



Urban Events Management, Participation and Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Among the factors playing a central role in a sustainable development are without doubt cultural and scientific events, permitting a positive participation of citizens and especially of young people. But what means a positive participation to an event? What are the conditions of success and efficiency? Does participation depend on the kind of management or on others factors like political economical or psychological factors? May we consider cultural and scientific events as the emerged part of the social iceberg or as the fundamental semiotic landscape? We would like to discuss and answer these questions through various events organized this year in Algeria, in an eastern town called Setif. These events are already composed of an exhibition/training of astronomy, a festival of short movies, a training for youth house trainers coached by UNICEF and by ICRT International Centre for Research and Training), an international conference about Islamic finance in partnership with ISRA (International Shari'ah Research Academy for Islamic Finance) and a book exhibition. Our objective is to analyze these events at different levels: organization, language, participation. Thus we could emphasize in a critical and measurable way the events institutional logic, the rites, the representations and the position of the searchers evolving in new territories, wondering us if they contribute to a sustainable development. Our study has been based on data and documents collected as a participant to these events and on formal and informal interviews or questionnaires. As indicated in the title of this abstract we have used the theoretical concepts of events management, participation and sustainable development.

1. Introduction

'Sustainable development' is a successful notion because it is associated to positive values and in the same time it is a rich notion with a lot of applications in many fields. In this paper we will apply it to urban events management and focus on participation, through a case study: the town of Setif, in Algeria.

This eastern town (300 km far from Algiers) is interesting from many points of view: not only as a historical and commercial place but as a shore affected by the waves of changing too. We have already shown in a previous communication entitled 'Foreign languages, globalization and formation' (Ankara 2014) some aspects of this changing. In a global approach we cannot neglect events management and participation as important parameters of this changing. We must wonder if they constitute only a part of the social iceberg or the fundamental semiotic landscape. The challenge is important because it concerns the present generation –principally composed of young people- and the future generations. It is an element of the glocalization frame, with financial and cultural impacts. And we agree with Francesca Belotti (2013) when she says: 'Algeria owns a lot of cultural resources in which she can invest (...) A greater application of the undersigned principles could certainly help the country to found a process of sustainable development (...)'(1)

2. Epistemology(E), Concepts(C) and Key Questions(KQ)

2.1 (E)

At an epistemological level our topic is in relationship with many disciplines: event management, culture policies and participative process, culture mediation, social economy and social engineering, organizational culture.

The topic literature can be divided in two categories:

- Many European authors find their philosophical basis in Habermas' works and especially from the notion of public space. Among them we can quote Sarah Montero (2013) in her comparison between Bordeaux and Montréal, Francesca Belotti (2013) in her thesis concerning Setif .

- American authors have developed a formalized conception: for example Selmer Bringsjord (2014) proposes what he calls 'the first steps ' of a formalized culture, extending James March's organizational theory and giving a 'logico-mathematical-computational perspective'. Nancy Hirsch-Gualda proposes an interesting formalized event management process (ITILV3) and Luis M. A. Bettencourt, José Cobo, Hyejiin Youn (2013) have formalized urban scaling.

2.2. (C)

Value: in her enrichment of the cultural experience modalization, Severine Marteaux (2002) links the fidelity of the audience to the site attachment and to the object attachment.

Non profit organization: we refer to the idea developed by Ammar Kessab (2007) in which he shows how this notion is useful for understanding the cultural policy in Algeria.

Proximity: Charlene Arnauld (2013) categorizes this proximity in different ways: the territorial proximity is a conjunction of the geographical proximity and the organized proximity (societal, similarity logic, membership logic).

Cultural durability: we defined it as indicated by Sarah Montero (2013) and considered it as the fourth dimension of the sustainable development. It includes: creativity, transversality and governance.

Participation: because of their historical past, because of the 90's events, Algerian people refuse to be instrumentalized and can exhibit their refuse if fair rules are not practiced. They make a difference between 'liturgic' events and creative events.

2.3. (KQ)

In a sustainable development we must first refer to the three (03) P rule linking People (society), Planet(environment) and Profit(economy) plus what we have called cultural durability.

Starting from this reference and knowing that Algeria since 2002 has elaborated a National Plan for Planning and Sustainable Development, is an active member of the Culture Diversity Program 2030, has participated through academic scholars to international conferences in Ouagadougou (2004) and Maputo (2009) , we may ask our first question:

- Q1: is the P rule applied in our concerned case? Is Setif promoting cultural durability through events?

Then, referring to Armand Hatchuel's works, our theoretical frame will focus on collective action, defined as an interaction between:

a) the relations system (hierarchical, cooperative or financial)

and

b) the group of knowledge (discourses, rules, expertises)

leading to what is called a collective learning. All these elements contribute to create a collective action space. So, our second question would be:

- Q2: how does this space work or - in other words- which management characterizes this space?

And last but not least, we will try to understand if the presence of a foreign intervening enhances and boosts the participation. We can formulate our third question like this:

- Q3: what are the role and the impact of the professional intervening (an actor, a scientist, a consultant) on the effective participation?

3. Methodology

In our qualitative study our sample contains five (05) events organized in different places of the town from May 1st to May 23th (2014). We quote them in a chronological order:

1. A Scientific exhibition and training about astronomy (May 1st to 4th)

2. A Festival of short movies (May 4th to 6th)
3. A Training for trainers (May 17th to 23th)
4. An Islamic finances conference (May 5th to 6th)
5. A Book exhibition (May 7th to 14th)

Because of the chosen period, this list does not mention other cultural events like: GATC (Great Algerian Tour of Cycling), folk music, classical music, football cup, commercial fairs, literary cafés, Sufi music.

