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Conference Paper

Perceptions Of Residents Of The Hosting Of The "Guimarães 2012 European Capital Of Culture": An 'Ex- Ante' Approach

53rd Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Regional Integration: Europe, the Mediterranean and the World Economy", 27-31 August 2013, Palermo, Italy

Provided in Cooperation with:

European Regional Science Association (ERSA)

Suggested Citation: Remoaldo, Paula; Mota, Mécia; Ribeiro, José Cadima (2013) : Perceptions Of Residents Of The Hosting Of The "Guimarães 2012 European Capital Of Culture": An 'Ex-Ante' Approach, 53rd Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Regional Integration: Europe, the Mediterranean and the World Economy", 27-31 August 2013, Palermo, Italy, European Regional Science Association (ERSA), Louvain-la-Neuve

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/123859>

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

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Abstract

The European Capital of Culture is an annual megaevent, which can be a good way of challenging and engaging local citizens, generating feelings of common citizenship. Besides, it is 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, depend on the commitment of residents towards it and of the consistency of the tourism attractions and activities supplied, and of the capacity of anticipating and monitoring the evolution of the tourists' preferences. The present study aims to assess the intention to participate and the impacts perceived by residents of Guimarães (northwest of Portugal) of the hosting of one of the 2012 European Capitals of Culture (2012 ECOC) in the *ex-ante* period (the year of 2011). Through a convenience sample of 510 surveys applied to the local population, complemented by semi-structured interviews to local and regional actors, conducted between October and December 2011, we tried to identify some of these potential impacts. According to the results we got, only 42.4% of residents had a reasonable prior knowledge of the megaevent and, with regard to participation, only 14.9% intended to participate. Compared to the study of Melville et al. (2010), referred to the Liverpool 2008 ECOC, we believe it is useful to retain that 57% of the population had a prior reasonable knowledge about the megaevent.

Keywords: Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture; Perceptions of residents; Impacts of megaevents; Tourism development.

Introduction

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

Cultural destinations are one of the segments of the tourism industry that has experienced a more significant growth in last decades (Van der Ark and Richards, 2006; OECD, 2009; Mota *et al.*, 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 with other age groups, as well as travelling opportunities (Silberberg, 1995; Eusébio and Carneiro, 2012). From this evolution, while in the 1990s cultural tourism was a segment consumed mostly by older people, over time younger segments of people are 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 a tourist destination, and mainly in cultural ones, as they are one of its main assets. Due to that, it is vital to involve residents in the process of tourism planning and to make a close follow up of their perceptions, aspects that, in the case of Guimarães, have not been sufficiently dealt so far (Jackson, 2008; Cadima Ribeiro *et al.*, 2012).

In Portugal is still scarce the amount of studies developed dealing with the perceptions of residents towards the impacts of tourism (e.g., Monjardino, 2009; Souza, 2009; Eusébio and Carneiro, 2010; Vareiro *et al.*, 2010; Eusébio and Carneiro, 2012). That is not the case at international level, where copious empirical literature regarding this issue is 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).

Having in mind 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 tourism, prior, during and post-event, taking as object focus the city and the municipality of Guimarães, located in the Northwest of Portugal.

After its certification by UNESCO as a world Heritage Site in 2001, benefiting from the national and international exposure that the before mention status acquired gave to it, Guimarães began to emerge as a cultural tourism destination. Of course, that recognition gotten as 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 and Remoaldo, 2009).

The residents of the municipality of Guimarães are the core of our research and for that primary sources were used. Namely, a survey was applied in 2011 to the population of the 69 parishes of the municipality. A new survey will be implemented in 2013, that is, in a period ex-post the 2012 European Capital of Culture.

This paper is structured as follows: in the first section a summary review of the literature addressing the main impacts of megaevents and the perception of residents is made; in the following section it is highlighted 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.

