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The Economic Impact of International Festivals and their Role in Regional Economic Development

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Master in International Management

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Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management

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RESUMO

Hoje, os festivais internacionais são considerados alavancas para o desenvolvimento territorial. No entanto, os seus impactos concretos permanecem incertos e controversos, tendo cada pessoa uma definição e visão diferente destes acontecimentos.

O principal objetivo deste estudo é avaliar e compreender como os festivais geram benefícios económicos simbólicos e identificar as condições para a sua eficácia através de uma análise comparativa de dois casos: o Festival de Artes Líricas de Aix-en-Provence (França) e o Oktoberfest de Munique (Alemanha).

Com base nos métodos empregues, entendemos que os festivais criam valor substancial, mas que seguem duas lógicas muito distintas. Aix corresponde a um modelo mais "intensivo", focado em elevados gastos unitários e prestígio cultural, enquanto Munique ilustra um modelo de "volume", baseado na magnitude dos fluxos. O efeito catalítico sobre o território é, portanto, condicional, dependente da coerência entre a natureza, o perfil e a governação.

O principal contributo desta investigação reside, assim, na proposta de uma "matriz de coerência dos festivais", explicando que os festivais são, de facto, considerados motores económicos e culturais, mas diferenciados, cuja eficácia depende da coerência dos modelos, da colaboração das instâncias de governação e da integração de estratégias de sustentabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Festivais, Impacto económico, Desenvolvimento territorial, Turismo cultural, Governação territorial

Sistema de classificação JEL: R11 (Atividade económica regional), Z32 (Turismo e desenvolvimento)

ABSTRACT

Today, international festivals are considered levers for territorial development. However, their concrete impacts remain uncertain and controversial, with each person having a different definition and vision of these events.

The main objective of this study is to evaluate and understand how festivals generate symbolic economic benefits and to identify the conditions for effectiveness through a comparative analysis of two cases: the Aix-en-Provence Lyric Arts Festival (France) and the Munich Oktoberfest (Germany).

Based on the methods employed, we understand that festivals create substantial value but that it follows two very different logics. Aix corresponds to a more "intensive" model focused on high unit expenditure and cultural prestige, while Munich illustrates a "volume" model, based on the magnitude of flows. The catalytic effect on the territory is therefore conditional, dependent on the consistency between nature, profile, and governance.

The main contribution of this research therefore lies in the proposal of a "festival coherence matrix," explaining that festivals are indeed considered economic and cultural drivers, but differentiated ones, whose effectiveness depends on the coherence of models, the collaboration of governance bodies, and the integration of sustainability strategies.

Keywords: Festivals, Economic impact, Territorial development, Cultural tourism, Territorial governance

JEL Classification system: R11 (Regional economic activity), Z32 (Tourism and development)

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1. INTRODUCTION

America, Europe, Asia. Cinema, science, sports, music. Opera, rock, R&B. Festivals have established themselves as key cultural and economic phenomena in recent decades. With several thousand major international festivals across the globe, collectively attracting millions of visitors each year and generating a global market value of USD 96,782.8 million in 2024 (Grand View Research, 2024), these events now represent an economic sector in their own right.

These events are not simply an artistic or festive expression, but also a key economic driver, attracting more and more visitors each year, reaching several million visitors for the largest ones, such as "Coachella", a festival in the United States which started in 1999 with 25,000 visitors and had more than 750,000 festival-goers over 2 weeks in 2022 (Varga, 2022). This stimulates the tourism industry, boosts various sectors such as hotels, restaurants, and transportation, and strengthens the brand image of destinations. These factors underscore their major role in the global cultural economy by generating considerable revenue, with Coachella alone generating over $114 million USD in gross revenue in 2019, and $704 million USD for the local economy in 2011 (Kearns, 2024).

Festivals can be defined by a large number of characteristics. Music festivals, film festivals, comic book festivals, theater festivals, food festivals, and literary festivals all have one thing in common: they bring people together to enjoy a festive, joyful, and unifying experience centered around a particular cultural interest.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), a festival is defined as “a series of special events, performances, etc. that often takes place over several days.” The term “international” means “relating to or involving two or more countries.” Therefore, an international festival can be defined as “a periodic artistic event, organized in a given place (often annually or at regular intervals), bringing together works, artists, or audiences from several countries, i.e., on an international scale.” This definition distinguishes international festivals from purely local events in terms of their scope, ambition, and ability to attract audiences beyond national borders.

Each type of person has their own definition of what a festival means and represents. For a visitor, it may be a unique immersive experience; for an artist, a platform for visibility; for a local decision-maker, a lever for regional development; and for a retailer, a seasonal economic opportunity.

Festivals are not just one-off events; they can be part of a broader regional development strategy. These events can strengthen social cohesion while promoting cultural innovation and stimulating partnerships between public and private actors (Aol, 2024). In addition, they can revitalize areas that are losing economic momentum, attracting a steady stream of visitors and encouraging the rehabilitation of urban infrastructure (Finkel & Platt, 2020). Thus, despite the challenges, most festivals are part of a sustainable development dynamic, integrating economic, social, and environmental considerations.

Although festivals have a clear economic impact, evaluating them remains a methodological challenge. There are various approaches to measuring these impacts, such as visitor surveys, media evaluation, and financial flow analysis. However, these methods have limitations, as it must be acknowledged that these multiplier effects are difficult to quantify and to ascertain the certainty of the status of participating respondents.

To illustrate this point, some visitors may, for example, replace another tourist activity with a festival without this representing a real increase in local consumption. Similarly, someone who travels to a place to enjoy themselves and spend money locally at the same time as a festival, without being aware of it, will contribute to the economy without attending the festival. These uncertainties therefore make it difficult to identify the economic benefits actually generated by these events (Crompton et al., 2001).

Faced with these challenges, an in-depth study is needed to understand the underlying economic mechanisms and optimize festival development strategies. The European Commission Report (2014), on the social and economic impact of culture highlights the need for an integrated approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analyses to better understand the economic dynamics at work. In this sense, this thesis aims to propose an analytical framework for evaluating the impact of festivals more rigorously and identifying best practices for maximizing their long-term benefits.

To explore this topic, the central question of this research is: “What are the direct and indirect economic impacts of international festivals on host cities, and how can these events be used as levers for regional economic development?” This question stems from the observation that festivals remain understudied as strategic tools for regional development.

It highlights both the direct impacts (visitor spending, tax revenues, temporary jobs), the indirect impacts (image of the region, tourist appeal, future investments), and the contextual

variability of these effects (large cities vs. rural areas, dynamic regions vs. areas undergoing redevelopment).

It is through these insights that we understand the objective of this research, which is structured around three areas: measuring and comparing the direct and indirect economic impacts of the festivals studied; analyzing the perceptions of the various stakeholders (institutions, organizers, residents, visitors); and identifying the strategic levers for optimizing the role of festivals in regional development.

To address this issue, the analysis will focus on the following areas:

A theoretical and conceptual analysis of the economic impacts of international festivals, describing the different types of impacts, the theoretical frameworks for evaluation, and the historical evolution of the economic role of festivals. The resulting proposals will be presented.

A second part explaining the methodology chosen to address this topic. This will include the type of festivals chosen to be focused on, an explanation of this choice, and the tools and methodological choices used.

We will continue this paper with a description of the analysis of the data obtained, as well as observations and discussions. This part will focus mainly on interpretations of the impacts observed in relation to the various proposals put forward in the previous parts.

This will allow us to conclude with a conclusion that responds as explicitly as possible to our problem, as well as recommendations and future perspectives.

This structure will enable us to address the various dimensions of our problem in a progressive and in-depth manner, combining theoretical approaches and concrete case studies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework of the Festival Economy

Traditionally, festivals originated as periodic events designed to celebrate religious, historical, national, and ethnic ties within a community (Ma & Lew, 2011). According to Gibson and Connell (2016), an international festival can be defined as "a limited-time cultural event that attracts international participants and visitors, promoting intercultural exchange while generating significant economic benefits for the host region." They combine different artistic, social, and economic dimensions, which contribute to their unique nature and impact.

2.1.1 Typology of festivals

There are several classifications of festivals based on different criteria. By artistic genre or theme, festivals can be divided into cultural (music, theater, cinema), gastronomic, sporting, or mixed (Wilson et al., 2017). Geographically, events can be differentiated as local, regional, national, or international. The final typology that distinguishes festivals is the economic model, which can be subsidized, commercial, or a mix of the two, considered hybrid. These categories directly influence the nature and extent of the economic impacts generated (Mair, 2019).

2.1.2 Evolution of the economic role

Historically, festivals were celebrations linked to regular intervals in the calendar, often reflecting the values, ideologies, identity, and continuity of the community (Getz, 2010).

Since the 1980s, there has been a growing trend toward professionalization and commercialization: festivals have become tools for regional marketing and levers for economic development (Quinn, 2005). This evolution reflects their integration into public strategies for urban revitalization and cultural tourism.

2.1.3 Applied economic theories

Economic theories applied to cultural events, such as festivals, involve recognizing the cultural economy and the unique attributes of cultural goods and services (Wilson et al., 2017). Nevertheless, festivals cannot be equated with simple commodities. According to Throsby (2010), cultural activities, particularly festivals, produce multiple values. Firstly, there is a market value that can be measured in terms of revenue or consumption. Second, the concept of non-market value, such as prestige, symbolic capital, and reputation, is essential to understanding their real impact by enriching our understanding of the value of a festival beyond

its simple economic impact. According to Throsby (2010), these events produce cultural values that cannot be reduced to economic benefits alone.

In addition, Frey (1994) highlights the positive externalities (associated with festivals) such as regional revitalization, social cohesion, and brand image, which are benefits to communities. These externalities are central to their political justification, but are difficult to quantify because they are rarely monetary (Duffy & Mair, 2021). There are also negative externalities such as congestion and substitution effects on spending.

In a more contemporary version, Towse (2019) emphasizes the specific characteristics of cultural goods: uncertainty of demand, symbolic value, and dependence on the subjective preferences of audiences.

2.2 Economic Impact Assessment Methodologies

2.2.1 Classical models

The assessment of the economic benefits and tangible effects of festivals is based on analytical models that measure various impacts (Getz, 2010). The tools used include input-output models and economic multipliers, which calculate the ripple effects of initial spending in the local economy (Miller & Blair, 2009).

