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# **A Multi-Dimensional Investigation of a Regional Event Portfolio: Advancing Theory and Praxis**

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## **Abstract**

Event portfolios have remained a neglected area of study as the different event types have been studied predominantly as single events, separately from each other and with a focus on large-scale events. In addressing this omission this study investigates a regional event portfolio in Fort Stockton, Texas by employing qualitative methods, including participant observation in a sample of six events, seven semi-structured interviews with event organizers and analysis of events' archival documents. A dramatological perspective viewing events as dramatic stories that express versions of a community's social order was the conceptual framework that guided the analysis of events to examine their innate interrelationships. Results show that the event portfolio amalgamates sport and cultural performances and creates a symbolic social context, hence allowing the expression of different aspects of community life. The paper discusses how the interrelationships among different events engender and maintain complementarities that facilitate event implementations. It is concluded that events are interrelated both conceptually and functionally. Thematic continuities among events in the portfolio reconfirm the metaphoric messages, with each event reinforcing the claims of the others. Events are functionally interrelated by sharing common resources and elements, generating complementary markets and transferring practical know-how. This helps mobilize community resources and facilitates the synchronized use of events for achieving multiple purposes. Based on the theoretical and practical implications of the study, a multi-dimensional model is proposed that integrates the contextual, operational and socio-cultural dimensions of event portfolios and can guide further investigation in the management and policy research of event portfolios.

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

## **Introduction**

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

Despite the suggested potential of an event portfolio, there is surprisingly a lack of empirical research exploring this phenomenon. This omission can be attributed perhaps to the fragmented realm of different event genres and the tendency to focus on single events and purposes, which in turn limit our capacity to think about events holistically and consider their manifold dimensions. In contrast, a comprehensive event portfolio approach views all the different event types as resources that can be harnessed according to an integrative event strategy. Such a strategy may link events with other policy domains and purposes by creating synergies aimed to optimize the benefits of events. In doing so, planners need to consider how events complement one another while

seeking to develop synergies among them. Also, the interrelationships among different events and their stakeholders should be recognized so that strategies are synchronized to serve a multiplicity of interests. In other words, this requires a shift of focus from singular to multiple. Rather than merely focusing on single events or purposes we may expand our focus on multiple events and purposes. That way the strategic and integrated planning of an event portfolio can become a tool for the sustainable development of host communities.

In this context, the purpose of this study is to identify the event interrelationships and the subsequent character of an event portfolio by analyzing its composition of events and examining the intended or unintended ways that events are related to one another. The case of Fort Stockton, a rural community in South-West Texas that hosts an extensive event portfolio, represents a unique setting to investigate the multi-dimensional nature of event interrelationships that form a host community's event portfolio. Furthermore, given the lack of empirical research on event portfolios, this study suggests a new theoretical model about this under-examined area. Thus, findings from this study can serve as hypotheses for further investigation, which can then be generalized analytically (back to theory), hence ultimately advancing the event management body of knowledge.

### **Towards Understanding the Dimensions of Event Portfolios**

Whilst the literature is rich in studying single events from a variety of disciplines and perspectives, there is little attention in studying multiple events in relation to one another. Consequently, there is limited knowledge about how event managers and host

communities can synergize sport, cultural and other planned events in an event portfolio in order to attain and magnify their outcomes. The study of event leverage (Chalip, 2004, 2006; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008) instigates the use of strategies and tactics for multiple events so that they complement one another in order to magnify their outcomes. From this perspective, a series of interrelated events can be synergized and cross-leveraged to derive outcomes through a holistic planning approach that places in concert the economic and social purposes of different events.

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

multiplicity of interests lying underneath layers of meaning(s) that shape conceptual and functional event interrelationships.

But how can we multi-dimensionally study the interrelationships of events? Anthropological literature provides a sound basis for conceptualizing comprehensively the potential utility of an event portfolio for host communities. Events can be understood as dramatic performances wherein participants and audiences instantiate shared meanings through projected event symbolisms. The symbolic meanings of events are enabled by the metaphorical messages they convey. In this regard, events are thought of as occasions that bring together and (re)interpret various symbolic elements of the social existence of a group or community, with the effect of re-creating social relations and the symbolic foundations underpinning everyday life (Robinson, Picard, & Long, 2003; Turner, 1969). According to Handelman (1990) events can be viewed as manifestations of negotiated social conditions that are produced by the interplay between the patterning of the social order and the problematics of social discourse. Likewise, events can be conceptualized as ritualized expressive practices that produce objectified symbolic representations or ‘texts’ of the larger social order. The relationship between such symbolic texts and the material social order is essentially meta-linguistic conveying particular messages for participants and the audience (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Foley, 2004).

Such an understanding of events is grounded on Geertz’s (1973) interpretivist analysis of events as ‘stories that people tell themselves about themselves’ as well as Turner’s (1969, 1974) notion of social drama and ritual that explains the capacity of events to instantiate meaning(s) and enable collective action. According to this perspective, people through events engage in a metaphoric dialogue in an effort to

express their needs, issues and concerns, which in turn shape the meaning(s) of an event. Consequently, events exemplify expressive and dramatic dimensions (Schechner, 2003). In short, the meaning(s) extracted from events constitute(s) the dramaturgy. As such, event dramaturgy entails the extraction of shared meanings enabled by the projection and/or performance of symbolic representations in an event's activities (Ziakas & Costa, In Press-b). The extracted meanings are the unit of dramatological analysis and interpretation.

The dramatological perspective is based on Goffman's (1959) use of the theatrical paradigm to explain in general social action and behavior. Goffman contended that the nature of social life is inherently dramatic and that people in all their social interactions play particular roles and reproduce performative conventions through the rehearsal and familiarity with social scripts. The application of dramaturgy in the context of events was suggested by Turner (1969, 1974), who building on Goffman's notion of dramaturgy, theorized events as collective forms of rituals and social dramas conveying a multiplicity of meanings aimed at expressing the human need to construct and interpret the conditions that make up their lives. Consequently, community events can be understood as symbolic social spaces that create a dramaturgical context invoking and conveying the foundational components of a host community. Therefore, from a dramatological perspective, events can be analyzed as texts conveying messages that explain the enactment of dramatic and performative dimensions pertaining to a community's social order. In this regard, events constitute multiple versions and interpretations of a community's social order and may reinforce meanings via the common internal logic that permeates the symbolic use of event elements.