1-The European Capitals of Culture and the perceptions of residents

For long time, culture and economy were 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) and, in the case of tourism industry, this relation is quite obvious due to the 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 reported that culture and entertainment activities were 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 and Crouch, 2000; Mota *et al.*, 2012) and tend to have associated 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, it is unquestionable the impact of cultural festivals in resident communities in certain places all over the world. Being so, the evaluation of the economic, environmental and socio-cultural impact 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, their performance is generally closely monitored by the organizers, sponsors and the public, in general, mostly because of the use of high amounts of public funds, national and EU public and private (Mota *et al.*, 2012; Papanikolaou, 2012). Lately, since 2006, the systematic evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture turn to be compulsory by the European Commission.

Even if the evaluation of the impact of cultural events used not to be a common fact, since 1980s several studies were conducted on megaevents and their impacts. In this regard, we should mention the pioneer work done by Ritchie (1984), Getz (1991) and Hall (1992), as referred by by Gursoy and Kendall (2006), and Langen and Garcia (2009). Meanwhile, for a long, the analyses performed were centred, mainly, in sporting events, as the Olympics (e.g., Deccio and Baloglu, 2002; Ritchie *et al.*, 2009) or the Football World Cup (e.g., Lepp and Gibson, 2011) and very little attention was paid to cultural events (Mota *et al.*, 2012).

If most 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 *et al.* (2009).

The emphasis put on economic impacts has probably to do with the concerns kept by the organizers of the events with 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 is hard of producing 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 and Garcia, 2009).

As mentioned, after 2004 the European Commission turn mandatory the evaluation of the impacts of each European Capital of Culture hosted. As a starting point, the European Commission ordered the evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture organized between the years 1995 and 2004. That report has concluded that they have been a powerful tool for the cultural development of the territories. However, this same study confirms the lack of

development of a policy of following the 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 Melville *et al.* (2010) tried to understand the views and perceptions of residents of four sectors of the city (City Centre, Kirkdale, Knotty Ash and Aigburth) who participated in the European Capital of Culture. It focused in three main themes. The first referred to the opinion of residents on Liverpool European Capital of Culture (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 megaevent (as 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, were considered the perceptions of residents about the megaevent and what happened specifically in their neighbourhood (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 2008 ECOC).

The results of the study indicate that, in 2007, 57% of the population recognized that had a reasonable knowledge of the megaevent. After the megaevent, in 2009, about 66% of the respondents answered that had participated in the event. In the perceptions of residents about the impacts of ECOC collected in the year in which the megaevent was celebrated (2008), respondents reported the urban regeneration, the effects on the image of the city, the increasing of the number of visitors, cultural programming, the positive impacts on social cohesion and purchases as the main achieves of hosting the European Capital of Culture (Melville *et al.*, 2010).

2-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, in the ex-ante period (the year of 2011), the intention of Guimarães residents to participate in the megaevent and the impacts perceived by them of hosting one the 2012 European Capital of Culture. It was used a convenience sample of 510 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.

This technique was used to complement the implementation of semi-structured interviews to local and regional actors, mostly representatives of cultural and recreational associations (also between October and December 2011). In the present paper, a statistical descriptive analysis of the survey applied to residents is produced, using the SPSS (IBM SPSS, version 20.0).

Four public secondary schools and one professional school available in the municipality were used for getting the survey sample. The goal of covering the 69 parishes that administratively make part of the municipality was the reason for using the high public schools and a vocational school which constitute the municipality of Guimarães as a way for spreading the questionnaire. This made possible to consider three generations of inhabitants (15–24-year-olds, 25–64-year-olds and the 65 or more years old residents) in our survey. The, at least, 15 years old students were taken as the gate to reach their relatives, brothers, father and mother, uncles, grand parents. Specifically, we asked the students, doing the 10th and 12th years of theirs schooling, to fulfil the questionnaire and take it home and distribute it to their family members. This was the most efficient way we got for getting, both, a higher amount of responses and a representative sample of Guimarães residents.