Dwyer, Forsyth, and Spurr (2005) emphasize the importance of distinguishing between different types of impacts in their analysis of special events. The input-output approach allows for modeling intersectoral linkages and accurately estimating multiplier effects.

One of the basic tools for quantifying direct expenditure remains the visitor survey, which requires a rigorous process to measure the cultural and economic value of events (Snowball, 2016).

Direct effects correspond to visitors' initial spending: accommodation, food, transportation, and tickets. Indirect effects result from inter-company purchases generated by direct activity. Induced effects come from the consumer spending of beneficiary households (Fletcher, 1989).

2.2.2 Limitations and biases

Nevertheless, evaluating the economic impact of festivals faces numerous limitations.

Crompton (1995, 2006) denounces a systematic tendency toward overestimation in economic impact studies: "Most economic impact studies are commissioned to legitimize a political position rather than to seek economic truth." Indeed, he identifies eleven recurring errors that lead to actual estimates being multiplied by ten. This criticism highlights the significant dimension of political bias in economic studies. Porter (1999) also highlights this criticism by stating that sponsors tend to favor "generous" methodologies to justify their investments.

Moreover, traditional models tend to neglect the crowding-out effect in economic impact assessments. Indeed, a festival can deter some tourists who would have visited the destination in the absence of the event. Traditional models consider local economic benefits to be linked to the festival. However, some spending would have occurred outside of the festival; this is referred to as temporal substitution. Spatial substitutions are also not taken into account: the positive effect measured locally may correspond to a loss for another geographic area (Preuss, 2011).

Furthermore, some models struggle to integrate the externalities generated by festivals. An externality occurs when the activity of one economic agent positively or negatively impacts the activity of another economic agent without either receiving or paying compensation for this effect. This is the case with quantitative models, in which integrating externalities proves difficult.

2.2.3 New approaches

To address the new challenges associated with festivals, new approaches have emerged.

Integrated approaches combine quantitative and qualitative analyses to understand the complexity of impacts. Methodological triangulation therefore combines surveys, interviews, and ethnographic observations, to better understand the complexity of the impacts of festivals and cultural events (Natow, 2019).

More recently, Duffy (2021), shows that event organization is becoming more strategic and is increasingly focused on long-term impacts on territorial development, social innovation, and the creation of sustainable networks.

According to the United Nations (2024), with the increasing volume of data, new analytical approaches must be used to enable better monitoring of progress. On one hand, the analysis of geolocated data makes it possible to trace visitor flows more precisely, thus reducing reporting bias (Miah et al., 2019). On the other hand, sentiment analysis on social media also makes it possible to assess visitors" perceptions in real time (Rodriguez-Ibanez et al., 2023).

Beyond their economic impact, festivals now demonstrate a societal and environmental commitment. In his context, the triple bottom line (economic, social, environmental) is becoming the benchmark for evaluation (Elkington, 1999).

These limitations have led to the emergence of new evaluation approaches, which consider festivals not only as economic drivers, but also as platforms for sustainable development and well-being. Life cycle analysis incorporates carbon footprint, supplemented by subjective well-being indicators inspired by Sen's capabilities approach (2015). Festivals are now seen as platforms for sustainable development and community engagement, beyond their immediate economic impact. This framework makes it possible to appreciate what already works in organizational cultures while building new meaning through the interactions and working relationships of these actors (Stadler & Fullagar, 2016).

2.3 Economic Impacts of International Festivals

International festivals generate multiple economic benefits for their host regions through direct, indirect, and induced impacts (Figini & Patuelli, 2022). Direct benefits come from the added value during final production, while indirect benefits take into account the added value throughout the supply chain (Figini & Patuelli, 2022).

2.3.1 Direct impacts

Visitor spending

The direct economic impacts of international festivals are mainly realized through visitor spending in the host region (Güneş, 2022). This spending includes both purchases made at the festival itself and those made at other businesses in the community (University of Minnesota Extension, 2024).

Direct expenditures include lodging, food, transportation, and ticketing (Ilieva et al., 2024). Getz (1991) establishes that these expenditures represent 60-70% of the total economic impact of a cultural event.

According to Richards (2022), average spending per visitor at major European festivals varies between €150 and €400 per day, with accommodation generally representing the largest expense, accounting for 30-40% of the budget. However, this daily amount also includes food (25-30%), local transportation (10-15%), tickets (15-20%), and miscellaneous purchases (10-15%).

Job creation

International festivals are major creators of jobs, both temporary and permanent. Temporary jobs mainly involve security, hospitality, catering, technical support, and logistics. Although short-term, these jobs often enable people to acquire specialized skills in the cultural and events sectors. This shows that festivals contribute to the professionalization of the events sector by requiring a skilled workforce and management (Wilson et al., 2017). This requirement is also found in permanent jobs, which result from the development of organizing teams, tourist accommodation structures, and related services.

Determining factors: The extent of the direct economic impact depends on several determining factors. The size and duration of the festival are obvious variables: an event lasting several days automatically generates more overnight stays and spending than a one-off event. The socio-economic composition of the audience is also crucial, with affluent groups having

significantly higher average budgets. In addition, the geographical location and seasonality will also determine the intensity of the impact.

2.3.2 Indirect and induced impacts

Event tourism

International festivals significantly boost event tourism by increasing a region's appeal to tourists (Kumar & Nazir, 2023). They offer unique experiences, encourage learning, and promote health, thereby attracting tourists with diverse interests (Getz, 2010). Festivals also improve the image of host communities, making them attractive destinations (Pereira et al., 2021).

International event tourism is characterized by specific behaviors (Pereira et al., 2021). Foreign visitors plan their stay in advance, often extend their visit to explore the region, and have a high rate of return. This loyalty generates lasting economic benefits that extend beyond the festival period itself. These events increase the average length of stay and boost local spending, particularly in the hotel, restaurant, and retail sectors. They also help to even out tourist numbers by attracting visitors during the low season, thereby contributing to seasonality reduction (Boz, 2014).

In the short term, the effects are concentrated around the event, but in the medium term, word of mouth and visitor loyalty reinforce their impact. In the long term, these effects bring about a lasting transformation in the image and attractiveness of the region, particularly for recurring festivals with established reputations, positioning them as leading cultural destinations (Boz, 2014).

Regional image and place branding

Festivals play a strategic role in building and promoting the image of regions, acting as powerful levers for regional marketing and place branding (Getz, 2010; Güneş, 2022). They help shape a distinctive identity by promoting local culture and specificities, while offering residents a sense of belonging and visitors an authentic experience (Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013). This attracts even more media attention (Wilson et al., 2017).

Beyond immediate visibility, festivals contribute to long-term loyalty and reputation. According to Pine and Gilmore (2020), 65% of festival-goers develop an emotional attachment to the host location, encouraging them to return.

Finally, digitalization accentuates these dynamics: festivals are becoming platforms for co-creating images via social media (Chen & Yu, 2025). While this reinforces dissemination, the risk is cultural homogenization and the loss of territorial uniqueness.

Thus, festivals are not only cultural events, but also genuine vectors of indirect and induced economic value, through the optimization of the region's image.

2.3.3 Structuring and urban effects

Infrastructure investments and sustainability

Events promote the construction or renovation of facilities (performance halls, public spaces, digital infrastructure), which then benefit the local community. However, Albalate et al., (2019) emphasize that the evaluation of these investments must include the sustainability dimension, in order to avoid that the infrastructures for a festival become underutilized "white elephants" after the event.

Urban transformation and regeneration

Festivals are part of urban regeneration strategies, helping to revitalize certain neighborhoods or enhance the overall attractiveness of cities. Smith (2012) describes this process as a major lever for urban redevelopment, while Quinn (2005) emphasizes the role of arts festivals in creating a new cultural dynamic and identity for the city.

Development of creative clusters and local integration

Beyond infrastructure, festivals can trigger long-term dynamics by promoting the formation of cultural clusters and creative industries. Bakas et al. (2019) show how these events fuel the “creative city” logic by strengthening the local economic ecosystem through links between organizers, suppliers, artisans, and tourism stakeholders. This “value chain” logic helps diversify the regional economy, stimulate short supply chains, and generate entrepreneurial opportunities beyond the duration of the event itself. By promoting the region, policies encourage the coordination of farms and the aggregation of tourism offerings, including through the integration of services and products (Baldi et al., 2022).

2.3.4 Criticism and limitations

Despite their positive effects, international festivals raise several criticisms related to their social and economic impacts.

First, there is a risk associated with gentrification and the exclusion of a portion of the local population. Indeed, the recurring hosting of cultural events can accelerate neighborhood gentrification, which can lead to rising rents and the marginalization of low-income residents. In 2004, García highlighted this phenomenon in his work, explaining that the integration of major festivals into urban regeneration policies often reinforced exclusion rather than inclusion.

Another criticism is the over-commercialization of festivals, which can lead to a loss of authenticity. Le et al. (2024) point out that this loss of authenticity, due to the use of festivals as tourism products, weakens their contribution to social sustainability and reduces their legitimacy among local communities.

Furthermore, the benefits tend to be concentrated among certain social groups. Indeed, the economic benefits rarely benefit the entire territory equally. Crompton (2006) points out that studies often overestimate net gains, while real benefits are generally concentrated around major players (major sponsors, hotels, restaurants), to the detriment of small businesses and local residents. Chen & Yu (2025) add that digitalization tends to reinforce this phenomenon by giving greater visibility to major brands rather than local players.

Finally, festivals can create a crowding-out effect. A festival can deter some tourists who would have visited the destination in the absence of the event (Preuss, 2011).

2.4 Festivals, Public Policies and Governance

2.4.1 Festivals as instruments of territorial development

Festivals are powerful tools for urban regeneration. The OECD (2019) recognizes the central role of culture in local development, recommending the integration of cultural events into regional strategies. Festivals catalyze the transformation of brownfield sites into new centers of attraction.

Waitt (2008) analyzes the geography of urban festivals between “hype, helplessness, and hope,” revealing the tensions between promises of development and local socio-economic realities.

Richards & Palmer (2010) update their vision of “eventful cities,” highlighting the evolution of festivals into tools for territorial differentiation in inter-urban competition. Cultural events function as “flagship events” that enhance international reputation (Kavaratzis, 2004). In addition, festivals need the support of the public and private sectors, in compliance with existing environmental regulations and safety standards" (Ilieva et al., 2024).

