept of values presented in research and evaluations, as well as bids and prospects for events, is economic value (Brown et al. 2015). From a private organiser's viewpoint this is not surprising, being a primarily financial stakeholder. Public bodies (co-)organising events, however, tend to aim for wider notions of value rather than simply a positive bottom line figure. Despite this, Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) and methods for evaluating economic externalities such as multipliers, are the most common ways to present tangible value. This is complemented by an increasing trend of viewing events through the lenses of social and cultural perspectives, with a range of philosophical underpinnings, as described by Brown et al. (2015). These include human well-being and long-term cultural values, as well as triple bottom line perspectives (Fredline et al. 2005).

Due to the popularity of economic perspective approaches, alternatives have been expressed in open opposition to the economism of the status quo, both in terms of its limited scope and its inclination to be overly optimistic

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(Abelson 2011). Singular economic focus is not a constructive *modus operandi* for public bodies, and may limit their ability to produce good quality services for the public. However, retaining the economic perspective whilst also accounting for other values created in the hosting of public events and festivals gives additional opportunities for comparison, and deeper understanding of trade-offs. The dual perspective is present in some studies (Fredline et al. 2005), but there is no consensus on how to account for all that benefits the public's consumption of events. The Clifton, O'Sullivan and Pickernell (2012) Welsh study shows that although social and cultural *objectives* are common, these aspects are not evaluated. This chapter uses public value theory to explain the multitude of beneficial effects arising from events, and examines how this fits with the increasing need to tie to the neoliberal agenda of the marketplace and public bodies working in harmony. Using public value to assess events has been conducted in a small number of studies (Judd 1999; Foley, McGillivray and McPherson 2015), but none put this side-by-side with typical economic data such as willingness-to-pay and added value from local spending.

A public value perspective aids the understanding of festivals by assessing the effects of social change. Efforts to create change are almost invariably present in larger event initiatives hosted by public actors; positive economic externalities and providing beneficial social and cultural effects are prioritised by both local and national government event programmes. In the town of Paisley, Scotland, this dual focus was manifest in the bidding for UK City of Culture of the Year (UKCoC) 2021, ultimately losing to Coventry. Expected outcomes of investing heavily in culture were understood to be more than economic, including active efforts for equity and inclusion (Benington and Moore 2011). At the same time, the bid was created as a driving force in an urban regeneration scheme based on culture. The local authority's understanding of culture's potential to create many types of value, but with a need for economic regeneration, makes Paisley an interesting scene for assessment of public value.

### Paisley Regenerated

Paisley is Scotland's largest town with some 77,000 inhabitants (NRS 2018). An old textile and automotive industry town, Paisley was hit hard by the deindustrialisation of the late twentieth century. Peaking at over 100,000 inhabitants, Paisley shrunk in population, significance, reputation and economic output. During the second decade of the twenty-first century, a large-scale programme for cultural regeneration has been rolled out. Festivals and events have been placed at the core of the rebranding and regeneration strategy for Paisley. An ambitious events programme was a key tenet of City of Culture capabilities, and the local programme received increased funding and strategic development from the local authority during, and after, the bidding process. Bidding and legacy programmes have resulted in Paisley gaining ground as an

event venue: the Halloween Festival was voted ‘Best Cultural Event’ of Western Scotland and gathered some 40,000 visitors (Visit Scotland 2019). Part of the bidding process enabled Renfrewshire Council to consult with a range of stakeholders, businesses and citizens around the use of space in the civic realm. Discussions about space being used for creative purposes, and a reimagining of the High Street and West End as a cultural quarter, gained a voice and commitment. Innovative uses of digital technology ensured that events were able to use light shows on the 800 year old Abbey creating both a spectacle and an increased basis for digital identity for Paisley, allowing Paisley to extend its digital reach through events. This is something that would not have been considered possible before the bidding process, as previously the focus was on keeping the image of the town associated with heritage and preservation.