An understanding of the different event genres as manifold cultural manifestations capable of negotiating and (re)developing the symbolic meanings and conditions that make up a community's social order can facilitate the development of a holistic framework for assembling events in a portfolio aimed at reaching and expressing different audiences and achieving multiple purposes. It has been shown in the literature that events have the capacity to strengthen social networks (Kemp, 1999; Walter, 1981) and the social capital of host communities (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Misener & Mason, 2006) and build group and place identity (De Bres & Davis, 2001; Derrett, 2003; Green & Chalip, 1998). These social benefits derive from liminality, which is engendered within the time and space of events, wherein *communitas* can be produced by the suspension of social conventions and barriers that bring people together as equals (Turner, 1974). Furthermore, liminality enables metaphoric discourse as event participants and audiences more safely can discuss contentious issues addressed by an event's symbolic meanings (Errington, 1990; Manning, 1981; Rasnake, 1986).

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

O'Brien, 2007). From an event portfolio standpoint, the challenge is how the different meanings and values of events can be synergized and cross-leveraged without forfeiting each subculture's unique representation.

Towards this direction, the dramatological perspective is essentially useful. A dramatological inquiry seeks to understand the meanings that are extracted from events and their manifold dimensions that represent different viewpoints and interpretations of a community's social order in order to identify cultural patterns and interrelationships that shape events. The multi-dimensional understanding of an event portfolio can help prevent, resolve or mitigate unintended consequences of events by prompting and guiding the event planners of host communities to provide equal opportunities for different expressions of social life. Albeit this is commonsensical, event implementations are not often viewed from a multi-dimensional and sustainable prism. In the context of an event portfolio, where multiple interests, values and meanings are met, the danger of conflict and/or exploitation exists. This raises the critical need for safeguarding authenticity (Getz, 2008; Higham & Hinch, 2009; Picard & Robinson, 2006) so that processes of commodification, modernization and cultural politics in events (Boorstin, 1961; Cohen, 1998; Roche, 2000; Sack & Johnson, 1996; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996) do not distort the authentic and balanced representation of symbolic existential elements that underpin a community's social order. In this respect, the dramatological perspective can provide a conceptual and methodological framework for evaluating the multi-dimensional processes and subsequent outcomes of events to community sustainability.

Viewing events through a dramatological lens can also help host communities develop a comprehensive portfolio strategy by understanding the cultural logic that

grounds and drives the universal human need for expression through events. Turner (1974, 1982) suggested that events are commentaries and critiques on, or celebrations of, different dimensions of human relatedness. In this regard, the understanding of a series of events in a portfolio as symbols, meta-commentaries and dramatic stories that convey versions of the social order can help event organizers and host communities understand the multiple realities and layers of social order that lie underneath events. In other words, an event portfolio can engender and convey a multiplicity of meanings and subsequently serve multiple purposes, hence creating better leverage for community sustainability. This requires that an event portfolio relate to a host community's ongoing public discourse and provide opportunities for the expression of different versions of social reality. Accordingly, the roles of events within the portfolio and their subsequent relations can be determined in the strategic design of the portfolio so that event meanings and purposes are synergized and reinforced. Consequently, joint event strategies should seek to address salient community issues that respond to matters pertinent to people's lives. In this respect, the extent to which an event portfolio fits in and responds to the ongoing public discourse can determine its effective implementation and sustainable attainment of goals (Ziakas & Costa, In Press-a).

Overall, a multi-dimensional analysis can be grounded on the dramatological lens of inquiry examining events in relation to one another in order to find the ways to develop synergies among them. Such an analysis can provide the foundation for understanding what shapes the multiplicity of event meanings and purposes and the relatedness of events illustrating how events complement one another. On this basis, the implementation of the portfolio can be analyzed by discerning the characteristics of

events and the factors or patterns that influence their organization. For this reason, the major events in this study are analyzed with the purpose of explicating the multi-dimensional interrelationships among them. The different events are considered as illustrating multiple versions of the community's social order. Through this perspective, the analysis investigates the means that nurture synergies among events in the portfolio.

### **Method**

In order to investigate the interrelationships of events in a portfolio, an exploratory case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009) was used. The aim was to provide in-depth analysis of the rich, real-world context in which the phenomena occur (Eisenhardt, 1989) through thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the manifold dimensions of the event portfolio phenomenon and how these affect the planning and management of a series of events. The underlying goal of this investigation was to understand the culture of the host community as it is expressed through events and unravel the layers of social order that are interlinked with the operation of its portfolio. In doing so, Foucault's (1972) metaphor of 'archaeology of knowledge' (i.e., as one discovers ideas, one uncovers precursors to them in the shifting and deeper layers and strata of an archaeological site) was a guiding principle to the study.

Fieldwork was conducted in the rural community of Fort Stockton in South-West Texas as part of a larger project investigating the nature and implementation of this community's event portfolio. This work produced a series of papers that focused respectively on understanding the functional grounds and processes of Fort Stockton's event portfolio (Ziakas, 2010), explicating the inter-organizational linkages of Fort

Stockton's events network that bolster community capacity to capitalize on its event portfolio (Ziakas & Costa, 2010a), and examining the rationales and drivers of Fort Stockton's use of its event portfolio as a means for regional development (Ziakas & Costa, 2011). This paper complements and extends the investigation of Fort Stockton's event portfolio by applying a dramatological perspective in order to provide a multi-dimensional analysis of the interplay between the socio-cultural underpinnings and operational parameters affecting event portfolio planning and management. The specific research questions of this study are the following:

- What are the intended or unintended ways that events are interrelated and complement one another?
- How can we understand the multi-dimensional nature of interrelationships among different events that shape the capacity of Fort Stockton's event portfolio to serve multiple purposes?
- How can we theorize the principal parameters of multi-dimensionality that foster the synergistic dynamics of an event portfolio?