2.4.2 Governance and financing models

The economic viability of festivals depends on the renewable social, economic, and cultural benefits they offer to society (Güneş, 2022). It involves striking a balance between different funding models: public subsidies (40-60%), private sponsorship (20-30%), and own revenues (20-40%) (Bonet & Négrier, 2018).

Viable funding models include a mix of subsidies, sponsorships, and self-generated revenue. Public investment is essential to ensure sustainability and attract sponsors aiming to stimulate local economies (Wilson et al., 2017). However, traditional financial channels are facing increasing constraints.

During economic downturns, festivals have demonstrated adaptability by diversifying their revenue streams and securing more sponsorships (Lorincz et al., 2023). The COVID-19 crisis has revealed the fragility of the economic model, with some festivals ceasing operations due to uncertainty, highlighting the need for greater accountability (Chun et al., 2024).

This crisis is accelerating reflection on resilience and the emergence of public guarantee funds that support the transition to more sustainable and flexible models (Ministère de la Culture, 2021).

2.4.3 Sustainability and social inclusion

The OECD (2022) incorporates sustainable development goals into its cultural recommendations. Economic sustainability aims for long-term financial balance, while environmental sustainability requires eco-design and responsible resource management.

Duxbury et al., (2020) specifically study cultural and creative work in rural and isolated areas, revealing the potential of festivals to revitalize territories in demographic decline.

Inclusive governance and participation

Inclusive governance involves residents in artistic and organizational choices. Neighborhood councils, participatory budgets, and citizen juries democratize festival decisions (Carrel, 2015).

The “cultural rights” approach inspires new generations of festivals, favoring the active participation of residents in creation. This evolution transforms audiences into co-creators, questioning the traditional distinction between cultural producers and consumers.

Catalysts vs exclusion

The debate pits inclusive festivals against factors of gentrification. “Inclusive” festivals develop social pricing, diversified programming, and enhanced mediation, with contrasting results depending on the context (Belfiore, 2002).

This tension runs through contemporary urban policies, questioning the social legitimacy of public investment in a context of public finance crises and rising territorial inequalities.

2.5 Contemporary and Post-COVID Issues

2.5.1 Current global context

International festivals are currently evolving in a context of significant changes that are redefining their organizational methods and impacts, seeking to prioritize authenticity over excessive commercialization, particularly through more personalized and immersive experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 2020). Towse (2019) already highlighted the specific nature of cultural goods in the face of uncertain demand and the subjective preferences of audiences. This reflection takes on a new dimension with the emergence of environmental imperatives such as reducing the carbon footprint (OECD, 2022), as well as the importance of the transition to a circular economy, accelerated by the digitalization and new technologies (Antikainen et al., 2018). Indeed, in addition to the growth of ecological ambitions and the implementation of new sustainability regulations, digitalization is now playing a major role in society, requiring the sector to adapt. This creates hybrid event formats (physical and virtual), but also a growth in the use of social media as vectors for co-creating territorial imagery, and digital data to analyze audience behavior (Piccioni, 2023).

2.5.2 COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many events, resulting in a major disruption for the global festival industry. In the United States, the added value of performing arts organizers (including festivals) fell by nearly 73% between 2019 and 2020 (National Endowment for the Arts, 2022). This crisis has revealed the structural fragility of the sector and its dependence on public subsidies as well as external factors. Faced with these constraints, organizers have had to demonstrate innovation with the massive and accelerated development of hybrid formats (Buhalis & Karatay, 2022). For some, new emergency financing mechanisms, such as public guarantee funds, have been required to support the transition to more resilient models, as explained by the OECD (2020). This period has also highlighted the social and territorial role of festivals, confirming their role as socioeconomic buffers and vectors of community resilience (Ministry of Culture, 2021).

These challenges are disrupting the way direct and indirect economic impacts are assessed, while also challenging traditional models. Territorial governance must successfully adapt to these contemporary challenges and future uncertainty, which justifies a deeper scientific analysis of their impact.

2.6 Limitations and Research Directions

The literature review reveals a predominance of studies focused on immediate economic impacts, favoring traditional input-output models (Miller & Blair, 2009). While these approaches offer a solid technique, they struggle to demonstrate the structural and long-term effects of festivals on their territories (Dwyer, Forsyth & Spurr, 2005). Furthermore, there is a real lack of in-depth qualitative research, which would provide a better understanding of the symbolic dimensions and dynamics of collaborative governance (Carrel, 2015). Finally, most analyses focus on large events, whose operations cannot be generalized to festivals of other, more intermediate sizes, which nevertheless make up the majority of European festivals.

There are three major limitations identified in this analysis. First, the lack of international comparative approaches limits generalizability and fails to account for the influence of cultural contexts. Second, despite Natow's (2019) recommendations for methodological triangulation, few studies use mixed approaches combining quantitative surveys and qualitative approaches. Third, as Crompton (1995, 2006) has pointed out, impact assessments are often biased by political objectives, leading to overestimations that compromise the scientific reliability and usefulness of the results for public decision-makers.

This literature review reveals gaps in understanding festivals as multidimensional drivers of development. Existing theoretical contributions favor an immediate economic interpretation, but leave social, symbolic, and governance dimensions in the shadows. With this in mind, this work will seek to respond by focusing on the following proposals:

- "International festivals generate significant direct economic benefits for host cities by stimulating tourism consumption, local employment, and income from related activities."

- "The regular organization of an international festival strengthens the destination's brand image and improves its tourist appeal in the medium and long term."

- "When part of coherent territorial policies, international festivals can act as catalysts for regional economic development through investment in infrastructure, stimulation of creative industries, and urban transformation."

- "The economic effectiveness of a festival depends on the nature of the event, the type of audience, and the local governance model."

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives of the Study

Following this research, it was concluded that finding a single solution for all existing and future festivals was not possible. In other words, each festival has its own positive and negative impacts, depending on its style, organization, development, geographical location, etc.

Nevertheless, there are certain common denominators that can be found despite the opposing targets or objectives of some festivals. The purpose of this section is therefore to explain how the data was collected and analyzed to address the issue and test the proposals raised.

The research is comparative and descriptive in nature, aiming to analyze the economic impacts of international festivals and their role in regional development. The approach chosen is therefore mixed, combining qualitative and quantitative tools. This will make it possible to measure the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of festivals, as well as to understand the perceptions of the various stakeholders. This choice is explained by the need to understand the qualitative perceptions of the stakeholders while quantifying certain economic effects via the audience and secondary data, thus combining measurable and subjective elements.

Two distinct festivals were chosen for analysis: the Festival of Lyrical Art of Aix en Provence and Munich's Oktoberfest. Comparing them allows us to analyze the economic impact of very different event models, one considered elitist and cultural, the other popular and mass-market.

Using two contrasting case studies in this approach will highlight the variability of impacts depending on the territorial context and the type of event. The comparative dimension allows us to identify overall and general elements on the role of international festivals in economic development, while taking into account their varying specificities.

In addition, the complementarity between quantitative methods (questionnaires, secondary data) and qualitative methods (interviews) has been emphasized in order to obtain a vision that is both comprehensive and nuanced.

3.2 Cases Studied

The first case studied is the Festival of Lyrical Art of Aix en Provence. This event is perceived as a prestigious cultural event created in 1948 and now recognized as one of the most renowned opera festivals in Europe.

Although its audience is smaller and has a higher average age than large popular festivals, it generates significant economic benefits for the region through hotels, restaurants, and cultural tourism, having a significant impact on the city of Aix-en-Provence during this period.

The second case is the opposite of the first, considered a mass festival, popular and world-renowned, attracting several million visitors: the Oktoberfest in Munich. Although one of its objectives is also to promote the city's culture and heritage, it is much better known for a very different model on a very large scale, attracting huge crowds and characterized by equally massive economic benefits and a strong identity and territorial dimension that is reflected in its media impact.

This comparative analysis reveals two antagonistic but complementary economic models: the “subsidized elitist model” of Aix, which prioritizes artistic quality and qualitative impact on the region, versus the “self-financed popular model” of Munich, which maximizes volume and direct economic profitability.

Here, the choice of these festivals is based on a “popular case” method, maximizing potential and analytical contrast. The Aix Festival embodies a subsidized elitist cultural model (70,000 spectators), while Oktoberfest represents a self-financed mega-popular event (6.3 million visitors). Despite their fundamental differences, they share international recognition, strong territorial roots, and reliable economic data. This polarity makes it possible to identify the economic mechanisms specific to each model while revealing the invariants of the impact of festivals on regional development.

3.3 Data Collection

For this research, it was decided to use three main data collection tools:

- Qualitative interviews: conducted with institutional actors who host festivals (town hall employees) and members of festival organizations. These semi-structured interviews focused on perceived economic benefits, promotion strategies, and public-private partnerships. These interviews were thematically structured following the propositions we came off with earlier.

- Public questionnaire: this questionnaire aims to gather information on festival-related spending, motivations for participation, and the public's and visitors' perceptions of the local economic impact. The goal here was to have more information following the thematic analysis as well as some other information that could be relevant/helpful.

- Secondary sources: institutional reports, official statistical data, and previous studies were used to supplement and contextualize the primary data, particularly on the overall economic impact, its evolution, and festival attendance.

3.4 Population and Sampling

As mentioned, two main categories of stakeholders were targeted for this research:

- Institutional and organizational actors, including representatives of the relevant town halls and people directly involved in organizing the festivals. These respondents were chosen for their role in managing and promoting the events.

- Festival audiences. In order to obtain a diverse range of profiles, the questionnaire was distributed randomly to potential festival-goers with varied socio-demographic profiles.

The interviews were sampled using a targeted approach (selection of key individuals), while the questionnaires were based on a more open approach, aiming to collect a representative sample of visitors. This combination allows for a comparison of the views of decision-makers and users, thus providing a broader understanding of the economic impact.

3.5 Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the interviews was processed using thematic analysis, which identified recurring themes around direct impacts, indirect effects, and development strategies. The goal was to have several questions that if answered, would help completing each of the propositions. Quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics (averages, percentages, frequencies) to identify general trends in consumer behavior and perceptions of impact as well as following the thematic analysis. Finally, triangulation between primary data (interviews, questionnaires) and secondary data (reports, statistics) reinforced the validity and reliability of the results.