With a plethora of urban renewal strategies to choose from, the defining features of a city’s investment programmes will partially be shaped by the prevailing trends of urban planning, and sometimes include a review of scientific evidence for different strategies. During the first decade of the 2000s, the main urban planning trends included The Creative City, Event-Led Urban Regeneration, and the creation of Business Improvement Districts, all utilised to different extents in Paisley. Renfrewshire Council also adopted a policy for ‘inclusive growth’ through cultural regeneration aiming for growth through economic and social equity, not deeming all economic growth equally positive but prioritising weaker groups. Parts of Paisley are amongst the most deprived in Scotland, whilst others (especially in wider Renfrewshire) are affluent, suburban environments with very different demographics. The UKCoC bidding process created policy leverage for change; structural inequalities were to be challenged with cultural means. This aligns well with Bozeman and Johnson’s (2015) addition to public value theory: ‘progressive opportunity’, where the former denotes active efforts to create equal opportunities as a public value in itself. Events may be leveraged as a progressive opportunity to be used to influence change in equity and social inclusion.

### **Cultural Regeneration as a Strategy for Public Value**

The Creative City, popularised by Florida (2002) claimed that creative professionals in the service economy were the driving force of wealth and success rather than previous notions of industry and businesses. Specialised production and consumption by these ‘creatives’ was going to be even more important in the future (Florida 2002). This work inspired policymakers to increase the attractiveness of their urban environments for this so-called creative class, with cultural regeneration being one of the utilised methods. Culture-led regeneration is an urban planning approach for investing public money in culture and creativity, expecting economic, social, and aesthetic benefits (Miles and Paddison 2005).

The hopes for large-scale social effects may be high, expecting that the regeneration ‘breathes life’ into a rundown community (Evans and Shaw 2004). Some of the flagships of this method, including Glasgow and Barcelona, are associated with hosting mega-events (OECD 2018, Heeley 2011), or physical flagship developments such as Bilbao (Gonzalez 2011) but in turn have been criticised for putting tourist needs over the common good of citizens (Milano, Novelli and Cheer 2019). Bianchini and Parkinson (1994) mention three dilemmas: long- and short-term investments are both needed for culture, cultural production needs to match consumption and payment, and finally the periphery may suffer from investing in the city centre. These dilemmas form some of the basic problems of the method, and its subsequent scholarly interest (García 2004; Papanikolaou 2012). The approach is criticised for excessive place-making eroding local history, centre-periphery conflicts, and advantages only reaching those not in greatest need (Mooney and Fyfe 2006; MacLeod 2002). Proponents instead point towards the surges in tourism, people moving in instead of out, higher levels of investment, and broken negative trends in some cities employing the method (MacLeod 2002; Pike 2017). Yet again, the effect may become cyclical as with the benefits comes improved quality of life and thus attracting the above dilemmas again (Milano, Novelli and Cheer 2019).

In recent years, following the bid for UKCoC 2021, a shift was made towards *cultural regeneration* rather than *culture-led regeneration* with less focus on boosting new programmes (for typology, see Evans and Shaw 2004). The former is more focused on integrating culture as a long-term component of all public life and public value (Liu 2019; Ghilardi 2005). Extroverted cultural activities diminished, but the £100 million investment in culture and venues (such as the refurbishing of the Paisley Museum and Paisley Town Hall) remains, as well as an extended public events programme compared to before the bid.

### Public Value and Events

Public value may tautologically be spoken of as something that is valued by the public, although it does not bring us much closer to a real understanding of the concept. Nabatchi (2012) speaks of a preferred, but ultimately impossible ‘normative consensus’ of what is valuable. In practice public value will be pluralist, with competing but partially overlapping notions of value. Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) show that, in the literature, though centred in the public sector, ‘public value is not governmental’. Rather, it may be underpinned by Jørgensen and Bozeman’s perspective that common views on rights and obligations of citizens, as well as principles of governance and policy, are the public values of a society. Including different sets of ideals, these are as diverse as ‘Democracy’, ‘Shareholder value’, and ‘Risk readiness’.

Public value as a guiding principle for public administration arose, not least, as an alternative to New Public Management (NPM) and its surge around the turn of the millennium. Where NPM held quantification, goal orientation, and market solutions in the public sector dear, Meynhardt (2009, 192) states that public value represented ‘a view of the public sector that cannot be reduced to individual cost-benefit analysis, customer orientation- or rational choice-models’. Public value represented a virtuous rather than quantifiable perspective, which together with methodological critiques of CBA from happiness research and hedonic psychology posed some serious challenges to the economism of NPM reasoning. In the USA scholars such as Bryson et al. (2021), have taken a wider approach to examining the basis for creating public value. They argue that a shared understanding of leadership is key to create social transformations for the common good. In other words, if we truly believe we can use events as a progressive opportunity, something that Bozeman and Johnson (2015) suggest is possible, then shared leadership through public/private partnership is the key to success. Paisley may be on track for achieving the long-term goal of social transformation that Bryson, et al. (2021) attest to, with the ideological belief and practical approach to future Paisley partnerships in shaping the multifarious nature of public policy from a values driven approach.