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

The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions. In this paper we made use just of few of questions raised: namely, the question referred to the intention kept by residents to attend the event "Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture"; the question on their intention to participate in the event; and the question regarding the degree knowledge of the cultural program of the 2012 European Capital of Culture. The differences gotten according to gender, age and education are the main focus of this paper.

The questionnaire included structured questions, mainly with a multiple-choice format, using in two a Likert scale of 5 levels, ranged from 1 'completely disagree' to 5 'completely agree'. It was divided into three parts: one connected with the attendance and participation on the

megaevent (six questions); the second related to the perceptions of residents of the impacts of the “2012 Guimarães” (two questions); the third part envisaged to collect the demographic indicators that would allowed drawing a demographic profile of the respondents (e.g., gender, age, marital status, education, parish of residence).

3-Main results

3.1-Profile of the respondents

Table 1 summarizes the profile of the survey respondents taking into account the main sociodemographic variables. The majority of the respondents were female (58%). This result is close to the one of other studies, such as Sharma and Dyer (2009), Ambroz (2008), Richards and Rotariu (2011), Eusébio and Carneiro (2012) and Shariff *et al.* (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, having 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 the one from 15 to 24 years old (53.1%), far from the 15% of the universe. This result has some explanation: a major reason has to do with the use of the public schools to implement several surveys conducted in the aim of the European Capital of Culture, overloading the faculty and turning hard the implementation of our one. Such an occurrence conditioned the insistence we could make for students to deliver and collect the questionnaires fulfilled by their relatives. This factor may also be a queue to understand the missing data found in socio-demographic characteristics demanded (see Table 1).

The more representative educational level in the sample was up to six years of education (47.6%), while the higher percentage in the municipality is the one on up to four years of education (29.1%). Thus, compared to general population, the sample collected reveals higher levels of formal education.

Table 1- Profile of the respondents

	N	%		N	%
Gender			Professional situation		
Female	296	58.0	Students	257	50.4
Man	209	41.0	Other	253	49.6
No answer	1	1.0			
Age			Residence		
15-24	271	53.1	Predominantly Urban Area (APU)	44	63.8
25-64	218	42.7	Moderately Urban Areas (AMU)	24	34.8
65 and more	12	2.4	Predominantly Rural Areas (APR)	1	1.4
No answer	9	1.8			
Education			Income		
Can not read or write	2	0.4	Less than €500	58	11.0
Up to four years	77	15.1	Between €500 and €1000	174	34.1
Up to six years	243	47.6	Between €1001 and €2500	126	24.7
Secondary	134	26.3	More than €2500	26	5.1
University	32	6.3	No answer	127	24.9
No answer	22	4.3			

Source: authors` own survey data.

3.2-Intention of assistance to and to participate in the activities of the megaevent

The first surprise concerning the results obtained refers to the low percentage of respondents (35.5%) that stated their intention to attend the activities of the megaevent "Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture" (Table 2), even if only 11.2% declared that they did not intended to watch any sort of activities of the megaevent.

Looking to those data according the gender, we found that intentions expressed were very similar. In fact, 52.7% of women were planning eventually to attend the megaevent, followed by those who answered “yes” (35.8%). Only the remaining 11.5% answered that they do not intend attending the 2012 Guimarães ECOC. In the case of males, stands also the response “probably” (53.6%), followed by those who answered “yes” (35.4%), which gives a similar percentage of respondents (11.0%) that did not intend to attend it.

Table 2- Intention of residents to participate in the megaevent and knowledge of the program of the "Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture"

	N	%		N	%
Intent to watch			Degree of knowledge of the cultural program		
No	57	11.2	Very low	68	13.3
Surely yes	181	35.5	Low	133	26.1
Probably	270	52.9	Medium	216	42.4
No answer	2	0.4	High	67	13.1
Intent to participate			Very high	17	3.1
No	230	45.1	No answer	9	1.8
Surely yes	76	14.9	Adequate diffusion		
Probably	200	39.2	No answer	6	1.2
No answer	4	0.8	No	243	47.6
Average*	Mode*	Median*	Yes	261	51.2
2,66	3,00	3	Total	510	100.0

Source: authors` own survey data.