3.6 Methodological Limitations

As with all research, there are limitations. The main one is sample size, particularly with regard to the questionnaire, which does not provide an exhaustive representation of all festival-goers. Furthermore, despite certain measurement tools, it is difficult to isolate the unique impact of festivals on their host regions, as some visitors combine their stay with other activities. Furthermore, response biases may arise due to the subjectivity of respondents. However, these limitations have been partially offset by the diversification of sources and the triangulation of data.

3.7 Methodological Conclusion

In summary, the methodology chosen for this paper is a mixed approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of two contrasting case studies, supplemented by interviews, questionnaires, and secondary data, highlights the complexity and diversity of the economic impacts and their potential role in regional development. This methodology thus aims to provide a rich, nuanced, and representative analysis of the economic issues related to international festivals.

4. DATA PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

All the following information derives from a compilation of interviews and surveys around a thematic analysis, conducted with people involved in international festivals, either as employees, visitors, or city representatives. Responses were systematically coded against each proposition to validate or refine the theoretical framework.

4.1 Presentation of the Festivals

For a more thorough analysis, the research focused more specifically on two festivals: the Festival of Aix-en-Provence and Oktoberfest. These two festivals were chosen for their importance, but also for their contrast. Before analyzing their economic and territorial impact, it is necessary to present their context, how they work, and their main characteristics.

4.1.1 Festival of Aix-en-Provence

The festival was created in 1948 on the initiative of Gabriel Dussurget, an art lover and music enthusiast, and Marie-Louise Double de Saint-Lambert, Countess Pastré and patron of the arts from Marseille, who wanted to establish a music festival in Provence.

This festival is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to program and organize the "Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence" (FIAL) and the European Academy of Music.

Thanks to the financial commitment of the Aix-en-Provence casino (now Pasino), the municipality, and the state, the festival first made a name for itself by producing almost all of Mozart's operas. Subsequently, the program diversified, embracing a repertoire ranging from early opera to comic opera and opera buffa, while using iconic venues such as the Théâtre de l'Archevêché, the Grand Théâtre de Provence, and the Théâtre du Jeu de Paume, some of whose infrastructures developed around the evolution of the festival.

Today, the Festival of Aix enjoys international renown and places great importance on contemporary musical creation and other artistic disciplines, embracing aesthetic eclecticism. Thanks to the support of public partners and private sponsors, the festival has diversified its activities and strengthened its regional roots. The Association has created new structures and partnerships, promoting access to opera, cultural transmission, and education. Since 2020, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been an integral part of its statutes. This diversity now attracts more than 70,000 visitors from all over the world for four weeks between mid-June and mid-July, with a budget of around €28 million.

Due to its nature and its audience, which until recent years was relatively elderly with high purchasing power, the festival is considered elitist and prestigious, in keeping with the image of the city of Aix-en-Provence, a city of more than 150,000 inhabitants with a diversified economy based on higher education, the service sector, and cultural tourism.

4.1.2 Oktoberfest

Created in 1810, initially to celebrate the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria and Princess Therese of Saxony-Hildburghausen on the Theresienwiese. This event quickly became institutionalized and established itself as an annual tradition rooted in Bavarian identity, now welcoming more than 6 million visitors over 16 days in early autumn, with an economic impact of €1.2 billion.

Oktoberfest is organized directly by the City of Munich, which oversees private operators (mainly large Bavarian breweries and fairground operators). Its model is largely self-financing, with massive economic benefits for the hotel and restaurant industry, transportation, and regional commerce as a whole.

Driven by local breweries and the Munich city council, Oktoberfest has gradually transformed into a major international event while retaining its strong cultural roots. Today, in addition to being world-famous for its huge beer tents, folk music, and traditional costumes, the festival also serves as a showcase for Bavarian identity and culture, combining popular conviviality and intangible heritage. This balance between local roots and international openness explains its longevity and its central role in the tourist appeal of Munich, a city of 1.6 million inhabitants with an economy that is industrial, service-oriented, and heavily focused on tourism.

Although rooted in very different contexts and rationales, these two festivals share international visibility and a strong territorial impact. Comparing them allows us to assess how the nature of an event, its audience, and its mode of governance influence its economic effectiveness and its role in local development.

4.2 Direct Economic Impacts

The first proposal states that “international festivals generate significant direct economic benefits for host cities by stimulating tourism, local employment, and income from related activities.”

Through literature reviews and various discussions, we can already confirm that international festivals do indeed have direct economic benefits. However, are these benefits truly significant for their host cities, and what factors are specifically involved?

4.2.1 Visitors

Our sample assessment initially showed us that the vast majority of the population as a whole had already attended at least one festival in their lifetime, regardless of the type. As the sample of people surveyed was predominantly European, we cannot give a concrete percentage of the geographical areas that attend festivals the most, However, we do know that the festivals in Aix and Oktoberfest, despite a large difference in visitor numbers (70,000 spectators for Aix vs. 6 million for Munich), both have a percentage of 20% foreign visitors, a percentage that is constantly evolving. We are therefore seeing that, over the years, festivals are attracting more and more people and more and more visitors from outside the area, i.e., travelers.

The average age of the Aix Festival, despite being high, is slowly getting younger thanks to an approach that aims to be inclusive and modern. The questionnaire confirms a diverse range of attendance based on ages, social backgrounds, etc.

We therefore see that attendance is different on a mass scale, with a modest but qualitative volume for Aix, compared to a mass model in Munich, but with a similar percentage for the diversity and ethnicity of the audience.

4.2.2 Revenue generated

The Aix-en-Provence Festival generated €28 million in 2023, and Oktoberfest €1.25 billion. For one day at each of these festivals, a visitor will spend (excluding accommodation) between €50 and €200 per day in Aix; for Munich, it is between €30 and €100, varying depending on individual consumption.

On average, the general public confirms that they spend the majority of their budget (excluding transportation) on the festival entrance ticket, then on accommodation, and then on food, with an average daily spend of €150-200, accounting for a ticket at around €50, an overnight stay at €80, and food at €30 (food varies depending on the price of the night).

The city halls of Aix-en-Provence and Munich confirm an increase in tourism revenue, particularly from accommodation during festival periods, with the general public confirming they stay 2-3 nights per festival. The Aix-en-Provence festival specifies that it accommodates all of its artists, temporary performers, and some seasonal workers in the region's various hotels, B&Bs, and Airbnbs, confirming an increase in the percentage of tourist accommodation used in the summer in the metropolitan area. Aix demonstrates a higher unit expenditure here, while Oktoberfest proves a powerhouse with colossal total revenues, both demonstrating the impact and the greater or lesser variety of their revenues.

4.2.3 Jobs

During a festival, it is well known that a larger payroll is required. The Aix festival employs around sixty full-time, year-round employees on permanent contracts, around a hundred fixed-term contracts arriving in November for nine months (often carried over from one year to the next), followed by an arrival of 500 shorter-term seasonal workers, including intermittent performers, and another 500 artists, for a total of around 1,200 employees during the festival, more than 12 times the number of year-round employees. Oktoberfest confirms that it recruits around 13,000 temporary jobs during the festival period, compared to a few dozen year-round for programming and organization.

The local social impact is real during the festival period, regardless of its type, whether it's for skilled cultural employment through the opera festival or the "horeca" sector, more specifically the restaurant and hotel industry in Munich. Total Budget/Business Model

The Aix-en-Provence Lyric Arts Festival explains that it relies on a funding model before 2024 consisting of 70% self-financing, 20% with support from Aix City Hall, and the remainder from the department. After 2024, following a financial crisis, it will be 50% self-financing, mainly through its own revenue, 25% from sponsorship, and 13% from co-production and ticket sales. The remainder comes from a loan and departmental support and subsidies.

In 2022, it was reported that the festival generated $10 million (all sectors combined, housing, catering, etc.) for the city of Aix-en-Provence.

Oktoberfest is largely funded through the tents of operators and breweries that wish to exhibit, as well as some local partners. The City provides public infrastructure and security. The Aix Festival relies to a certain extent on the public sector in its operations, while Oktoberfest is a self-sufficient commercial model, particularly due to the fact that it promotes local gastronomy and culture, rather than putting on performances like in Aix. While the Lyric Arts

Festival is perceived as non-profit because its profits are not very significant, Oktoberfest allows its private operators to make a total profit of around 30 percent (organization costs ~350-400 million, on-site revenues 620 million, profit: 200 million).

Regarding public opinion, it is important to note that 60% of respondents believe that international festivals do indeed have a significant impact on the local economy. The main economic benefit would be in commercial spin-offs (hotels, restaurants, shops etc.) for 24%, followed by an impact on increased tourist attractiveness with 22% then the creation of direct and indirect jobs with 17% (see appendix D).

4.2.4 Conclusion

The results confirm this first proposition: international festivals do indeed generate substantial direct economic benefits, whether in terms of tourism consumption, activity in related sectors, or the creation of temporary jobs. However, the comparison shows that the magnitude and nature of these benefits depend heavily on the festival model: Oktoberfest relies on the massive volume of visitors, while the Aix Festival capitalizes on the value and prestige of its audience.

4.3 Indirect and Induced Effects

The second proposition implies that “The regular organization of an international festival strengthens the destination's brand image and improves its tourist appeal in the medium and long term.”

4.3.1 Brand image

The Aix-en-Provence Festival of Lyric Arts decided to adopt a multi-channel communication strategy combining international press relations, TV and radio partnerships, digital marketing, and free public events. This enabled them to obtain hundreds of articles and features about them in 2024, as well as around 238 accredited journalists who attended the performances, in addition to being able to record and broadcast on their main partners such as ARTE and France Musique. Around 40 journalists are present each evening for the first performances. The festival works in close synergy with the Tourist Office and local authorities to promote the region more effectively, in addition to the international reach they have achieved through their communication strategy and co-productions. In 2023, a photo exhibition was held at the TGV station in Paris. Partnerships have also been formed with cultural institutions in the city, such as the “Musée Granet”, helping to reinforce their prestigious cultural image.

34% of respondents who are familiar with the festival see it as an elitist event that is not very accessible, while the rest are evenly divided between “a prestigious festival that contributes to the region's reputation” and “a good balance between artistic quality and openness.” (see Appendix E).