### **Setting**

The rural community of Fort Stockton was selected as a suitable site because it hosts an extensive array of events. Its population is about 7,800 people of which approximately 70% are Hispanics and 30% Caucasians of Anglo-American origin. Fort Stockton's economy is based mainly on oil production, a prison system and service to the local ranching industry. Fort Stockton is located in the desert and it is in a relatively remote distance from the large metropolitan areas of Texas. In addressing these innate

disadvantages, this community invests in events with the intent to achieve economic and social purposes.

### **The Nature and Character of the Event Portfolio**

Fort Stockton hosts an extensive array of events throughout the course of the year including a number of prominent events and a plethora of smaller events. The prominent events include the Big Bend and Road Runner Open Road Races (two well-known open automobile races in the USA), the Sheep-Dog Trials (an annual national event where contestants compete in sheep-dog handling), and Water Carnival (the most important local cultural festival). Indicative smaller events include the Pioneer Days (an event reviving the history of the town), the Summer Off the Patio (a series of concerts featuring country music), the Blue Moon concert series featuring different kinds of popular music, a Flag Retirement ceremony, a Livestock show, as well as high school football games, horse shows, rodeos, and baseball/softball, football, basketball, volleyball and golf tournaments.

As it was demonstrated in the previous studies examining Fort Stockton's event portfolio (Ziakas, 2010; Ziakas & Costa, 2011), local event organizers neither view their town's events technically as an event portfolio nor have employed a strategic approach to cross-leverage events. Instead they view the array of events as a way to achieve common objectives that address community issues. This legitimizes the event roles and embeds event implementations in a web of interrelations that facilitate an implicitly integrated approach in mobilizing shared resources and using the different events to achieve common purposes. This approach epitomizes the nature and character of an 'informal' portfolio of events, not as a formalized structure but rather as an endogenous organic

configuration embedded in local structures and processes. Accordingly, events are analyzed in this study in order to discern the event portfolio interrelationships, processes and patterns that facilitate or constrain implementation.

### **Events Sampling**

Due to space limitations for providing an in-depth analysis of several events of Fort Stockton's portfolio in the form of an article, this study used a sampling of events. The sample included the most prominent sport and cultural events as they were identified by local people in the previous studies. The criteria for events to be included were to be of different type and scale, organized by different entities at different points in time throughout the year and to be representative of the event portfolio's contribution to the community. These events are Harvest Fest (major community festival), Labor Day Weekend Fiesta (Hispanic Fiesta), Pioneer Days (historical re-enactment event) and the two Open Road Races (Big Bend & Road Runner). In addition, the community's seminal event Water Carnival is included in the analysis in order to compare and contrast event interrelationships in the portfolio.

In particular, Water Carnival was examined thoroughly elsewhere demonstrating its community building role in Fort Stockton, which makes it the nucleus of its event portfolio (Ziakas & Costa, 2010b; Ziakas & Costa, In Press-b). This event entails a staged show (different every year) in the form of a musical featuring synchronized swimming and theatrical/dancing acts. The same show is repeated for three days accompanied by beauty pageants and a crew parade that takes place the last day of the event. The show is written, prepared and performed exclusively by local people contributing thus to the creation of a heightened sense of community and the strengthening of the social fabric

through the massive engagement of people. The whole event is a year-round product of collective endeavor fostering a symbolic social space wherein participants share common ideals and values. The coexistence of sport and theater exemplifies that sport and cultural performances have a symbiotic role within the event portfolio. Finally, Water Carnival serves as an exemplar setting the organizational standards for other events in the portfolio and training locals (many of whom participate from a young age and over the course of several years) to acquire the practical know-how and experience in the organization of events.

### **Data Collection**

Methods of data collection included participant observation of events under study, semi-structured interviews with event organizers and review of archival documents. Data were collected from the above multiple sources in order to increase the reliability and validity of the findings (Yin, 2009). Fieldnotes were kept systematically in a research journal during the whole fieldwork (Coffey, 1999; Spradley, 1980), which took place in different points in time for a period of two years. This allowed a deeper understanding of the context and evolution of the event portfolio across time. The research journal contained observations made after attending events and planning meetings, the informal conversations with local people and event stakeholders and the impressions of the daily life in the community. Furthermore, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with event organizers in order to gain more insight in major issues involved in the event portfolio. A common characteristic of the organizers was that they all were community officials who took advantage of their departments' resources to stage events. The interviews took place in a time period of three weeks. They were conducted at the



interviewees' offices and lasted on average 40-60 minutes. Probes and follow-up questions were used to solicit depth and detail. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Questions focused on learning the organizers' perceptions about the meanings and organizational processes/issues of events. Finally, a total of 16 archival documents of events under study were collected and treated as secondary data.

### **Data Analysis**

Given the exploratory nature of the study, data were analyzed iteratively both during and after collection (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Since the study was part of a larger investigation the analysis was constantly informed by the overall pool of existing data. A constant comparative method was applied to examine inductively patterns emerging in the setting under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The fieldnotes, interview transcripts and archival documents were thoroughly examined in order to identify patterns relating to the interrelationships, character and operation of the event portfolio. Critical sections were highlighted and memos were written to record interpretations of identified interrelationships (Strauss, 1987). These patterns were examined further by returning to the literature for triangulation and conceptual clarification (Eisenhardt, 1989). The analysis revealed the contextual, operational and socio-cultural grounds of the event portfolio. Once theoretical saturation of event interrelationships and patterns was reached with no new data emerging from the analysis, the findings were checked for consistency with the other studies that examined Fort Stockton's event portfolio and then presented to two detached researchers to test their reliability and validity. For this reason, a composite summary of the emerging themes was compiled along with the evidence supporting them (from observations, interviews and program documentations). The

summary was given to the two researchers and meetings were scheduled thereafter separately to discuss the reliability of the findings. Based on the findings a set of emergent theoretical propositions and a conceptual model were generated situated in and developed by recognizing patterns of relationships (Eisenhardt, 1989) within the case of Fort Stockton's event portfolio.