Taking into account the sources of information concerning the ECOC, the main ones used by the respondents were the internet (37.5%), friends and family (41.2%), magazines and newspapers (38.4%). Flyers and booklets (16.9%), posters and outdoors (29.2%), and “word of mouth” (29.2%) were the other main information sources mentioned. These results show a diverse kind of sources of information used, with a relatively equilibrium of score among three of them.

Using the question “According to your opinion, were the ways of diffusion of the megaevent ‘Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture’ used until the present moment sufficient and adequate?”, a considerable amount of the female respondents have expressed a negative point of view, with 50.7% of them answering “no” and 49% saying “yes”. On the contrary, 55% of men had a positive point of view, followed by 43.5% that said “no”. The amount of those that did not answer was quite similar by gender (0.3% for women and 1.4% for men).

The ones that answered “no” and tick the categories they wanted, identified that until the date the survey applied took place (end of 2011), some kind of publicity in TV and radio (37.5%) was missing. They also identified a need for more news about the megaevent in the press (20.0%), more visibility of its website (12.5%), more presence in the social networks (18.2%), and the need of attaining a deeper involvement of the local population and associations in the programming of the ECOC (27.1%). In what concerns this last issue, it relates to the public conflict (mentioned several times by the local and national newspapers) that turn visible between the residents, local associations and local authority and the official organizer of the megaevent, 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 2012. The resignation in July 2011 of the Head of the “Fundação Cidade de Guimarães” few weeks later and all the troubles that preceded it can explain that at least ¼ of the respondents mentioned a need of more general diffusion of the ECOC and the need of attaining a deeper commitment of the local population and associations in its planning.

Education was also a variable that could explain the intention to participate in the megaevent. In fact, it was the respondents endowed with more education (Master and PhD degrees) that intended (50%) or probably would attend the 2012 ECOC (25%). They were followed by those with an under-graduation degree, as results form the ones that intended to participate (28.6%) or probably would attend the megaevent (17.9%). The less educated (could not read or write) were the ones that in 50% of the cases indicated that they would not attend the event. The same happened with the ones with up to four years of education (50%).

There were five main factors for not attending the megaevent and the six activities that at that time captured the attention of respondents for participating in it. The most important factors mentioned were the low interest perceived of the activities planned (15.7% mentioned by men and 15.8% by women) and the absence of transport (10.5% mentioned by men and 8.8% by women) and the ticket prices (mentioned by 7% of men and 8.8% of women). That is, the results show a similar profile in men and women in what concerns the main factors behind the motives for not attending the megaevent.

The activities mentioned by the respondents that intended to assist were the outdoor shows (33.8% of men and 46.6% of women), music shows (23.3% of men and 35.6% of women) and exhibitions (18.7% of men and 29.2% of women). Other type of outdoor activities picked up also the interest of part of men (17.4%) and women (22.8%). Theatre was the activity identified as less interesting by the respondents (13.7% in the group of men and 26.0% in the group of women), revealing that women were choosing a more diversified amount of activities and were more interested in outdoor activities.

Education was also a variable that could explain the results obtained, as it was among the younger inhabitants (15 to 24 years old) that the low interest of activities programmed was larger expressed (53.8%). Between the adults (25 to 64 years of age), a variable that has shown to be critical was the price of tickets (17.9%). Regarding the older residents (65 and more years) the absence of transport (33.3%) was the main reason for not attending.

In what concerns the participation in the events programmed (question 2 - either as an active attendee, a volunteer or as an activities organizer), 45.1% did not intend to participate actively, followed by 39.2% who probably intended to do so.

Trying to relate these data to the degree of knowledge of the cultural program of the megaevent, the average of responses stood at 2.66 (the scale used was from 1 to 5 five levels on the Likert scale), the mode was 3.00 (medium knowledge) and the median positioned equally in 3 (medium knowledge). This means that the medium knowledge was the most representative one (42.4%), followed by the low knowledge (26.1%). This can explain the high percentage of residents that did not intend to take an active role in the ECOC.