The Oktoberfest, thanks to its global reputation, has become one of the most widely covered events in the world (CNN, BBC, etc.) with a strong presence on social media, which is the best way to reach its target audience. This festival has become a symbol of Germany abroad in addition to its traditions, with some cities now organizing their own Oktoberfest, such as Beijing. This event softens Germany's sometimes rigid image and confirms the regional identity of the area with traditional costumes, Bavarian folklore, conviviality, and gastronomy. Oktoberfest is seen by half of the respondents as a commercial success but with a risk of possible abuses, which we will discuss below (see Appendix F).

4.3.2 Loyalty and cultural development

In Aix-en-Provence, the most loyal fans remain a fairly elitist audience, although there has been a noticeable improvement in recent years, thanks in particular to the free activities offered by “Aix en Juin” ahead of the festival and the free preludes, which are now also available digitally.

Oktoberfest has greater power to build customer loyalty quickly, as the event is perceived as more festive and family/friendly, with visitors returning during Germany's second most visited period, Christmas with its markets. Nevertheless, despite more complicated customer loyalty, Aix often sees its visitors stay a few days longer than the duration of their shows to enjoy the continuity of the city, which maintains its prestigious image thanks to the painter Cézanne, or the small villages around it, each with their own history and well-established tourism partnerships between each municipality. On average, a spectator, especially a foreign one, will extend their stay by 3 to 5 days, compared to 2-3 days for Germany, with visitors preferring to differentiate between a purely festive stay and other cultural discoveries, while leaving the door wide open for a second full stay. In Aix, visitors extend their stay after the event (30% return outside the festival), while in Germany, they plan to return for another trip (70%). This has enabled Aix-en-Provence to focus on its museums, guided tours, and an upgrade in hotels and restaurants, as well as to develop off-season music tourism with spring and winter concerts, for example.

In Germany, beer tourism has grown, offering a little bit of the festival all year round for the shyer, or mini-Oktoberfests during the other seasons.

4.3.3 Public perception

Reinforcing the city's image as a complement to the Aix festival, it is characterized as prestigious, although still elitist. This has led to an increase in cultural patrons and investors, as well as so-called “satellite” festivals. Nevertheless, the still rather elitist image makes it difficult for the festival to rejuvenate as quickly as desired, even though this has been changing in recent years thanks to various initiatives and the image of Aix as a prestigious but dynamic city alongside the metropolis of Marseille.

Munich, on the other hand, faces the opposite situation, with a very festive, friendly, and accessible image, which can nevertheless be perceived as a cliché of beer and folklore, detracting from its cultural richness. One of the respondents to the questionnaire mentioned that “Germany is for drinking, Provence is for the bourgeoisie.”

4.3.4 Negative effects

As mentioned above, despite the generally positive image, certain negative effects must be taken into account, such as increased prices for accommodation and food during festival periods in both locations. A certain saturation of the city will be encountered, remaining occasional for Aix-en-Provence but too significant for Munich, which has 1.5 million inhabitants year-round

but receives between 6 and 7 million during Oktoberfest. This sudden increase in visitors, accompanied by the consumption offered in Munich, also creates certain excesses, particularly related to alcohol (see Appendix F).

These negative aspects, identified by some of our interlocutors at festivals and in cities, as well as on the internet, are confirmed by our questionnaire, with respondents estimating the risks and disadvantages of festivals at 23% each, being the increase in the cost of living and various nuisances (noise, traffic, waste), etc. In third place, with 21%, is overcrowding and infrastructure saturation. Every other negative impact (such as concentrated benefits over too short a period, gentrification and exclusion of local populations, and, surprisingly, environmental impact and economic dependence) does not exceed 8% of the main disadvantages (see Appendix G).

4.3.5 Conclusion

This proposition is validated: festivals help to strengthen the brand image of their region and boost tourist appeal beyond the duration of the event. Oktoberfest illustrates the effect of global notoriety, generating mass tourism, while Aix demonstrates how a prestigious festival can serve as a sustainable lever to position a city on the international cultural map. Nevertheless, these benefits are differentiated and dependent on communication strategy and media coverage.

4.4 Governance and Territorial Integration

The third proposal states that "when aligned with coherent territorial policies, international festivals can act as catalysts for regional economic development through infrastructure investments, the stimulation of creative industries, and urban transformation."

4.4.1 Management structures and funding methods

The majority of the general public believes that, according to 37% of them, the responsibility for funding these events should fall primarily on the organizers, with limited public support (reasonably priced admission tickets, for example). It is important to note that 34% of them believe that a 50/50 public-private partnership is the solution. A few people believe that this should be solely a private matter, but there is agreement that this responsibility should not be solely borne by public authorities (see Appendix H).

The Aix-en-Provence Festival takes the form of an association, with a board of directors and an executive management team. Its teams are divided according to the model of organization by function (Thiétart, 2022): we observe a grouping of tasks according to specialization (patronage, technical and production, artistic administration, etc.) (see Appendix I). The Board of Directors approves the artistic program and appoints the Executive Director for a five-year renewable term. It is important to note that the City of Aix-en-Provence is represented on the board through three members (two direct representatives + one qualified person appointed by the town hall). The Board of Directors meets on average twice a month, followed by the Festival's Steering Committee, which meets more regularly. Of course, the busiest meeting quota corresponds to meetings with partners, which are considered more technical (particularly for budget monitoring since the 2024 crisis). Its partners include recurring institutional partners listed, such as the city, the department, the “South region” council, the metropolitan area, as well as private sponsorships such as Corum.

In 2023, the projected budget was approximately €28 million, with a reliance on its own revenue. That year the festival generated around 52 million euros in revenue (tickets, co-productions, etc.), an additional 10 million euros from sponsorships and subsidies and structural funding totaling more than 11 million euros.

This funding method confirms its mixed nature but is fragile, dependent on its own revenues and public support. This fragility was demonstrated by the 2024 crisis, when the festival had to rely even more on grants and subsidies.

Oktoberfest, on the other hand, is a city festival; it has a very different organizational structure, with the City of Munich initially managing all the institutional aspects (permitting, coordination, security, site management). The festival obviously relies on private stakeholders who are essential to its success, namely the "Wiesn-Wirte," who operate the large tents and beer halls, as well as the fairgrounds. They organize the commercial side of things through various agreements and associations. Finally, a foundation was created, the "Münchner Wiesn-Stiftung," a foundation created for hosts and beer halls for social initiatives. As a result of this much more private and interdependent model, the financing method relies primarily on private revenues such as the sale of drinks and food, as well as attractions, but also the rental of spaces to fairground operators. The main organizer, the City of Munich, collects rents, taxes, and covers logistical and security costs. The total economic impact in 2023 has been estimated at €1.25 billion (between on-site expenses and benefits in the city).

This model is based on a much more private financing method with support from public regulations. Private operators bear the commercial risk, while the city provides a framework, permits, security, and infrastructure services.

4.4.2 Integration into local policies

About 34% of the public thinks that international festivals should be more closely integrated into local economic development strategies, while 13% believe they are still completely underutilized. 8% say that they are well-balanced while almost as many people believe they are too privileged and governance should focus on other priorities (see Appendix J).

The relationship between the Aix Festival and the City is highly developed. Indeed, since the festival bears the name and part of the city's image, the city includes it in national and regional cultural policies, notably through the various subsidies mentioned above, including $2 million in 2020, as well as through target-based agreements with the state and local authorities. In terms of infrastructure, the city provides various facilities for the festival, including two major renowned venues: the Grand Théâtre de Provence, inaugurated in 2007 and made available to the festival for each year, and the Archbishop's Palace, a landmark in the city's history and home to a large portion of the festival. These facilities, used and maintained in collaboration with the community, are a lever for public and private investment in the local opera industry. In addition to their financial contribution, local authorities also provide logistical support through venues, security, and local urban transportation throughout the entire period, and even for an extended period.

For Oktoberfest, the event is an official city event, and this is a pillar of Munich's annual tourism strategy. Since the city itself is the majority organizer, it naturally plays a central role in the cultural, tourism, and event-related discussions during their various council meetings and council meetings. Regarding infrastructure, given the scale of the movement, which is much greater than the city's daily traffic throughout the year, the municipality and its local businesses are installing a massive temporary water, electricity, and gas network. This equates to several kilometers of cables, millions of kWh, and liters of prepared water. On the transportation side, the S-Bahn is adapting its services and providing additional support for all types of public transportation during the period. In addition, permanent spaces (Theresienwiese) have been developed to facilitate organization and streamline long-term infrastructure costs.

These investments are significant but repetitive each year, as they play a major role in the smooth running of the event.

It is therefore clear that the Aix-en-Provence festival is more part of a regional cultural development strategy, while Oktoberfest is an integral part of the City of Munich's tourism strategy.

4.4.3 Inter-institutional cooperation and stimulation of local creative industries

For the Aix Festival, relationships are ongoing between the Festival Association, the Ministry of Culture, and local authorities. Each of these authorities is represented on the board of directors and contributes to the festival's funding (and may request verification or more detailed monitoring, as in the wake of the 2024 crisis). Other partners involved in this institutional coordination include patrons, European partners (such as ENOA, Medinea), and the Pasino d'Aix en Provence, for example. All of these partners have reached an agreement on their mode of operation as a "cultural cluster."

Oktoberfest has a more formal coordination process, which takes place mainly between the city and the operators. While the city handles the major logistics (permits, security, planning), private associations organize the commercial content. To bring all this together, annual conventions and joint committees are organized. This event therefore strongly stimulates the local ecosystem (through the Wiesn: seasonal jobs, suppliers, communication, merchandising, tourism sector).

The Aix-en-Provence festival relies more on cooperation with the European Union, while Oktoberfest relies on local coordination, demonstrating an example of complex management.

4.4.4 Evaluation of the adaptability and resilience of the models

A majority of the public surveyed sees festivals as events that will multiply and diversify, but notably become more eco-responsible, with 24% of voters having a more sustainable vision of development (see Appendix K).

The Aix-en-Provence festival is clearly integrated into local cultural policies and relies on a hybrid model combining subsidies, ticketing, and patronage. However, the 2024 crisis, due in part to insufficient patronage, demonstrated the fragility of the system if these resources diminish. Despite this dependence, the festival has demonstrated its resilience, particularly with its digital adaptation during the pandemic, and retains considerable legitimacy thanks to its international reach. Its reputation attracts artists and audiences from around the world, while stimulating local industries. However, to ensure its future, it must diversify its revenues and strengthen its governance to secure its financial stability.