Meyrick and Barnett (2021) highlight how cultural projects may face impossible demands of ‘demonstrating value’ due to the lack of common measurements and the low confidence in methods used for gauging cultural value (including qualitative data). This is exacerbated by the lack of a consensus on the method and variables to use in non-economic evaluation, though event evaluation researchers have called for it (Nordvall and Brown 2018). Using a well-documented approach such as ‘public values’ places the study of social values of events where it can more easily be compared to other policy areas. This partially bridges the gap of ‘intangibles’; i.e. cost-benefit inputs that cannot be used to render the final sum of consumer surplus.

Meynhardt (2009) shows how the different parts of ‘the public’ may experience different things as ‘value’, with the public split into interest groups, consumers, represented (by legislative representatives), clients, and citizens respectively. Different types of public policy will allocate the scarce resources available in different ways, all producing public value to the different agents of ‘the public’. Belonging and group identity, as well as increased self-worth, are important variables in most broad studies on social and cultural values of events (Foley et al. 2015). Meynhardt develops the thoughts of Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) from a policy perspective to processes in individuals in addition to the relations between (public and possibly private) agents and the public. This addition makes several important non-economic values of events accessible for public value analysis. In addition to costs/benefits and positive/negative experiences, Meynhardt includes belongingness, group identity, and increased self-worth, extending to the well-being area with many of the same values demonstrated in

the recent literature review on values of community events (Smith et al. 2021). Meynhardt also mentions ‘equal opportunity’, not unlike *progressive opportunity*. This develops the idea that an important aspect of value is having the tools to be able to achieve one’s own goals, putting a value on achieving a more equal possibility to exploiting individual ability. A value concept taking into account community aspects and researching culture in a town with high levels of deprivation and, in some regards, limited opportunity, provides a strong addition to understanding the value of events.

Using a ‘public service ethos’ based on creation of public value was seen by Stoker (2006) as an important step in moving past NPM. In this model, well-being is one of the main targets of the ethics-based approach, in addition to performance, accountability, and individual rights. The rise of well-being as a central indicator of success, partially contesting the earlier CBA framework, has increasingly been subject to theoretical development as well as implemented in public policy, with adopters such as OECD (2020), New Zealand (NZ Treasury 2015), UK (Office for National Statistics 2019), and Germany (Die Bundesregierung 2020).

## Festivals and Place

Public values associated with festivals are similar to other cultural activities, except for the importance of *place* and civic spaces’ transformative capacities. Until recently, with the emergence of ‘digital festivals’, festivals were a matter of an effort designated in time and place. Though the classic understanding of a festival was as a predominantly religious community event (described in Foley, McGillivray and McPherson 2012), festivals can now be more broadly phrased as ‘themed, public celebrations’ (Getz 1998, 409). Despite the broadening of the concept, the ties to community values and the importance of ‘place’ remains. Festivals often embrace local community identity and engage local groups who come together for a common purpose, sometimes centred around shared values and beliefs: ‘Festivals celebrate community values, ideologies, identity and continuity’ (Getz, Andersson and Carlsen 2010). Even with festival themes far from localised community events, such as the Olympics, community actors are important stakeholders in the bidding, preparation, and organisation of an event (Glynn 2008). Several studies have shown the importance, and potential positive effects, of engaging the local community (Misener et. al. 2015; Higgins-Desbiolles 2017), and the negative effects of failing to do so (Yolal et al. 2016; Dredge and Whitford 2011). These and other studies show that positive effects of festivals include social cohesion, social capital, whilst negatives may include distrust, unrest, and rioting (Higgins-Desbiolles 2018; Talbot and Carter 2018).