Table-1. gives the characteristics of the five selected events

	Site	Way of information	Public	Partnership
Event1	Feast Room+ ODEJ	Written banderol(WB)	Large+Lim	CTS searchers
Event2	Exhibition,Room	WB+Adverts	Large	Algerian stars
Event3	Olympic Center	Adverts	Invited	ICRT (Dubai)
Event4	Ferhat Abbas Univ.Setif1	Net+banderol	Scholar+Students	ISRA (Malaysia)
Event5	Entertainment Park	WB+Adverts	Large	Algerian publishers

Except for Event3 (07 km far), all the sites are near the down-town, with an easy and cheap access.

We must precise that our secondary position differed from an event to another (the main position being observer). This can be resumed in the second table as follows

Table-2.

Events	1	2	3	4	5
Position	Visitor & observer	Spectator & observer	Participant & observer	Listener & observer	Customer &observer

Except in the third event, we can consider that our presence did not really interfere on the events. We will not discuss here the complex question of the scientific impact measure of an observer on any event.

In order to analyze and compare the events we have selected seven useful indicators (I) with variables put between brackets. They are as follows:

- I1: kind of management (Commercial CO, creative CR, collaborative CO)
- I2: languages (Arabic A, French F, English E)
- I3: Institutional logic (rigid R, soft S)
- I4: rituals (political opening PO, pauses PA, lunch time LT)
- I5: intervening position (academic AC, vulgarization VU,)
- I6: participation (high H, limited L, convivial C)
- I7: social impact (at once AO, differed D,)

4. Results and Comments

From all these indicators applied to our events sample, we have obtained the following table:

Table-3.

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7
E1	CR/CO	A/F	S	PO	VU	L/C	D
E2	CO	A/F/E	R	PO	VU	H/C	AO
E3	CR/CO	A/F/E	R	PO/PA/LT	AC/VU	L/C	D
E4	CR/CO	A/F/E	R	PO/PA/LT	AC	H/C	D
E5	COM	A/F	S	PO	----	L/C	AO

Event1 permitted to gather and meet many astronomical Algerian clubs, to exchange experiences and to stimulate the interest of young people. The presence of a telescope was a good idea and the experimental session made a direct contact with astronomy.

The scientific vulgarization through an open debate helped the assistance to a better understanding and gave to scientists an idea of the scientific representations of the audience.

Event2 showed the dynamism of a sector generally considered as poor. Young talents have demonstrated the power of movies: with one idea and one camera you can influence and create emotion. The most successful short movies were: 'I exist' and 'Message to Obama'.

Event3 this specialized training, with the participation of the Algerian UNICEF representative and the international expert on behalf ICRT (Dubai) was an opportunity for the youth house executives to revise their conceptions on participation. Methodological tools were given and discussed in a convivial atmosphere.

Event4 It was an academic event which allowed young and experimented searchers to develop many trends of the Islamic finances. The executive respected the international management rules existing in other countries and proved the dynamism of the Institute of Economy. In spite of the differences existing between some searchers, the global idea is that Islamic financial model contributes to an economical durability and is an issue for global economy.

Event5 had not the importance of the International Salon organized every year in Algiers where the event management is more professional, but it permitted to some readers to discover and buy books. No comparison too with the National Book Festival organized in Washington, where young people are an essential element of the event and where the relationship between great writers and readers is strong and efficient.

5. Conclusions

1. There is a real political will to develop a positive social participation. It appears in the diversification of the events and the intervenings' help. The collaboration between a foreign consultant as a coach and Algerian trainers is successful. The selected participants reacted positively and the event value was good.

2. Management differs from a space to another but some rituals still create rigidity. They curb a fluent and spontaneous large social participation. It is necessary to introduce other techniques of participation and to formalize the event preparing.

3. Because of the specialized chosen themes, there is an atomization of the collective action spaces, which limits the number of participants.

6. Recommendations

1. In order to ameliorate the social impact, management must take in a greater consideration the event media cover (before, during and after the event).

2. For understanding a negative attitude of the participants, we must give an importance to three essential behavioural factors: time management, freedom, participant benefit, relax need (Margaret Deery, 2007).

3. An evaluation on the spot and at a longer term must be elaborated to measure the impact and the reception of the event.

4. Further than the evaluation, an event certification could create a better vitality (as it already exists for instance in Italy with Punto3).

5. Formalized tools -like ITILV3 for instance- could surely ameliorate the event management process.

7. Perspectives

a) Theory

We propose to elaborate another analytic event management tool based on Prossorov's formal hermeneutical approach: topology and clusters in texts semantics . It could help us to read and analyze urban events as a text of the semiotic social landscape.

b) Culture Policy

The official starting of the UNU-IRADDA Institute in Algiers (2015 1st semester) could have a positive effect in the development of the event management culture and the sustainable development.

As says Raymond Weber (2009) 'It is probably at the local level of the towns and districts that culture appears more evidently as a resource of sustainable development'.

c) Expectations

An exchange of good experiences with other countries/towns/institutions?searchers would be beneficial and would work more for a sustainable development. As it is written in Kuala Lumpur 'ONE WORLD UNDER ONE ROOF'; so we must be out of the box for being under the roof !

8. Notes

(1) We have translated the Italian quotation from her thesis in the reference below.

The original text is: ‘(...) l’Algeria possiede molte risorse culturali sulle quali poter investir.(...) Una maggiore applicazione dei principi sottoscritti aiuterebbe certamente il paese a instaurare un processo di sviluppo durevole’(p.202)

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