## **Results**

The results are presented in the order of events' contextual, operational and socio-cultural grounds that shape their interrelationships and patterns in the portfolio. First, the contextual ground constitutes the event purposes and policy dimensions of the portfolio. Second, the operational ground constitutes the integration of event elements and instrumental dimensions that enable the event portfolio implementation. Third, the socio-cultural ground constitutes the conceptual dimensions and symbolic event meanings that are extracted from the dramaturgic essence of the portfolio. It must be noted that these grounds are interrelated acting upon another at multiple levels, hence the resulting identified patterns and interrelationships cannot be viewed in isolation but rather as interconnected and multi-faceted parts affecting variably each other and the portfolio as a whole. For this reason, after the presentation of the portfolio's grounds, the multi-dimensional event interrelationships and patterns are analyzed in the 'integration' section.

### **Contextual Ground: Event Purposes and Policy Dimensions**

(1) *Harvest Fest*. This event is the area's major festival. Its purpose is to celebrate the local economy and promote its agriculture, aquaculture and viticulture. This festival

started in early 1990s in an effort to promote the local wine. Event organizers pointed out:

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

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

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

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

The activities of the event comprise a set of projections that represent a selective imaginary of the conditions in the past. The event is organized in different sections, each projecting a particular aspect of pioneer life. For example, there is the section of 'genealogy/herbs and plants/pioneer women' that illustrates the agricultural products and how were used by women in the daily life of families. Another section includes the re-enactors meals where local people re-enact the preparation and consumption of a

traditional meal. A major section of the event includes the military row where local people re-enact the soldiers' military activities. They are dressed as soldiers and perform military exercises. There are also sections of civilians, a petting zoo, children's games, horse care and roping. Overall, the community utilizes the event as an occasion showcasing the fort as the area's major tourism attraction. This coexists with the educational use of the event as more than 400 students from area schools, including 150 students from Fort Stockton attend the event and visitors are encouraged to tour the grounds.

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

Both races are regarded as some of the most challenging open road races in the USA. They are a cooperative endeavor between the cities involved, the Texas Department of Transportation, local law enforcement and emergency teams and the more than 100 volunteers who help ensure the racers' safety. The Tourism Department being the coordinator of the races seeks to integrate them with the community's tourist product mix and offers optional tours of the area to racers as part of the event's schedule.

Additionally, the Tourism Department posts in the town's main street entrance a big banner saying: 'Welcome Racers.' Local hotels and restaurants welcome them with enthusiasm and also post 'welcome racers' signs on their doors and premises. Besides, they embrace common theming putting racing posters and photographs to create a celebratory atmosphere that entices racers' spending.

### **Operational Ground: Event Elements and Instrumental Dimensions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

A distinct part of the festival is the Car Show, which involves the participation of more than 100 people exhibiting their cars. The emotional investments local people have in the relationships between their cars, themselves, their families and friends, are deeply materialized in their vehicles on show. This existential issue for the community is also met in other events of Fort Stockton. Cars are a common element of events that establish an apparent connectivity among different events. For example, in Water Carnival there is a parade with cars through which local people demonstrate their sense of who they are. The presence of cars is celebrated in turn in Harvest Fest along with the celebration of local economy.

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

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

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

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

The possible reasons for the decline in local attendance and participation in Harvest Fest are explained by event organizers on the basis of conflicting timing with other activities: "There are other activities going on in the community that draw a lot of people. There is so much going on with the school starting and the football season that maybe some people had a conflict or sometimes they simply forget." This raises the problem of the timely placement of the event within the portfolio. The possibility of conflict with other events, even contingent activities or weather conditions may cause decline in attendance. Event organizers pointed out: "For two years we moved the event to October, which proved not to be very good. For example, the reason we didn't have any cook-out participants was because it rained."

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

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

**(2) Labor Day Weekend Fiesta.** The Fiesta encompasses elements of Hispanic culture such as Mariachi music and demonstrations of folk dancing. The influence of Harvest Fest is explicit in this new event, which is essentially a mini version of Harvest Fest. It features similar activities such as a car show, sport activities, games, arts/crafts and food booths. The creation of this event illustrates a capacity for replicating events in Fort Stockton’s portfolio. Thus, new events can be created on the basis of a successful one. The advantages of such a process are clear: the knowledge and expertise that people gained through the organization of a successful event may be transferred to another event and similar activities that are popular may be offered to target audiences. This is the case with the Fiesta. However, this process has disadvantages that mainly lie in the mimetic characteristics when events are replicated. If a new event is just a mimesis of another event this may not cause any interest to potential audiences due to the repetitiveness of



similar activities and may constrain a mindset for novelty in the creation of new events. For this reason, replicability in events should seek to address a new need or issue by offering similar activities, which attract event attendees. In the case of the Fiesta, this is illustrated in Table 1 through an analysis of the similarities and differences with Harvest Fest.

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

[Table 1 to be inserted here]

**(3) *Open Road Races.*** A basic interrelationship between the races and the other events in the portfolio is the intention to make the races, more enjoyable for the whole community by including activities for all family members as in other events such as booths and parties. For example, one year a local company gave racing fans a chance to watch the race by offering a live feed for viewing in the park. Therefore, like in the other events the races serve as an occasion for bringing together the family/social networks of the community.

### **Socio-Cultural Ground: Event Meanings and Conceptual Dimensions**

*(1) Harvest Fest & Water Carnival.* The meanings and conceptual dimensions of Fort Stockton's event portfolio can be delineated first from the analysis of thematic/conceptual interrelationships between Water Carnival and Harvest Fest as it is shown in Table 2.