Place identity is one of the forces driving event visitors and tourists to a place. Construction of place and related identities is not necessarily tied to traditional boundaries or designations, but can be created by adding new angles to old

places, or create entirely novel identities tied to places which were not regarded as places, such as music or dance festivals, as suggested by Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard and Jones (2010). However, to use existing traditions, places, buildings, and heritage is a strong incentive for developing a sense of place, and in the case of local government, to create stronger community ties in their area. The sense of a common good is often attributed to place and public value agreement. Festivals have a potent ability to shape and generate shared identities (George 2015) adding to a consensus of the value added to the community and town. Music festivals, for example, are often created around the name of the place: Leeds, Reading and Glastonbury are key examples of associating the festival with a place and space. There is often a contested role of the festival within the place and as Nabacht (2012) stresses, the need for normative consensus on public value attributed to the role of festivals and events is key here. This works for larger festivals but hosting events or festivals in smaller communities gives the role of maintaining and creating a common sense of community, an out-sized role to play (Jaeger and Mykletun 2013).

### Evaluating Festivals

Since the 1980s, festival and event hosts have increasingly focused not just on reputation and local culture or leisure, but also on local economic gains (del Barrio, Devesa and Herrero 2012). Events may have the positive effects of gathering interest, investment, and increased local economic momentum, and hopeful event organisers may want to turn the inevitable expenses of a large-scale event into a profit. Through standard economics evaluation techniques, such as EIA, the economic impact of festivals and events can be calculated in terms of effect on the Gross Regional (or, for mega-events, National) Product.

The EIA approach presents several problems, in particular generous applications in terms of spending and consumption estimates produce overly optimistic results. Also strict implementations use a limited range of variables with limited explanatory power and all spending by locals is subtracted; only economic influx to the region is positive (Abelson 2011). This is questionable in the Paisley case as the turn towards cultural spending is a goal in itself, and a large amount of spending on leisure is centred in neighbouring Glasgow. There are solutions, such as suggested by Snowball (2008), who suggests asking what respondents would have done with their resources and time instead. In this study, the local and non-local values are presented side by side.

The standard economic methods for evaluation consider primarily short-term effects (Misener et al. 2016). A major debate in this area is whether calculations of impact are overly optimistic, or indeed performed with adequate tools altogether. Overestimation of economic multipliers, the overshadowing focus on spending by non-locals, and ignoring community costs other than event-related transactions are all criticised but common features of cultural

event effect presentation (Abelson 2011). Cost-benefit analysis has been suggested as an alternative, but does not necessarily solve the optimism of evaluations, and demands much more resources. Properly performed, EIA will provide some key figures on the economic success of a festival whilst remaining at a fraction of the cost of a CBA.

Scholtz, Viviers and Maputsoe (2019) calculate the social value to be 1.46 times that of the economic impact. In standard techniques, these values may be either simply omitted or considered intangible, unmeasurable. Measuring and planning for public value requires a longitudinal study of collective positive experiences, evaluating esteem, trust and well-being with a community. It often takes years before there is noticeable change. In this study, the public value framework was used to design questions on a broad scope of added value, and social value leading to a shared understanding of the common good, common benefit and social transformation. Additionally we conducted surveys on economic output and willingness to pay.

One of the downsides to a public value approach is the difficulty to quantify the effect in the short term, which in turn is a contributing reason for the popularity of CBA. The UK Green Book's thorough work with creating a softer approach to cultural value had the explicit goal of taking broad-spanning values into account whilst keeping it monetised in the last step (O'Brien 2010; Fujiwara, Kudrna and Dolan 2014). This means sticking to the principles of subjective well-being, foregoing some collective values which are clearly demonstrable, but with no agreed method for quantifying their extent. Well-being associated with culture is calculated at £90 per person per month in the UK (Fujiwara, Kudrna and Dolan 2014) so the possibility to use events and festivals as a progressive opportunity to bring a collective leadership together to effect change is one that is attractive in public value terms if one can secure consensus. Making use of sophisticated methods for calculating well-being of culture, most of the effects shown above remain partial or completely under evaluated. Though they may overlap with subjective well-being, important public values may be invisible for the individual respondent.

### The Paisley Study

This study makes use of mixed methods to evaluate economic, social, and cultural impacts. Data collection comes from three main sources: an in-depth interview series, two on-site structured interview series at Paisley events, and the official Renfrewshire Council evaluations, the latter performed by external consultants.