Oktoberfest relies on a more solid financial structure, mainly driven by private revenues from breweries and fairgrounds, under the organizational leadership of the City of Munich. This model offers great resilience: risks are shared between experienced private operators, and municipal infrastructure is perfectly adapted. Nevertheless, the event must address the challenges associated with mass participation: public safety management, alcohol consumption, environmental impact, and vulnerability to health crises (loss of approximately €1.25 billion following its cancellation due to COVID-19). Thanks to its unique cultural and economic roots, the Wiesn enjoys rare financial and institutional stability, but its ability to adapt depends on the implementation of sustainability and risk management policies to preserve its international appeal.

4.4.5 Conclusion

The data partially confirm the propositions: when integrated into coherent territorial policies and supported by collaborative governance, festivals become true catalysts for regional development. Aix illustrates strong integration into local cultural strategy, while Munich highlights municipal and private cooperation around the Oktoberfest. However, in the absence of inter-institutional coordination or a long-term vision, the structuring effect of festivals remains limited.

4.5 Long-term Development Potential and Limitations

The final proposal explains that "The economic efficiency of a festival depends on the nature of the event, the type of audience, and the local governance model."

4.5.1 Nature of the event

The questionnaire revealed that for the majority of the public, the type of festival itself was not the factor with the greatest economic impact on the area. All were equally valid, with the impact depending on other factors. However, if a choice had to be made, 22% opted for popular/electronic music festivals, which generally have a younger and larger audience, even if 16% mentioned they could be equal as it depends on others factors (see Appendix L).

The Aix Festival is perceived and recognized as an elitist event, focused on the lyrical arts, primarily opera, classical music, and contemporary creation. Its international influence is clearly recognized and is part of major cultural policies, primarily local but also national. Its audience is therefore more limited, even though there has been an increase in the number of young visitors in recent years. The nature of this event, with its prestigious vision, reinforces the city's image as cultural and upscale.

Oktoberfest, on the other hand, is perceived as a popular, mass festival, rooted in Bavarian folklore since the 19th century. This festival attracts more than 6 million visitors, 85 times the audience of the Aix festival. Its influence has become even more international, as the city of Munich has been recognized as the world capital of tourism.

4.5.2 Type of audience

As seen previously, the typical audience of Aix-en-Provence is an international crowd with high purchasing power, coming for medium- to long-term stays (3 to 5 days) combining concerts and heritage tourism. They are perceived as having low social inclusion, however, the festival emphasizes the fact that they have developed many initiatives to expand their audience. The "Opéra On" program offers attractive prices for those under 30, "Aix-en-Juin" which is a free prelude, 40% of their tickets are under €60 and in particular the "Passerelles" program reaching more than 5,000 people in 44 municipalities through associative, educational, health and social structures. The program offers awareness courses with artistic practice workshops and meetings with technical teams, accessible to all ages.

Oktoberfest, on the other hand, attracts a more diverse audience, whether families, friends, or tourists, with some shorter stays of one to three days and average spending, but which

becomes massive given the volume of visitors. The festival aims to be accessible to all and is recognized as such; however, the price increase during the period prevents some households from enjoying it, despite certain initiations such as "Familientag" family offers or free access to the site allowing visitors to view the parades.

4.5.3 Governance model

As mentioned above, the Aix-en-Provence festival is an association that follows the 1901 law, subsidized by the State, the Region, the department, and the city with a hybrid financial model. Despite this fragile balance, structural benefits in the creative industries have been observed (artistic jobs, technical professions, etc.). In addition, the Academy supported by the festival allows for the training of international artists, as does the creation of the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra, which has brought together more than 3,000 participating artists since its inception.

Oktoberfest is much less vulnerable because it is managed by the City of Munich for all aspects of infrastructure, security, and coordination. One of its only risks is related to private commercial risks via the operation of breweries and fairgrounds during the festival. Nevertheless, the structural benefits are a regional economic driver through the brewing industry, events, and logistics. This structural economic transformation and the resulting revenues correspond to 3% of local GDP.

4.5.4 Development potential

Following COVID, the Aix-en-Provence Festival demonstrated diversification by introducing a hybrid festival format with recordings and streaming. This format they have decided to maintain and develop every year since. Over time, they have also developed educational initiatives, particularly through schooling, reaching more than 15,000 young people per year. This helps develop knowledge of the sector and therefore attract a new audience, with the festival's long-term goal being to be as interesting to young and old alike. The third major focus of their current development is sustainability. Carbon footprints are reduced as much as possible, and production strives to be eco-friendly. In the coming years, they are even participating in the 17h25 collective, along with several other renowned French and international festival theaters. This community aims to achieve an ecological and social transition in cultural structures by offering structures capable of supporting standardized sets, which would involve less transportation and logistics, instead requiring a simple "kit" to be set up and taken down for each performance.

Oktoberfest is banking on continued growth in its success through complementary tourist products such as the beer museum, brewery tours, and traditional year-round markets. Since the festival is controlled by the city, the goal of the development here is to bring a positive impact to the city year-round, strengthening its brand image. Despite its ability to quickly and effectively recover from a health crisis such as COVID, in terms of sustainable development, Oktoberfest is facing increasing pressure due to waste management, which is poorly respected, energy use, and mobility, which is intended to be gentle but difficult to envisage in these events.

4.5.5 Identified limitations

Despite evidence of effectiveness in terms of crisis management, public support, etc., the success of these festivals still faces some limitations that sometimes harm their positive image.

Indeed, in Aix-en-Provence, the financial fragility linked to dependence on patronage and subsidies, in addition to recurring criticism in the press regarding the tensions between elitism and accessibility, does not help the festival in its efforts to maintain a perfect image for all. The festival's economic efficiency is quite limited by the small size of its audience, despite its prestige, and also creates a risk of cultural gentrification and exclusion of residents who are not particularly interested in the innovations being made.

In Germany, local nuisances are most likely to harm Oktoberfest's image, a point already highlighted as a major problem by 23% of those surveyed, followed immediately after by the rising cost of living and infrastructure saturation, two strongly emphasized negative effects of the Oktoberfest. The festival must find the right balance between a loss of cultural authenticity due to the risk of trivialization into "mass tourism" and a festival accessible to all. Furthermore, since this festival's main value is conviviality, its dependence on the annual calendar poses a significant risk. The loss due to Covid was estimated at €1.2 billion, which could have consequences for the city's organization and funding, which has a massive impact year-round.

4.5.6 Conclusion

This last proposition is confirmed/validated: the economic efficiency of a festival depends largely on its nature (elitist vs. popular), the type of target audience (high purchasing power vs. general public), and the local governance model (cooperation, transparency, strategic vision). Aix offers an example of a festival that fosters the rise of creative industries and cultural influence, while Oktoberfest generates a massive but concentrated and sometimes fleeting economic impact. This shows that no model is universal: long-term potential depends on the adaptability and sustainability of strategic choices.

4.6 Crossed Synthesis

To better understand and analyze the responses provided by the various interviews and the questionnaire, a cross-synthesis allows us to identify the operating modes, commonalities, differences, and specificities of each festival model. This synthesis provides a general framework for a more fluid and understandable analysis of the economic impacts of international festivals (see the comparative table in Appendix M).

This comparative table allows us to more precisely identify the various points raised above, and highlights/demonstrates/otherwise the following cross-cutting lessons:

The comparative analysis of Aix and Munich highlights both structural convergences and divergences. Among the commonalities, the two events generate similar international appeal (nearly a fifth of the audiences are foreign), create massive employment during their run, and lead to an extension of the length of stays beyond the strictly event period. They are thus strongly integrated into local development strategies and demonstrate a definite ability to adapt in the face of recent crises, particularly the pandemic.

However, the differences are equally marked. The event philosophy distinguishes cultural elitism in Aix from accessible popularity in Munich; economic models contrast public dependence with private autonomy; impact scales vary between qualitative intensity and quantitative massification. Finally, resilience appears contrasting: structural financial fragility for Aix, but relative economic robustness in Munich.

These observations highlight several critical cross-cutting success factors. Strategic coherence between the nature of the event, audience profile, and governance model determines sustainability. Local anchoring, ensured by integration into local policies, is essential to legitimize the benefits. Revenue diversification and the capacity for innovation also appear to be essential levers for ensuring sustainability and adaptation to societal changes.

To explore this further, the radar chart (see Appendix N) offers a comparative reading of the festivals through eight key dimensions mentioned. It highlights the contrast between the economic weight and international visibility of Oktoberfest and, conversely, the importance of innovation and the identity anchoring of the Aix Festival. We see that Oktoberfest has a strong dominance on economic benefits, hospitality and international notoriety, while the Aix en Provence festival has a differentiated positioning, less massive but driven by innovation, resilience and heritage enhancement.

4.7 Contributions to Theory and Implications for Practitioners

4.7.1 Theoretical implications

This research contributes to enriching our understanding of the economics of festivals by demonstrating that the economic efficiency of a festival is not based solely on volume and attendance. This confirms the combination of market and non-market values discussed by Throsby (2001) and Frey (2019). The comparative analysis conducted using the two festivals illustrates the dependence of the economy on the coherence between three interdependent variables: the nature of the event, the target audience profile, and the governance model.

This "festival coherence matrix" constitutes a three-dimensional analytical framework that enriches existing models (de Getz 2008 and Dwyer et al., 2010). It allows us to go beyond the classic opposition between cultural and commercial festivals and to integrate territorial anchoring as well as qualitative impacts.

The study reveals two distinct logics of territorial integration. The cultural catalyst model illustrated by the Aix Festival corresponds to a gradual transformation of the local economic fabric through the development of creative industries and the rise of tourism. The "economic locomotive" model, exemplified by Oktoberfest, generates massive effects on the local ecosystem with immediate but concentrated benefits. These results complement the approaches of creative clusters (Richards, 2019), emphasizing that territorial anchoring does not follow a single model but depends on the event's positioning.

This analysis highlights a theoretical paradox between the vulnerability of prestige and the robustness of popularity. Elite festivals like Aix-en-Provence, despite financial fragility, possess symbolic resilience thanks to their artistic legitimacy and institutional support. Popular festivals, like Oktoberfest, appear economically sound but remain vulnerable to cyclical factors (climate, security, health crises, etc.). This contribution invites us to rethink event resilience (Hall et al., 2020) by distinguishing between financial, organizational, and symbolic dimensions, demonstrating the need for multidimensional assessment methods.