In particular, the continuities between Water Carnival and Harvest Fest that illustrate their connectivity and how they conceptually complement one another can be summarized as follows: First, the role of performance connects the events. In Water Carnival there is a staged show (rehearsed choreographed acts) performed by local people and children, while Harvest Fest entails a number of stage activities that encourage local people and children to demonstrate their talent in a more liberated/spontaneous fashion. The continuity of performance and 'show-like staging' in both events offers different opportunities for enactment and spectation. The car parade in Water Carnival and the car show in Harvest Fest also establish connectivity between the events expressing mediated recollections that cars convey. Sports and physical activity is another common element between the events. Water Carnival features synchronized swimming, while in Harvest Fest there is a bike tour, running, walking and softball. These sport activities in Harvest Fest offer alternative opportunities for people to participate and audiences to attend. The continuity of sport performance takes place through these two events, which complement one another in terms of sport activities offered and opportunities for participation. Another aspect that bolsters connectivity between the two events is the targeted audiences. Both events target families to attend the events. In Water Carnival, parents

along with their children perform in the acts. In Harvest Fest there are activities for all the family to enjoy in the festival.

[Table 2 to be inserted here]

**(2) Labor Day Weekend Fiesta.** The Fiesta is targeted towards Hispanics and hence the inclusion of folkloric Hispanic features indicates that there is a need to celebrate the Hispanic culture since it is not represented in major community events. In relation to other events, the Fiesta is a complementary event within Fort Stockton's portfolio providing the same activities but mainly for Hispanic audiences.

**(3) Open Road Races.** A fundamental interrelationship of the races with the other events in the portfolio is the intended projection of self-proclaimed qualities of Fort Stockton. In particular, event organizers promote the West Texas hospitality and local gastronomy. The projection of Fort Stockton's friendliness and hospitality serves to cultivate the image of Fort Stockton as a friendly and nice place to live. Thus, the races confirm and accentuate to outsiders the claims of Water Carnival and Harvest Fest. They demonstrate the capacity of the community to host a national caliber event taking advantage of its natural resources and willingness of local people to help as volunteers.

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

events. Thus, the car parade is an interrelationship of the races with Water Carnival, Harvest Fest and the Fiesta that maintains a strong connectivity among them.

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

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

## **Integration:**

### **Event Portfolio Dimensions and Community Sustainability**

#### **Event Interrelationships and Portfolio Dimensions**

By considering the individual characteristics of events and analyzing them in relation to other events in a portfolio, we can grasp their interrelationships and synergies. As such, Table 3 lists the individual characteristics of events in Fort Stockton along with the subsequent characteristics of its portfolio. As shown, Fort Stockton's event portfolio is characterized by a number of joint characteristics, use of shared resources, common objectives and elements. These synergies and complementarities among events in the portfolio encompass contextual, operational and symbolic/socio-cultural dimensions that organically foster an integrative holistic mindset towards its implementation. In particular, the common objectives of events denote a common sense of purpose that drives the development of the portfolio. The dramaturgic meanings of events respond to the community concerns for integrating the social fabric of the town, develop its economy and improve the quality of life. The common elements of events establish continuities among different events and enhance their meanings. Finally, the sharing of resources demonstrates the town's capacity to tap into an integrated set of local resources for the implementation of the event portfolio.

[Table 3 to be inserted here]

Based on the interviews with the event organizers, the key themes that emerged are summarized in Table 4. The purposes, meanings and target markets of some events were explained by their organizers. Key issues concerned the decline in attendance/participation, the timely scheduling of events within the portfolio, and the

replication of successful events. This reveals the nexus of operational matters and pertinent decisions that need to be made in the planning and management of an event portfolio such as the reach of target audiences, the frequency and timely placement of events and the ways different events fit together. All these aspects are fundamental in the design, composition and character of an event portfolio, hence affecting the nature of event interrelationships and patterns that can enable effective synergies and complementarities within the portfolio.

[Table 4 to be inserted here]

Table 5 summarizes the event portfolio interrelationships evident in Fort Stockton that shed light on the synergistic character of multiplicity and relatedness. Multiplicity of an event portfolio refers to its capacity to engender and convey multiple meanings and serve multiple purposes. Relatedness in a portfolio represents the ways that events complement one another. In Fort Stockton's case, the multiplicity of meanings and purposes fosters a mindset of resource-sharing and integrative connectedness of events that cultivates their relatedness. Thus, events are naturally interrelated through volunteerism, generation of markets and transfer of proprietary knowledge as well as experiential capacity. In particular, a core volunteer pool is maintained providing volunteers for the different events, new or complementary markets are engendered through hosting different events in the portfolio, and the proprietary knowledge as well as experience in the organization of events aids the effective use of shared resources and replication of successful event elements.

In this regard, a pattern of event replication is evident in the Fiesta and the Open Road Races. Also, the event portfolio is characterized by a pattern of continuity, which

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

On this basis, events in the portfolio serve overlapping objectives. In particular, Water Carnival celebrates a sense of community and attracts VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourism from former residents of Fort Stockton. Similarly, Harvest Fest celebrates local economy and attracts visitation from the local area. Likewise, the Fiesta celebrates Hispanic heritage and attracts Hispanic visitors from neighboring communities. Pioneer Days projects local history and attracts schools as visitors. The races demonstrate that Fort Stockton is a vibrant community and attract the respective sport tourist subculture. Thus, the event portfolio responds to the ongoing public discourse for community improvement creating synergies among the common objectives: of community identity, civic esteem, economic benefit and quality of life that the events in the portfolio seek to attain.

Overall, the instrumental utility of the event portfolio has made it an integral and undivided part of the community's development agenda. As one respondent pointed out:

If you took out some of the events in the community, it would put a void in the community. This goes back to community pride; we are a small community but we have pride in our community. There are a lot of different events and a lot of people put the effort to make those projects a success. This helps the community and people feel good about themselves. They can go to other communities and compare their activities with our events and feel proud of what we achieve.