Primary quantitative data was collected during 2019 with 140 structured attendee interviews partially based on the ATLAS event evaluation questionnaire were conducted at three events: Paisley Halloween Festival, Fireworks Extravaganza, and Christmas Lights Switch-on. In the days following two of

these, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 60 representatives in shops around Paisley town centre. The interviews' partially open-ended questions gave respondents the possibility to express opinions relating to the events programme in their own words. Shop representatives were asked about both economic and other impacts to them and their peers. Local shops are regarded as important economic beneficiaries, which in turn is the main quantifiable effect of events. Their hitherto unheard perspective on Paisley events both economically, culturally and socially adds to the perspective of citizens-consumers, tourists, and public bodies.

One of the authors of this chapter was embedded in the Paisley 2021 bidding team, thus getting an inside perspective on the partnership approach and helping shape the process of developing cultural policy in Paisley around added public and social value. The other author was embedded in the regeneration team at Renfrewshire Council from early 2019 until lockdowns in March 2020. Both took observational notes of the processes involved and their participation in shaping the approach to evaluation. These form large informal pieces of knowledge on the subject matter of events in Paisley. In addition to the personal experiences gathered by being part of the teams, three in-depth interviews were conducted with local practitioners from different organisations in February 2019; a local arts project, a local community planning group, and a Renfrewshire Council officer. All three of these interviewees had been heavily involved in the bid, so these interviews were reflective discursive engagements, aiming to explore to what extent the vision and shifts in engagement, attitude and benefits from cultural engagement in the process, they and their communities they represented had felt came from the bidding process and beyond. They discuss the impacts and values of the bidding process, primarily in non-economic terms. These were used as a triangulation device for the researchers to check the results of the public and private sector survey against, the observations from the engagement of the community groups that both had witnessed and the testing of their understanding of how the bidding process had added to the cultural value and added public value for the town of Paisley.

In addition to the informal interviews with officers, a complementary interview was conducted with the events manager in Renfrewshire, in April 2020, to discuss the implications of Covid-19. The effects on the 2021 UKCoC would have been large (as seen in Coventry with reduced attendance and many additional precautions), and the programme envisioned by the Paisley 2021 group would not have been entirely possible during the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondent noted that even small-scale public events would likely not start until the pandemic was over, and that the type of large physical events with visitor numbers in the tens of thousands would possibly not be hosted for the foreseeable future. Paisley would likely not arrange these types of ambitious events in confined spaces until public trust has gone back to normal, but recognised that their approach to embedding and engaging more locally with

communities on smaller scale outdoor festivals that promoted local identity would be of more benefit in the short term.

Secondary data was gathered on-site in Paisley. Evaluations were commissioned for the 2016 event season onward, and seven to nine major festivals and events are evaluated each year. Eight events spanning December 2017 to November 2018 are used in this study, soon after the 2021 bid was lost. The methodology, eventsIMPACT is an Impact Analysis tool, with EIA being the most prominent branch. Income is calculated as spending generated in the town centre due to events, including accommodation. Organiser expenditure, as well as local resident spending is subtracted. Evaluations consist of questionnaires conducted during event runtime, circa 400 per event. Relevant questions for this chapter were chosen from the evaluations: on local spending, on satisfaction and feelings about Paisley. These were chosen as they provide the best insight to Gross Value Added and our operationalisation of public value. The primary data interviews were designed with evaluations in mind: filling the gaps of the evaluations for the study's different purpose and using the strengths it provides in numbers.

## Findings and Analysis

The findings were themed into key areas of importance and value as identified by local respondents and the bid team. We have presented the analysis under the different thematic areas below. These highlight the value areas that the community and policymakers deemed important in creating public value through events and festivals and were highlighted as part of the bidding process.

### *Sense of Community*

Respondents showed a strong sense of altruism, and positive feelings towards the town, the local authority and population, sometimes all spoken of as the same thing. This is most notable amongst the shopkeepers. A majority of those affected negatively by traffic jams, re-routed buses, and the non-attendance of regular customers still supported the events programme and expressed positive values stretching beyond their own business. This was expressed as 'it's good for the town' — that events and regeneration helped the town into a better position than before was expressed by practitioners and attendees as well. More often than not this was expressed with more emphasis than other values such as personal gains or entertainment values. According to respondents, the common value of what is 'good for the town' was clearly a primary opinion about the program as a whole. There was a strong majority supporting the programme, and despite being gathered two years after losing, several primary on-site respondents still spoke unprompted about the 2021 bid.