We must remember that during almost 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 noticed by the local and national newspapers (Remoaldo *et al.*, 2013).

Speaking of news about the ECOC in media, it is worthy to mention that, from a study performed by Denise Court (2012), using a sample of 150 residents in Galicia (A Coruña, Lugo and Ourense), we could get the information that 63% of the respondents did not had heard 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.

Going back to the issue of residents participation, passive or active, women and men have revealed similar intention to participate (16.6% of women said “yes” and 41.9% said “probably yes” versus 15.3% men that “yes” and 38.8% “probably yes”). Nevertheless, women mentioned more frequently the absence of time to participate. The older group (65 and more – 33.3% answered “no”) and the younger group (15 to 24 – 41.9% answered “no”), who were ones that revelled a more significant intention to participate. In fact, among the adults (25 to 64), the majority of respondents answered that did not intend to participate in the megavent (50.7%).

Finally, the residents endowed with higher level of education (Master and PhD) were the ones that have shown a higher intention of participating in the megaevent (50%), followed by the ones with an under-graduation degree (28.6%). Once again, it was the less educated that do not intended participate in it (50% of the ones that did not were able to read or write and 50% of the ones with up to four years of education).

The statement that they had little information about the ECOC was very pronounced among the younger group. To be involved in the organization of any event was not identified by any respondent.

Concerning the variable education, the claim of the absence of time was more pronounced among the lower educated, the same way as having the little information about the megaevent.

The main motives expressed for participating in the 2012 ECOC were curiosity and discovery (23.5%), contributing to the success of the event (20.6%), and gain a new experiences (17.5%). We are not surprised with the commitment of respondents to the success of the event as the Guimarães residents are known by its attachment to the city and the high pride expressed by being born or living in it. Being the cradle of the nation and having the historical center certified by UNESCO as World Heritage since 2001 can be major explanations for that.

3.3-Perceptions of the impacts of the 2012 ECOC

Question 7 referred to the expected impacts of the megaevents and was one of the main questions rose, using the three main types of impacts expected: the economic, the sociocultural and the environmental ones. Table 3 shows the main results obtained.

The improvement of the image of the municipality (4.39) was the statement which got the higher average: 81.2% of the responds answered that they agree or completely agree with it, that is, this way an expected and desirable impact of hosting the 2012 ECOC. This result was followed by “Conservation of the built heritage” (4.17), which corresponds to 79.0% that expressed a positive answer about the issue. “More public investment in culture” was the third statement that received a higher average (4.06). “Attract more investment” got also a good average (4.00), just after “Valuation and recovery of traditions” (4.01). The high average gotten by the last statement should be 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 after hosting the European Capital of Culture. This last statement also fits with the “improved self-esteem of the population of Guimarães”, that got one of the highest averages (3.84).

The statements that showed a lower average appreciation were the eventual “increase of crime” (2.68), the “degradation of the physical and natural environment” (2.93) and the “increase of the income of residents” (2.94), also possible impacts of hosting the ECOC and

attracting more visitors. Concerning the last statement (“increase of the income of residents”), 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 but that it will not reflect in their own income. This result is consistent with the one we found in a previous empirical research (Vareiro et al., 2011, 2012).

In summary, we can conclude that the sociocultural and the economic impacts got a better score than the environmental ones. There were not significant differences of perceptions by gender. Despite this general positive perception, the general statement rose, referred to the eventual “increase of quality of life” to be felt by the city residents, was not perceived as so positive as one, may be, could expect (3.32).