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

The pressing need to attract more visitors and tourism revenues to the community through events has led to the proliferation of events in the community without considering market saturation. Whilst the multiple events can attract diverse audiences, hence engendering new markets, the innate similarities and repetitiveness of common elements/activities throughout the portfolio may lead to loss of market interest. The repetitiveness pattern is also connected with the number of events included in the portfolio from the perspective of exhausting local resources, especially use of funding, facilities and the volunteer base. Therefore, what appears to be missing from the event organizers' planning considerations is a set of criteria for the selection of events to



include in the portfolio as well as an assessment for the optimal number of events (i.e., estimating market demand and resource capacity).

[Table 5 to be inserted here]

### **The Dramaturgical Underpinnings of the Event Portfolio**

This study demonstrates that a metaphoric context is shaped by the events in the portfolio. Viewed as dramatic stories the events make a complete story that speaks about Fort Stockton by itself. Thus, each event is like an episode of this dramatic story. The event portfolio is not merely the sum of its parts. What makes it fundamentally a meaningful context and enduring symbolic space is that each event complements and reinforces the claims of the others. This also allows the expression of different aspects of community life that synthesize the whole semantic essence and functional basis of the portfolio. In particular, Water Carnival affirms and celebrates a local sense of community. Harvest Fest celebrates the local economy. Pioneer Days commemorates the historical past of the community. The Fiesta celebrates the Hispanic heritage. The Road Races project the capacity of Fort Stockton to capitalize successfully on events attracting visitors and illustrating to the world Fort Stockton's spot on the map.

In this regard, the event portfolio reveals the social order as an extended metaphor by connecting disparate realms of experience in a manner that highlights the definitive features of the community. It mirrors the community as the social order knows itself to be by consolidating local people around conventional values that foster social interaction and prompt collective action. Thus, the event portfolio is linked to the wider societal, economic, and political context of Fort Stockton, as a site to reconstruct and reenact meaningful commentaries that epitomize the community.

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

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

## **Research Implications: Advancing Theory and Praxis**

### **Theoretical Implications**

The application of a dramatological perspective on event portfolio planning and management derives a number of theoretical implications. An event portfolio can be

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

This study sheds light on the ways events in a portfolio can be conceptually and functionally interrelated complementing one another. It builds a foundational ground towards understanding the contextual, operational and symbolic/socio-cultural dimensions of event portfolios. It illustrates the potential of developing a holistic approach wherein multiple events are used synergistically to achieve multiple purposes. To do so, we need to search for the best means to foster synergies and complementarities among different events and theorize the constitutive factors that facilitate the event portfolio implementation. Towards that end, this study conceptualizes and proposes the

following implementation parameters that enable the organization of an event portfolio with an integrated mindset:

- Proposition 1: Utilitarian Scope. A common sense of purpose that legitimizes event strategies is the unifying factor that brings different event stakeholders together to use events for the same purposes. This ‘utilitarian scope’ is an expression of the host communities’ needs and problems and its conscious effort to utilize different events for a defined set of purposes.
- Proposition 2: Dialectical Expressivity. Since events appeal to the existential needs of their participants and the community at large, their expressive practices relate to an ontological public discourse in search for meaning(s). This fosters a meta-language or ‘dialectical expressivity’ to convey sets of messages that frame a metaphoric dialogue through event symbolisms.
- Proposition 3: Symbiotic Polymorphism. The sustainable multiformity of events in the portfolio links different event elements, themes and meanings (that represent and connect the respective functional domains) into a coherent whole. This kind of ‘symbiotic polymorphism’ can help establish continuities between different events while appealing to diverse target audiences and can also reinforce polysemy enabling people to instantiate the meanings of events.
- Proposition 4: Resource Inter-changeability. The capacity of tapping into the same resources for different events within the portfolio generates resource-sharing efficiencies. ‘Resource inter-changeability’ requires collaboration, communication, flexibility and common understanding of resource

interdependencies among event organizing entities in order to mobilize and use an integrated set of resources in event portfolio implementations.

Yet, it must be emphasized that the complexity of event portfolios as a phenomenon and the different contexts (e.g., urban vs. rural, cultural or socio-economic, etc.) in which they may operate, encompassing a nexus of different dynamics and processes affecting them, entails significant challenges to understand or theorize their nature and operation. To shed more light on this phenomenon, further research is needed to explore the underlying rationales, motivations as well as driving forces that determine event portfolio planning and implementation and examine the involvement (and multiple interests) of actors responsible for the design, development and delivery of an event portfolio. An ultimate goal of this line of research would be to understand how event relatedness can be shaped and multiplicity of meanings and interests served without compromising the authentic development and representation of different identities, values and subcultures expressed through an event portfolio.

### **Practical Implications**

The practical implications of the study advance our knowledge on event portfolio planning and management. It appears that the primary decision event managers have to make concerns what events should be included in the portfolio. To do so, it is required an analysis of market conditions, resource capacity and issues to be addressed through events, which in turn will determine the formulation of the portfolio's strategic objectives.

In line with the selection of events, the following strategic decisions need to be made for an event portfolio:

1. Reach. The portfolio's reach concerns what target markets the host community wishes to attract. The selection of target audiences can be as diverse as the variety of events that are included in the portfolio.
2. Frequency. The events' frequency concerns how often events should be organized to establish the optimal sequencing. The rate of recurrence must respond to market demand and sufficiency of local resources so that it does not cause market saturation or exhaustion of resources.
3. Size. The portfolio's size concerns the optimal number of events in the portfolio. The equilibrium in the number of events is required to ensure that a community does not exceed its capacity to host events and that there is no oversupply of events in the market.
4. Placement. The events' placement concerns when events should be organized to facilitate their timely sequencing. The timely organization of events requires that they be placed in the portfolio so that they do not conflict with each other or other major circumstances in the host community, there are suitable weather conditions and other happenings in the community, while off-peak timing or seasonality considerations are equally important.
5. Fit. The events' fit concerns how the different events can be connected and harmonized. Connectedness among events may enhance the value and meanings they convey and build the 'personality' of an event portfolio. The use of common elements, themes, narratives, symbols and conceptual

or activity continuities are some means that can be used to cultivate a common character and logic that the events are grounded upon.