These indicators of a functioning sense of community were partially the effect of cohesion created by the momentum from the bid. According to one practitioner, the events programme and the resources coming from the bid were intertwined: 'I think as those bigger events have continued to grow, they are very valued by the community. [...] I think it might have happened because of the smaller funds made available; communities in the town feel connected to the town centre and feel like the cultural events are part of the town's cultural landscape.' The attendees mirrored this, noting; 'It's nice to see the town come together', and also supported in the earlier evaluations. Several values associated with increasing community cohesion also show up in the data; evaluations show increasing perceived safety over time, strong community ties show in the focus on common goals, civic participation increases, and social capital is strengthened.

### *Local Pride*

The experience of the physical events was overwhelmingly positive, partially due to the scheduled activities at the venue, but, to an even higher degree, due to the 'ambience' or 'atmosphere'. These words were used primarily by attendees but echoed by shop representatives and practitioners, one mentioning that the events' strategy created an attraction for grassroots movement due to the positive brand associated with Paisley events and community. All three in-depth interviewees mentioned a transition from a negative view of the town and its capabilities both based on cultural and social grounds before the bid, to an ambience of support and common good afterwards. Towards the end of the bid, if someone spoke negatively about Paisley in open channels on social media, they were very likely to be met with counter arguments, according to one respondent.

All data types also display how local respondents show pride in the town. In the 2017 event evaluations, at the height of the bid, only 4% stated they *didn't* feel more positive about Paisley than they used to, and a strong majority stated they were proud of Paisley's culture and heritage. The same was expressed by one practitioner arguing that the increase in cultural focus had not just given Paisley new things to be proud of, but noted how certain slogans had stuck in the public mind and were repeated by many, such as that Paisley had the second highest number of listed buildings in Scotland (after Edinburgh).

### *Progressive Opportunity*

In the events programme overall, the public values were expressed by practitioners in terms of accessibility, community get-together, citizenship and a democratic process, key elements of Bozeman's model, and in some cases based upon the educational values found in Paisley's vibrant history. The Renfrewshire

Council officer noted that later steps in the investment plan for the bid were mainly goals of social equity: ‘We have large programmes for tackling poverty and social deprivation, improvements in life chances and social outcomes for local people. [...] And then all of that manifested itself in terms of the vibrancy of our town centre. It’s levels of occupancy and it’s night time economy, all these sorts of things.’ Again a key outcome of a public value approach is securing and alleviating some of the structural inequalities that exist. Given Paisley was deemed the most socially deprived area in the UK (Scottish Government 2016), this was a key strategic outcome for the Council and a lot of expectation for a cultural events based approach. Three years after the failed bid, but still believing and following their approach, the town has risen three places from the bottom in the multiple deprivation index, for the first time in 30 years. It is evident that the public value approach to embedding culture at the heart of policy decision making and developing approaches from a grass roots organic manner, led to the renewed common good approach from their festivals and events strategy.

The cohesive effects mentioned above were partially conscious designs by Renfrewshire Council to create ‘inclusive growth’. Aiming at higher equity, explicitly in the form of more cultural participation by the outsized group of socially deprived living in Paisley (Scottish Government 2016). The analysis of postcodes in evaluations and primary interviews showed that attendees from all types of neighbourhoods were present, but there was a strong correlation between more deprived areas and more attendees at the events. This was not unexpected: evaluation data from the Spree music and performance festival revealed an inverse correlation, with less deprived people visiting ticketed events with well-known artists.

The practitioners spoke highly of how mobilisation had increased during the period of their interviews, including a strong influx of volunteers to social NGOs in Ferguslie, one of Scotland’s most deprived localities, in Paisley, and a strongly increased visibility of social organisations, leading to more interactions with people in need of help. According to the social NGO practitioner, the public surge in interest and support for her organisation resulted in several prevented suicides and maintaining shelter, food, and paying the bills of several more, despite a positive socio-economic trend in the area.

Status and usage of public spaces were also echoed by practitioners and attendees as a valuable public asset. Comments on the ‘town coming alive’ was not exclusively denoting people in the streets, but also the creative use of space, including the light show on the Abbey and the festivalised (Harms 2021) utilisation of spaces which are usually empty. These include County Square outside the train station, the spacious civic areas around the Abbey and town hall, or the park at Dunn Square; all little used civic spaces amongst the most central addresses in Paisley. The transformation of some of these outdoor spaces are part of the bid’s physical regeneration investment plan, which survived the

unsuccessful bid, though the events programme also presented access to spaces to people otherwise unlikely to use them.