Table 3- Perceptions of residents towards the expected impacts of the megavent “Guimarães 2012 ECOC”

Expected impacts of “Guimarães 2012” (%)	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Without Answer	Total	Average	Median	Mode
Increase of quality of life	4.5	11.4	38.4	34.1	8.8	97.3	2.7	100	3.32	3.00	3
Creation and/or increased employment	4.3	7.5	28.2	43.1	14.1	97.3	2.7	100	3.57	4.00	4
Changing habits and behaviours	7.6	17.5	35.3	31.0	5.5	96.9	3.1	100	3.10	3.00	3
Increase of the income of residents	6.5	20.8	45.9	18.8	4.7	96.7	3.3	100	2.94	3.00	3
Increase of crime	17.3	28.0	28.4	15.1	8.0	96.9	3.1	100	2.68	3.00	3
Improving the image of the municipality	0.6	3.5	12.2	32.2	49.0	97.5	2.5	100	4.39	5.00	5
Rising prices of goods and services	4.1	16.1	33.5	31.6	11.6	96.9	3.1	100	3.31	3.00	3
Attracting more investment	0.8	3.9	18.4	45.3	28.6	97.1	2.9	100	4.00	4.00	4
More public investment in culture	1.6	2.0	15.1	48.4	29.8	96.9	3.1	100	4.06	4.00	4
Valuation and recovery of traditions	1.2	2.7	19.0	45.3	29.2	97.5	2.5	100	4.01	4.00	4
Conservation of the built heritage	0.4	3.3	14.1	40.8	38.2	96.9	2.9	100	4.17	4.00	4
Increase transit	1.8	7.8	30.4	37.5	19.8	97.3	2.7	100	3.68	4.00	4
Difficulty in parking	2.5	5.9	23.7	38.0	26.5	96.7	3.3	100	3.83	4.00	4
Increased supply of cultural events	1.2	4.9	30.6	43.9	16.9	97.5	2.5	100	3.72	4.00	4
Improvement of local infrastructure	1.2	4.3	26.5	48.6	16.7	97.3	2.7	100	3.77	4.00	4
Increased public safety	1.4	9.6	32.5	40.0	13.5	97.1	2.9	100	3.56	4.00	4
Degradation of the physical and natural environment	8.2	21.8	40.0	20.8	5.5	96.3	3.7	100	2.93	3.00	3
Changing the habits of Guimarães residents	5.5	18.0	39.8	25.7	8.4	97.5	2.5	100	3.14	3.00	3
Improved self-esteem of the population of Guimarães	2.9	3.9	24.9	39.4	26.3	97.5	2.5	100	3.84	4.00	4
Increased waste produced	11.6	20.8	27.6	27.3	10.0	97.3	2.7	100	3.03	3.00	3

Source: authors` own survey data.

Conclusions

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

With regard to the intention to participate in the scheduled events, we were surprised by the fact that almost half of the residents (45.1%) have answered that they did not intend to participate. Taking into account the high self-esteem of the Guimarães residents recognized at national level, this may be considered a surprising result. Nevertheless, this could be explain 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 they had of the cultural program of the ECOC, the average responses stood at 2.66 (using a 5 points Likert scale). This means that the average knowledge about the event was the most representative one (42.4%).

In what regards the sources of information about the ECOC and its program, the sources of information more used by residents of Guimarães were the internet, friends and family, the magazines and newspapers. Meanwhile, residents expressed the idea that was more advertising on TV and radio was missing, as well as to get for it more news in the press, to turn more known 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 megaevent.

In what concerns the gender differences, we concluded that perceptions were very similar for almost every of the questions analyzed in the present paper. Only regarding the ways used to advertise the megaevent women expressed a more negative point of view. Additionally, the tend to choose a more diversified amount of activities and were more interested in outdoor activities than men.

Also the youngest respondents were more skeptics in attending and participating in the ECOC. This result was also more visible among the less educated. The low interest perceived by respondents on the activities planned and the absence of transport were the main justifications for not attending the megaevent, being the factor ranked first among the younger residents and the absence of transport among the older ones. Once again, this can be related

with the absence of public information about the official programme. According, this calls the attention to the need of local authorities to care the provision of appropriate transport facilities. As the municipality of Guimarães includes 69 parishes and some of them are relatively far from the centre of the city this maybe a major restriction to the common resident of the municipality.

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