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

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

**Towards Understanding the Synergistic Dynamics and Processes of Event Portfolios**

Based on the findings of this study, a multi-dimensional model is proposed in Figure 1 to help describe the synergistic dynamics and processes that facilitate the development of an integrative holistic strategy for an event portfolio and enable its implementation. This model by integrating the contextual, operational and socio-cultural grounds of event portfolios is intended to facilitate further inter-disciplinary research in examining the complex dynamics and multi-layered processes involved in this area of study. Since the model is based on one case study, its generalizability is limited and needs to be replicated and tested in other contexts in order to be generalized.

[Figure 1 to be inserted here]

The core matter in event portfolios is to cultivate synergies among otherwise disparate events and create opportunities for cross-leveraging these events for a number of benefits. The potential of an event portfolio as a strategic policy tool depends on its capacity to engender and convey multiple meanings and serve multiple purposes. This does not mean that new meanings and purposes are to be added continuously but that rather planners should select the optimal array of meanings and purposes to address community issues and serve the portfolio's strategic objectives. Also, event managers should find the means to connect events in a portfolio both conceptually and functionally fostering thus their interrelations, which involves the contextual, operational and socio-cultural grounds (or dimensions) supporting the portfolio.

The conceptual interrelations represent the socio-cultural ground of an event portfolio encompassing and expressing different local viewpoints through event meanings and symbolisms. Conceptual connectivity of event meanings is enabled by the dialectical expressivity of ontological issues that concern host communities and the



symbiotic polymorphism of diverse events that connects different versions of social order, as exemplified by event themes, symbols, narratives and meanings, into an integrative frame. This facilitates the operational ground in terms of assembling and integrating different events.

The functional or instrumental interrelations represent the contextual ground of an event portfolio comprising the policy setting, market/economic conditions, events network, resource capacity and community particularities that affect the development and delivery of the portfolio. Instrumental connectivity of event purposes is enabled by the utilitarian scope of a pressing common sense of purpose that brings together policymakers and event stakeholders and the resource inter-changeability of tapping into an integrated set of resources to use in event portfolio implementations. This facilitates the operational ground in terms of collaboration and resource-sharing among the network of key community actors and event stakeholders.

Within this context, event relatedness is engendered by the multiplicity of event meanings and purposes and the basis of their conceptual as well as instrumental connectivity. Events may complement one another through their thematic focus that reinforces intended meanings, mobilization of shared volunteer pools that help in the organization of events, transfer of tacit/proprietary knowledge and experiential capacity of the host community in event management and capitalization on engendering new or accompanying markets. The synergistic mindset in the planning of event portfolios concerns primarily what events should be included in the portfolio and their reach, frequency, timely placement, and fit as well as the size of the portfolio (number of events).

## **Conclusion and Main Directions for Future Research**

The findings of this study illuminate the multi-dimensional nature of interrelationships among different events that shape the capacity of an event portfolio to serve multiple purposes. It appears that the basis of synergy lies at cultivating the conceptual and instrumental connectivity of events, which shapes their relatedness enabling the reinforcement of event meanings, the development of complementarities and the effective management of resource interdependencies within the event portfolio. While the synergistic planning and implementation of an event portfolio may be influenced by a number of factors and the particular characteristics of a host community, it seems that the dynamics of event relatedness is grounded on the state of a host community's social order that finds expression through events. Thus, the study of event portfolios needs to better understand the socio-cultural underpinnings affecting the development and management of event portfolios.

From a planning standpoint, it is essential to determine the roles and relations of the events within a portfolio in order to nurture connectivity among them. For example, we need to clarify what role sport events can play relative to one another and relative to cultural events (Chalip & Costa, 2005). To decide the event roles in a portfolio requires the strategic delineation of event purposes and meanings that would constitute the character of the portfolio. Most importantly, the composition of an event portfolio should seek to establish the destined roles of diverse events in ways that their connectivity complements and reinforces the individual characteristics of events. In general, the planning of event roles and relations represents a fundamental matter in the design and development of an event portfolio. As such, the study of event portfolios needs to

examine how event relatedness and multiplicity of purposes can be engendered and in turn how events can be cross-leveraged for multiple benefits (Ziakas & Costa, In Press-a).

In short, event portfolios are a neglected area of study and therefore there is a great deal to be learned about their nature, planning and management. In this regard, the proposed multi-dimensional model that was developed in this study can serve as a starting point for grounding further empirical research in this area. As such, future studies may test in different community contexts the extent to which multiplicity and relatedness enable the synergy for cross-leverage of events by analyzing the effects of different factors acting upon another through the layers of social order. Similarly, future studies can use the model to examine the relationship between event processes and outcomes that impact upon a portfolio's capacity to achieve its objectives, thereby evaluating the potential of event portfolios to become an effective tool in the sustainable development of host communities. This examination will eventually indicate and generalize the multi-dimensional synergistic processes that shape the effective development and management of an event portfolio.

In light of the multi-dimensional analysis of an event portfolio, the understanding of event interrelationships and the processes of event portfolio design and planning emerge as central for future research. If we want to better understand the complex nature of event portfolios as a phenomenon and the number of managerial implications that they entail future research should investigate the management of event interrelationships and find the means to foster synergies, complementarities, and meanings to capitalize upon in order to connect events and amplify the appeal of a portfolio. Similarly, future research

should examine event portfolio design and planning in order to identify the optimal composition of a portfolio in relation to the contextual factors that facilitate or constrain its implementation and event cross-leveraging for achieving multiple purposes. While the range of issues concerning event portfolios is as diverse as their complex nature, it is suggested that a focus on the multi-dimensional nature of event interrelationships can lay a sound foundation for the study of event portfolios.

