

Title: Event Volunteering—Tourists and Locals: Creating Their Own Experience Values in Horse & Dog Events

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to compare three events, identifying values created through co-creation, for the volunteers, outside for the local society, and inside for the event. This with an emphasis on what dimensions the international and national volunteer tourists bring to the events, creating values together with the local volunteers. It is a value approach, through sharing and integrating knowledge and skills in ways that benefit both the volunteers and the events (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Lusch & Vargo, 2014). We focus on the differences between the local, national, and international volunteers, related to expectations, experiences, and values created for themselves, the events, and the local society, comparing three events arranged in Iceland, the United States (Alaska), and Norway. The volunteers, who participate in all three events, have different nationalities, knowledge, and skills. Their nationalities differ every year, and to enable the creation of values, it is according to Zatori (2016) important to provoke attention, engage, and involve the volunteers and make them discover what working together can bring.

The three events are the horse event, Landsmót, which is the national championship of the Icelandic horse, a biannual event, arranged at Iceland (Helgadóttir & Dashper, 2016), with national participants, and national and international volunteers and audience, and the two dogsledding races, arranged every year, Iditarod, organised in Alaska, United States, and the Finnmark Race (Finnmarksløpet), arranged in Finnmark, Norway, with national and international participants (Jæger & Mathisen, 2017). All three events are staged in rural areas, built from the bottom up on local premises. Created by local people with a genuine interest in the core activities, which is for Landsmót, a festival anchored in local culture, and a sport event with the main track, showing the Icelandic horse in sport competitions and entertainment, and a breeding track, showing stallions and mares. For the dogsledding races, it is a sport competition, a tour through nature, and a festival with many cultural events arranged during the race period.

This paper uses a qualitative approach, with fieldwork and interviews conducted at the three events. The interviews are analyzed as narratives, where the narrators situate themselves in the changing social contexts of everyday life and the event. The study identifies values that are important for the volunteers, the events, and the local society. It recognises volunteer individual values that are shaping their experiences and value creation.

Link to a short film introducing one of the events investigated in this paper, a horse event on Iceland, Landsmót: <https://vimeo.com/196279042/32fb1962ef>