Finally, the approach adopted by comparing "polar cases" confirms its relevance for revealing the invariants and specificities of festival models. The triangulation of sources strengthens the validity of the results and opens up prospects for replication in other event contexts.

4.7.2 Practical implications

These theoretical contributions and results translate directly into specific operational implications for organizers, communities, and public decision-makers.

For prestigious cultural festivals, a need is suggested to diversify funding sources by developing innovative partnerships such as the circular economy and local creative industries. The goal is to invest in controlled democratization without distorting artistic identity while strengthening anticipatory crisis governance.

For popular mass festivals, it seems worthwhile to emphasize the development of environmental and social sustainability in order to preserve local acceptability and generate year-round benefits. There is also agreement on the need for good forward-looking management of flows, primarily through technological innovation.

For local authorities, the results suggest adapting support strategies to the event model: structural subsidies for cultural festivals, infrastructure facilitation for commercial (mega) events. Furthermore, it was noted that the implementation of differentiated impact indicators (long-term qualitative vs. immediate quantitative impacts) and the creation of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms would allow for a more detailed assessment and the maximization of territorial synergies.

Finally, the comparative analysis suggests that differentiated cultural and tourism policies would benefit from recognizing the specific nature of event models: promoting international influence and artistic training for cultural festivals, and economic stimulation and flow management for mega-events. These findings reveal the need to move beyond uniform approaches to develop evaluation frameworks adapted to each event typology. This methodological development raises significant operational challenges for all stakeholders in the sector.

5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMANDATIONS

5.1 Validation of the Proposals

Festivals do indeed generate direct economic benefits that impact host cities, albeit with certain variables depending on their model. The Aix festival operates on a logic of intensity and individual spending, while Oktoberfest has a massive model with a quantitative volume based on the magnitude of visitor flows.

Both festivals also demonstrated the importance of their role in the host city's brand image, with distinct approaches. Aix-en-Provence strengthens its cultural and prestigious identity with a loyal audience, while Munich benefits from global influence despite the risk of image deterioration. A festival therefore clearly reinforces a city's brand image, whether positive or negative, despite a difference in image.

Furthermore, we noted that festivals can act as catalysts for regional economic development, provided that territorial strategic coherence and political support through collaborative governance are present and clear. (Aix demonstrates cultural integration, while Munich has tourist integration.)

This confirms the model-public-governance coherence mentioned in the triple bottom line, which demonstrated that economic efficiency would be more impactful through this triple interdependence, allowing us to understand the diversity of effects.

These results highlight the following cross-cutting lessons: they allowed us to elucidate the fact that despite commonalities, there can be no universal model for the success of a festival due to their diversity. Furthermore, territorial anchoring and collaborative governance are key factors for the smooth running, but also the sustainability of a festival. These points also demonstrate the need to find a balance between quantity (flow, volume) and quality (prestige, lasting image).

5.2 Theoretical and Methodological Contributions

This study allowed us to confirm and make certain theoretical and methodological contributions.

The proposal of a festival coherence matrix is an essential three-dimensional tool for guiding strategic and policy choices and evaluation indicators. In addition, two integration models have been put forward: the "cultural catalyst," proposing a gradual transformation of the territory through anchoring in the creative industries, and the "economic locomotive,"

demonstrating/generating massive but concentrated effects. These different models highlight the paradox between vulnerability and robustness. Elite festivals are financially fragile but demonstrate symbolic resilience, while popular festivals are very robust economically but extremely vulnerable to various crises/experience cyclical dependence.

It is with this objective in mind that the comparison of "polar cases" was relevant for identifying the invariants and specificities of festivals. The triangulation of data reinforces the robustness of the results while the analysis made it possible to go beyond the classic input-output model to enable the integration of qualitative indicators (linked to image, attractiveness and social cohesion).

5.3 Operational Recommendations

This leads to various operational recommendations for the various stakeholders in these international events.

For organizers of prestigious festivals like Aix, it is essential to develop financial diversification to address a potential need for or decline in support, while also promoting local creative industries. Controlled democratization should be prioritized by offering more educational programs as well as hybrid digital formats without distorting the primary artistic identity. Furthermore, governance must be proactive, with administrative diversification and professionalization of financial management while strengthening existing alert mechanisms. The COVID crisis has demonstrated that these points are essential to the sustainability of a festival of this magnitude.

For popular mass festivals, such as Oktoberfest, environmental sustainability must be the priority through optimized waste and resource management, as well as soft mobility and eco-design of temporary infrastructure. Furthermore, by developing complementary tourism products such as museums and other initiatives supporting local industries, they would enhance their annual benefits. Finally, technological innovation must be emphasized through real-time flow management and an enrichment of the visitor experience, helping to avoid trivialization due to mass tourism and preserve cultural authenticity.

Regarding local authorities, the strategies and support provided must be differentiated according to type. Multi-year structural support, access to cultural infrastructure, and facilitation of partnerships for cultural festivals. Logistical, infrastructural, and regulatory support, and coordination with municipal services for popular festivals, are also needed.

Territorial governance must be optimized through the creation of joint committees (private-public), multi-year target agreements, and better urban planning for events that integrate social impacts. Equitable redistributive mechanisms such as event taxation and support for local stakeholders should also be added. The use of differentiated indicators, for its part, allows for a comparison of immediate and long-term qualitative and quantitative impacts, which is essential today.

From a more national perspective, regulatory frameworks must be adapted to the specificities of event models. Furthermore, targeted support programs, with a priority on innovation and the ecological transition, must be developed, as well as improved international cooperation. Finally, having national and/or continental observatories would allow for better monitoring of impacts as well as facilitate discussions and the exchange of best practices, strengthening the collective capacity to leverage festivals as levers for development.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study demonstrates several limitations. Methodologically, the sample is considered limited; since it only covers two European cases, it is not possible to make a global generalization. Questionnaires, however, do not cover the entire public and may be affected by reporting bias. The timeframe is also limited and marked by recent crises (COVID), which affects the measurement of long-term impacts.

Analytically, it is the causal complexity that prevents us from completely isolating the effect of festivals. The observed data are subjective, not reflecting a net increase for the territory due to substitution effects. Furthermore, some estimates may be approximate on the part of the interviewees.

Lately, conceptually, definitions of international festivals remain unclear, as do the boundaries between different types of impacts. Furthermore, two cases cannot represent the cultural and organizational diversity of the sector. The rapid evolution of the events sector also calls for caution in writing and analytical frameworks. These limitations were, however, partially offset by methodological triangulation, which strengthens the validity of the results.

5.5 Future Research Perspectives

This work allows us to address various topics to be discussed in the future. Methodologically, conducting longitudinal studies lasting 10-15 years would be useful for measuring lasting effects. Using a multi-case panel with intermediate and rural festivals across several continents

would provide a more diverse and accurate representation. Furthermore, the use of big data (geolocation, sentiment via social networks, etc.) in addition to spatial econometric approaches would open up new analytical possibilities that correct for reporting biases.

In terms of emerging themes, the integration of sustainability is central, with ongoing assessments of the triple bottom line and real carbon footprint measurements, as well as the development of the circular economy. An in-depth analysis of social networks to better understand and measure social cohesion and inclusion is essential, while the implementation of innovative collaborative governance, including citizen, financial, and territorial participation, is also a major issue. Finally, festivals are a perfect playground for analyzing adaptive capacity in the face of multiple crises, as well as the impact of emerging digital innovations (virtual reality, AI, metaverse).

5.6 Conclusion

Ultimately, this research confirms that festivals are powerful levers for territorial development, but that their effectiveness depends on close coherence between the nature of the event, the audience profile, and the governance model. The results invite us to go beyond a strictly economic interpretation to integrate cultural, social, and environmental dimensions. They also advocate for collaborative and anticipatory governance, capable of articulating structural support, innovation, and territorial equity.

The proposed recommendations provide organizers, communities, and decision-makers with operational avenues adapted to the specificities of each model. The limitations identified call for further, broader and more diverse research to consolidate our understanding of the mechanisms at play. At a time when festivals are facing multiple challenges such as sustainability, resilience, digital transformation, this study highlights the importance of an integrated approach that combines attractiveness, innovation, and responsibility.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Frame of the Interview (festival workers edition)

Conducted with festival workers

Introduction & Background

Please introduce yourself and describe your role at the Aix Festival/Oktoberfest.
How long have you worked at the festival?

A. General Overview

1. How would you describe the Aix-en-Provence Festival/Oktoberfest in a few words?
2. What do you think sets the festival apart from other cultural events (in Aix/Munich and internationally)?

B. Organization and Governance

Organizational Structure

3. How is the festival team organized? (permanent, seasonal, distribution of missions, etc.)
4. Who are the festival's main partners? (public, private, institutional)
5. How are strategic decisions made?

Business Model

6. What are the festival's main sources of funding?
7. How has the business model evolved in recent years?
8. What are the main expenditure items?

Relations with the Department (public authorities, e.g., City Hall)

9. How would you describe the relationship with the City of Aix-en-Provence/Munich?
10. What is the level of involvement of other departments/regions?
11. Is the festival integrated into local development strategies?

C. Direct Economic Impacts

Attendance Data

12. Can you give me an estimate of attendance figures?
13. What is the typical profile of attendees? (origin, age, socio-professional category, etc.)
14. How has attendance changed over the past five years?

Local Economic Impact

15. Do you have any data to share with me on the festival's economic impact?
16. Which sectors benefit most from the festival's activities?
17. Does the festival prioritize purchases from local businesses?

Employment

18. How many jobs does the festival generate? (Permanent contracts, fixed-term contracts, seasonal workers, etc.)
19. Do you use local service providers? In what areas?
20. Do you observe a knock-on effect on local cultural employment?

D. Indirect Impact and Image

Local Activity

21. In your opinion, does the festival contribute to Aix's/Munich's attractiveness?
22. Do you observe visitors returning outside of the festival period?

23. What feedback have you received on the city's image related to the festival?

Media and Communication

24. What is the festival's communication strategy?
25. What media impact have you observed?
26. Does the festival participate in any local promotional activities (regional, departmental, national, international)? If so, what?

Local Cultural Development

27. Does the festival engage in outreach activities for local audiences?
28. Are there any collaborations with other cultural stakeholders in Aix/Munich?
29. What are the links with arts education institutions?

E. Challenges and Outlook

Difficulties Encountered

30. What are the festival's main challenges today?
31. Are there any limits to the festival's growth?
32. How have you managed the COVID crisis?
33. Are there any tensions with certain local stakeholders?