A key contributor to this outcome was the local authority officials making a conscious decision to plan with culture at the heart of their decision making, not necessarily planning for culture but changing the way they thought of culture, as public value. Culture was embedded in their approach to health, education and social justice as Foley, McGillivray and McPherson state: ‘events can be used in public value terms as an instrumental means of the achievement of noncultural ends’ (2012, 337). What Paisley succeeded in, where others have failed, is that they understood that using culture as a public value for the common good was a *process* and didn’t need to be evaluated only as an outcome in the terms the way economic models present. The process and the use of the softer approach of engagement of local groups, citizens, even dissenting voices, enabled them to engage in a longer term process of re-engagement with communities on the periphery and brought them back in from the margins; adopting the approach of Meynhardt (2009) that public value creation is drawn from the experience of the public. Paisley’s campaigns on social media of ‘Paisley Is’ and ‘Why I love Paisley’ and after the bid of ‘Future Paisley’ allowed the voices of cultural agents, citizens and producers to be heard as part of a collective voice and in securing the common good for Paisley; the key ingredients that Bozeman and Johnson (2015), stress are needed to demonstrate a progressive opportunity. Paisley leadership led the way and achieved the elusive normative consensus for their approach that Nabatchi (2012) suggests is needed in creating public value.

### *Use Values and Economics*

The most striking similarity between the different types of data collected was respondents’ expression of support for the Paisley cultural programme and the bidding process. In the official evaluations, this showed up as an increasing support for the bid over time, and ended up at very high levels. This was echoed by the policymakers and practitioners, who noted an initial scepticism about the bid based on locals’ negative sentiments about Paisley, on the lines of; ‘We couldn’t be City of Culture’. During 2016 and 2017, the high degree of visibility, community mobilisation, funding, and the formal success of being shortlisted contributed to shifting opinions. Indeed, this was one of the main public values achieved according to several practitioners: the town appeared to rally behind a common goal; a common good. One noted that on social media, the few negative voices were met with many more arguing that the bid had brought positive change to Paisley; 94 % supported the bid in the late-2016 evaluations, and 98–99 % of evaluation respondents were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the events.

This was also true of both shopkeepers and festival attendees, two years after the bid was lost. The flagship events program and the general regeneration scheme had strong support. Several respondents noted how the current state was due to the 2021 bid, or that the state of the town and its culture had been improved for years: 'If they keep on improving like this, I have nothing negative to say'. The positive opinions were close to unanimous amongst respondents. Most traceable disagreements were found within data groups: where the majority of shopkeepers expressed a common narrative, stating that most businesses gained footfall and/or income from events. A small minority were convinced of a different version, where 'everyone knows' that events are bad for most businesses, except perhaps for a few bars next to the venues. It was clear that these different views were discussed amongst groups of apparently mutually exclusive business owners.

The positive effect on business, however, was corroborated by the evaluations. The Economic Impact Analysis showed a £5.4m increase in spending in the town centre per year (of which £2.2m from people from outside Renfrewshire); one Renfrewshire policymaker estimated that visits to Paisley had increased by at least 300% compared to before the regeneration scheme. Several pubs and restaurants answered that the events were the busiest days of the year, and that Halloween broke sales records, and attendees of the winter events did parts of their Christmas shopping in Paisley due to attending the Christmas lights switch-on or the Fireworks extravaganza.

Interestingly, the willingness to pay (WTP) was slightly below the actual cost for Renfrewshire Council (£6 compared to £6.80 per visitor). Many respondents reporting low WTP were still very happy with the experience, but were clearly uncomfortable with putting a price on it. Some mentioned that they had already paid for it (via taxes), and others protested the question altogether and did not want to give an answer. This is also complicated by the similar WTP from the ambitious Halloween festival and the comparatively limited Fireworks show; respondents thought that it may be worth 'a few pounds' but were hardly willing to develop it. The insincere £0 answers (so-called 'protest zeros') further shows the contrast between placing a value on an experience and expressing it in monetary terms. It is well known in the willingness-to-pay literature that different questions will produce very different answers (Snowball 2008).