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Table 1: Similarities and differences between Harvest Fest and Labor Day Weekend  
Fiesta

<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Differences</b>
Family events	Hispanic culture
Vendors	Hispanic audience
Car show	Small park facility
Sport activities	
Games	
Night dance	

Table 2: Continuities between Water Carnival and Harvest Fest

<b>Water Carnival</b>	<b>Harvest Fest</b>
Staged Show	Staged Activities
Car Parade	Car Show
Sports: Synchronized Swimming	Sports: Biking, Running, Walking, Softball
Choreographed Dance Acts	Street Dancing
Participation of Families and Children	Activities for the Family
Celebrating Local Identity	Celebrating Local Economy



Table 3: Event Descriptions and Portfolio’s Fundamental Characteristics

Individual Event Characteristics						Event Portfolio Characteristics		
Event	Organizer	Main Purpose	Major Elements	Target Markets Reach	Calendar	Joint Characteristics & Shared Resources	Common Objectives	Common Elements
Water Carnival	Water Carnival Association	Community celebration	Synchronized swimming & choreographed dance/theatrical acts, Beauty pageant, Parade	Locals, Families, VFRs/School reunions, Neighboring visitors – Local/Domestic reach	3 <sup>rd</sup> Weekend of July	Park facilities, Volunteers, Sport, Family appeal	Social, Economic	Synchronized swimming (sport), Theatrical acts, Parade
Harvest Fest	Tourism Department	Community celebration	Vendors, Live music, Sports, Farmer’s market, Wine emporium, Car show	Locals, Families, Neighboring communities – Local reach	Last Saturday of August	Park facilities, Volunteers, Sport, Family appeal, Funding	Economic, Social	Vendors, Live music, Sports, Car show
Labor Day Weekend Fiesta	Labor Day Committee	Recreation	Vendors, Live music, Car show, Games, Sports	Local Hispanics, Families – Local reach	Labor Day	Park facilities, Volunteers, Sport, Family appeal	Social, Cultural	Vendors, Live music, Car show, Games, Sports
Pioneer Days	Historic Fort Stockton	Education & History	Reenactment, Games	Schools, Local families – Local reach	Beginning of September	Park facilities, Volunteers, Family appeal, Funding	Social, Cultural, Economic	Games, Theatrical acts, Vendors
Big Bend & Road Runner Open Road Races	Tourism Department	Sport tourism	Race, Welcome parties, Car show, Parade, Banquet	Open road racers – Domestic reach	End of April, Beginning of October	Park facilities, Volunteers, Funding, Sport	Economic	Automobile racing (sport), Car show, Parade, Vendors

Table 4: Key Themes Emerging from Interviews

Key Themes	Quotes
Purposes & Meanings	<p>‘We wanted to market our wine from Saint Genevieve, so we thought about doing a festival. It started so we could do wine tasting and the following year we started adding the Vintage Dinner and other different sections to make it bigger such as the Fun Run and the Bike Run and then we added the car show and sports.’</p> <p>‘The Buffalo soldiers’ history is important to our area, the Pioneer history, the Indian history, the Hispanic history. That’s the most important thing to us. That is not forgotten and children are educated through being in the cultural place that they can see where history took place and see people demonstrating the way things were at that time.’</p>
Event Elements	<p>[...] ‘Basically, it’s more small-town festival environment, gathering in park, kids area, arts and crafts, we do a lot of music, street dance, we have a fun run, a bike tour, a softball tournament, anything that looks good to do in the summer, anybody can go -it’s free- and everybody can enjoy themselves.’</p> <p>‘There are many softball tournaments in</p>

	<p>this town. So if you can incorporate that with another event going on, then you can increase participation. Because the softball players want to bring their families, then obviously this gives wives and kids something to do while they play softball. And they usually have a break between the games and so they can just stay here and get something to eat, walk around or whatever. There is an option of things to do.'</p>
<p>Target Markets &amp; Reach</p>	<p>'Harvest Fest is a family event; so there are all ages [...] So we target the local market and other people out of town in close proximity.'</p>
<p>Attendance/Participation Decline</p>	<p>'13 years ago we had 8-9,000 people out at the park. And then through the years it went down. Sometimes the weather has a lot to do with it. For instance, when it is hot, people don't come over. This year, it rained on Friday night and few people came out to the park.'</p>
<p>Timely Scheduling/Placement</p>	<p>'There are other activities going on in the community that draw a lot of people. There is so much going on with the school starting and the football season that maybe some people had a conflict or sometimes they simply forget.'</p>

	<p>‘For two years we moved the event to October, which proved not to be very good. For example, the reason we didn’t have any cook-out participants was because it rained.’</p>
<p>Replication &amp; Repetitiveness</p>	<p>‘Other events try to follow the footsteps of Harvest Fest as far as having the booths and activities. For example, there is a new event coming this weekend, the Labor Day Fiesta. And they are inviting all the booths to come out again.’</p>



Table 5: Event Portfolio Interrelationships

Portfolio Aspects	Interrelationships	Water Carnival	Harvest Fest	Labor Day Weekend Fiesta	Pioneer Days	Open Road Races
Parameters	Purposes	Socio-cultural & VFR tourism	Socio-economic	Socio-cultural	Cultural & educational	Sport tourism
	Meanings	Sense of community	Local economy	Hispanic heritage	Local history	Community capacity
	Markets	Locals & VFRs	Locals	Hispanics	Schools & Locals	Racers
	Reach	Local & Domestic	Local	Local	Local	Domestic
	Frequency	Annual	Annual	Annual	Annual	Semi-annual
Patterns	Resource-sharing	√	√	√	√	√
	Replication			√		√
	Continuity	√	√	√	√	√
	Repetitiveness		√	√	√	
Implementation	Knowledge/Experience	Transfer				
	Volunteer Base	Local pool				
	Timely Placement	Coordinated				
	Fit	Conceptual and Instrumental Connectivity				
	Size	Unspecified				

Figure 1. A Multi-Dimensional Model of the Synergistic Dynamics in an Event Portfolio