The evaluations initially gauge volunteering activity with a monetary conversion coefficient (£14.09 per hour). This measure was dropped in later evaluations as the events did not attract or make use of many volunteers. In contrast to this practitioners spoke about the increased volunteering and civic organisation as a main effect of the cultural programmes, though not directly tied to the public events programme. Several groups reported surges in visits and volunteers, and that the small funds offered for community organisations were the key to a large increase in activity. In-depth interviews with policymakers revealed an increased third sector mobilisation, volunteering, local cooperation, and that policy leverage were at all-time highs during the bidding process.

Although this disappeared after the bid was lost in December 2017, the levels in February 2019 were much higher than before the bidding process started. Primarily, adding to the public value perspective rather than the economic, this clearly shows the need for qualitative methodology in event evaluation.

## Conclusions

The public value of the Paisley festival programme does not lie exclusively, nor even primarily, in attending specific high impact events. This view was communicated by attendees, shopkeepers and interviewees. Values are expressed in terms of an increased sense of community, pride in the place, new usage of, and feelings for, urban spaces, and the willingness to work for social change or the common good. The values identified in this study have made a change in the internal and external reputation of Paisley; not because of advertising but because many in the community now get to associate Paisley with positive experiences.

The willingness to pay for Paisley's cultural programme was similar to the actual cost paid by Renfrewshire Council. Similarly, even with a cautious EIA, at least a million pounds (a conservative estimate from the EIA) are spent yearly in Paisley town centre by visitors driven by the festival programme, and several times more by locals. The economic influx is considerable, but respondents overwhelmingly put the softer public values first (Meyrick and Barnett 2021). This broad measurement of values shows the insufficiency of not just input-output style economic analysis, but also the softer well-being approach used by the UK Green Book, monetising subjective well-being variables created with a cost-benefit style calculation of surplus.

The bidding process opened up the opportunity for leveraging a wide array of reforms; investing in art, service sector jobs, creating a Paisley brand based on positive connotations, and the development of the civic realm in the form of a cultural district encompassing the 1000-yard walk between the east end Abbey and the Coats Memorial Church, the West End, via the High Street. This represented change which in several parts was needed anyway, but did not become possible until public and private actors in Paisley were onboard a reform ship already moving. Support for the town's cultural efforts came out of the bidding process but is retained by the commitment of the local authority to provide culture on what is largely perceived as the citizens' terms and for the common good.

Regeneration efforts such as the one in Paisley have the potential to change the access to civic spaces. In this case, the process had explicit focus on inclusion in the sense of equity. Cultural consumption increased in some under-represented groups, and the access to picturesque but under-utilised town areas increased. Sentiments about the physical surroundings in central Paisley were transformed by the bid and its most visible, and ever-growing part, the festivals.

This may be especially significant in a town such as Paisley with dilapidated areas and unique listed buildings both being major parts of the geography. Reigniting the pride in the latter and utilising events as a progressive opportunity to use civic spaces had a significant effect on what was seen as an increase in public values in policy and practice.

Whilst the neoliberal brand of culture-led regeneration guided some of the principles of the bid, with stated aims of achieving economic growth through culture, Renfrewshire Council and its partners partially outgrew that model. The willingness of local policymakers and businesses to remain in public-private partnerships remains strong, but the focus has shifted towards a model more permeated in public value thinking such as well-being and aligning to Scottish Government's strategy of the well-being economy and aligned to those of New Zealand's leadership model which is significant in policy terms of the level of ambition Paisley sees for itself.

The public values associated with engagement and community have become a selling point for Paisley, projecting a brand based on the idea of a town strongly engaged in their own community and history. Though a more low-key approach than the bombastic mega-event brand, it is used to promote Paisley nationally and internationally, not least in the form of the extensive festival programme and the historical buildings. The renovation of buildings has been the most costly part of the regeneration programmes, change largely impossible without the leverage created by the bidding process.

This study demonstrates the need for more effort to study the possibilities of public value created through events. Whilst subjective well-being is becoming common to study in relation to culture and events (Smith et al. 2021), the wide array of effects shown in this study would not be possible to monetise in the models used by UK Government, Economic Impact Analysis, and hardly even with an ambitious CBA. The equitable effects of progressive social opportunities, and the increased well-being in communities experiencing stronger coherence are key pieces in understanding what is possible to achieve with an ambitious community festival programme. This chapter adds significantly to the interdisciplinary understanding of using public value theory and economic theory as a process-led strategy rather than gauging success or failure of the use and re-use of public space on traditional economic impact terms only.

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