Developments and Projects

34. What are the festival's prospects for growth?
35. Are there any development projects underway?
36. How do you see the festival's future in five years? In ten years or more?

Recommendations

37. What would you recommend to optimize the festival's economic impact?
38. What best practices could you share with other festivals?
39. How can we improve the territorial integration of cultural events?

Appendix B – Frame of the Interview (administrative workers edition)

Conducted with administrative workers of the host city

Introduction & Background

Please introduce yourself and describe your role at Aix/Munich City Hall.
How long have you worked at the city hall and how long have you worked on cultural issues in Aix/Munich?

A. Municipal Vision of Culture

1. What are the main thrusts of Aix's/Munich's cultural policy?
2. What role does the Lyric Arts Festival/Oktoberfest play in this strategy?

B. Governance and Partnerships

<u>Relationships with the Festival</u>

3. How are relations between the city and the festival organized?
4. What are the terms of municipal support (financial, logistical, etc.)?
5. How are decisions made regarding the festival?

<u>Institutional Coordination</u>

6. How is municipal action coordinated with other local authorities?
7. Is there any consultation with the metropolitan area, the department, or the region?
8. Who are the other partners involved?

<u>Territorial Integration</u>

9. Is the festival included in any planning documents (PLU, SCOT, etc.)? If so, which ones?
10. Is there a global event strategy in Aix/Munich?
11. How does the festival fit in with other cultural events?

C. Economic and Territorial Impacts

<u>Evaluation of Impacts</u>

12. Does the city conduct economic impact studies of the festival?
13. What indicators do you use to measure the economic impact of this festival or other cultural events?
14. Do you have any quantified data on the impacts?

<u>Benefits for the Territory</u>

15. What do you think are the main benefits of the festival for Aix/Munich?
16. In which economic sectors do you observe the greatest impact?
17. Are there any effects on real estate, retail, restaurants (other)?

<u>Attractiveness and Tourism</u>

18. What contribution does the festival make to tourist attractiveness?
19. Do you have any data on the evolution of tourist numbers?
20. Does the festival influence the city's brand image?

<u>Planning and Infrastructure</u>

21. Has the festival influenced urban planning choices?
22. What facilities have been developed in connection with the festival?
23. Have there been any specific investments? (Theaters, infrastructure, etc.)

D. Cultural and Social Policy

Cultural Democratization

24. What actions are being taken to broaden the festival's audience?
25. How can we reach Aix/Munich residents, particularly those on low incomes?
26. Are there any arts education programs linked to the festival? or others linked to other cultural events?

Local Creative Economy

27. Does the festival stimulate the local creative economy?
28. Has there been a knock-on effect on other cultural stakeholders?
29. Have you observed a development of creative professions?

Social Cohesion

30. Does the festival contribute to social cohesion in Aix-en-Provence?
31. Are there any tensions or criticisms from certain residents?
32. How do you manage potential negative effects (gentrification, nuisances, etc.)?

E. Challenges and Prospects

Difficulties and Limitations

33. What are the main challenges in managing the festival (within the department/city hall, and potentially for the festival itself)?
34. Are there any limits to the festival's development?
35. How did you manage the COVID crisis?

Desired developments

36. What developments would you like to see for the festival and the city?
37. Are there any development projects underway?
38. How can the festival's territorial impact be optimized?

Recommendations

39. What advice would you give to other departments/regions?
40. What are the key success factors for a festival and a cultural event?
41. How can the territorial integration of cultural events be improved?

Appendix C – Frame of the Survey

International Festivals Questionnaire

As part of academic research on the economic impact of international festivals, I need to gather your opinion and experience as a citizen, visitor, and/or professional.
Your answers will help to better understand how festivals contribute to the development of regions and their activities.
This questionnaire is anonymous and will only take a few minutes of your time.
Thank you very much in advance for your participation!

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH FESTIVALS

Some definitions:
Cultural event = Temporary event presenting artistic or heritage activities to promote cultural expression to a targeted audience
(International) festival = A recurring cultural event organized around an artistic theme, bringing together various events (shows, exhibitions, meetings) to promote cultural dissemination and regional dynamics. It may have an international dimension through the presence of foreign artists, an audience from abroad, recognition beyond borders, or international partnerships.

1. How often do you attend cultural events?
   - Very regularly (more than once a month)
   - Regularly (several times a year)
   - Occasionally (once or twice a year)
   - Rarely (less than once a year)
   - Never
2. Have you ever been to any international festivals?
   - Yes, several different festivals
   - Yes, the same festival several times
   - Yes, one festival once
   - No, but I would like to
   - No, but I would like to
3. What types of international festivals have you attended?
   - Classical music/opera/lyric art festivals
   - Popular/rock/electronic music festivals
   - Film festivals
   - Theater/performing arts festivals
   - Multidisciplinary/street art festivals
   - Dance festivals
   - None
4. Think about the last international festival you attended, or the next one you would like to go to. What type of festival is it?
   - Classical music/opera/lyric art festival
   - Popular music/rock/electronic music festival
   - Film festival
   - Theater/performing arts festival
   - Gastronomic/local traditions festival
   - Multidisciplinary/street arts festival

5. Please specify the name and location if you know it.
6. On what occasion have you attended or would you like to attend?
   - Personal cultural outing
   - Family outing
   - Outing with friends
   - Tourist trip including the festival
   - Business trip
   - Invitation/gift
   - I live locally
7. Did you sleep or do you plan to sleep at the festival site or nearby during the festival?
   - Yes, in the festival town
   - Yes, in a tent at the festival
   - Yes, within a 50km radius
   - No, I live in the area
   - No, I will be traveling back and forth during the day
8. If you have stayed or plan to stay there, how many nights?
   - 1 night
   - 2-3 nights
   - 4-7 nights
   - More than a week
   - I did not stay there
9. Estimate your total expenses per person for one day at this festival:

	Less than 10€	11-50€	51-150€	151-300€	+300€
Entrance ticket	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Accommodation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Food & drink	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Shopping/souvenirs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

PERCEPTION OF THE ECONOMUC IMPACT OF FESTIVALS

10. In your opinion, do international festivals have a positive economic impact on their host regions? (1 = Yes very important; 6 = Rather negative impact)
11. In which sector do you think the positive economic impact of festivals is greatest? (Rank from 1 = most important to 7 = least important)
    - Hotels/Accommodation
    - Restaurant/Bars
    - Shopping
    - Transportation (taxis, rentals, etc)
    - Cultural/Entertainment Services
    - Other Services (hairdressing, wellness, etc)
    - Temporary/Seasonal Employment
12. Have you ever noticed economic changes in a city related to a major festival. (3 options max)
    - Visible increase in the number of visitors
    - Opening of new shops/restaurants
    - Improvement of infrastructure (transport, facilities)
    - Increase in prices (housing, restaurants, etc.)
    - More temporary job offers

- Development of local cultural offerings
- Traffic jams/transportation congestion
- Increased activity in the city
- No noticeable changes
- I have not had the opportunity to observe

13. Do you think that international festivals:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	I don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Create sustainable local jobs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Attract investment to the region	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Increase the cost of living locally	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Improve the city's brand image	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mainly benefit visitors from outside the area	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Really benefit local residents	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Promote the emergence of new local cultural projects	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

14. In your opinion, what are the 3 main economic benefits of international festivals?
    - Creation of direct and indirect jobs
    - Enhanced tourist appeal
    - International influence of the region
    - Development of the local creative economy
    - Commercial benefits (hotels, restaurants, shops)
    - Economic stimulation of the region (boosting local commercial activity)
    - Training and skills development (practical and human)
    - Investment in infrastructure
    - Improvement of the permanent cultural offering
15. In your opinion, what are the three main economic risks or disadvantages?
    - Increase in prices/cost of living
    - Gentrification and exclusion of local populations
    - Overcrowding and infrastructure saturation
    - Various nuisances (noise, traffic, waste)
    - Excessive economic dependence on the event
    - Unfair competition with the usual local economy
    - Benefits concentrated over too short a period
    - Profits captured by external actors
    - Negative environmental impact
    - No major disadvantages

COMPARAISON BETWEEN TYPES OF FESTIVALS

16. Which of the following international festivals are you familiar with?
    - Festival of Lyrical Art of Aix en Provence
    - Oktoberfest (Munich)
    - Festival de Cannes

- Festival d'Avignon
- Edinburgh Festival
- Coachella
- Tomorrowland
- Salzburg Festival
- Hellfest (Clisson)
- Interceltic Festival of Lorient
- Other

17. In your opinion, what type of festival generally has the greatest economic impact on its region?
    - Classical music/opera festivals (Aix-en-Provence Festival; BBC Proms UK)
    - Popular/electronic music festivals (Tomorrowland; Coachella)
    - Film festivals (Cannes Film Festival; Sundance Film Festival)
    - Food/traditional festivals (International Agricultural Show; Oktoberfest)
    - Multidisciplinary festivals (Edinburgh Festival Fringe; Avignon Festival)
    - All are equal, it depends on other factors
    - I don't know
18. If you were to advise local authorities (town hall, county, region), what criterion would you consider most important for maximizing the economic impact of a festival?
    - The international reputation of the event
    - The number of visitors attracted
    - The purchasing power of the target audience
    - The average length of stay of visitors
    - Consistency with the identity of the region
    - The quality of public-private partnerships
    - Local roots and community involvement
19. Do you know of any examples of cities that have achieved successful economic and overall development thanks to one or more festivals? If so, which ones?
20. Conversely, do you know of any negative examples of festivals that have created economic or social problems?
21. Who do you think should bear the main responsibility for financing major international festivals?
    - Private organizers/associations exclusively
    - Mainly organizers with limited public support
    - A balanced public-private partnership (50/50)
    - Mainly the department with private participation
    - Entirely public authorities
    - I don't know
22. How should local regions support international festivals? (1 = most important, 7 = least important)
    - Direct subsidies in euros
    - Free provision of equipment/venues
    - Logistical support (security, roads, communication)
    - Investment in permanent infrastructure
    - Administrative and regulatory facilitation
    - Tourism promotion and regional marketing
    - Training and local employment
23. Do you think international festivals should be more integrated into local economic development strategies?
    - Yes, much more (they are underutilized)

- Yes, a little more
- It's well balanced
- No, they are already too privileged
- No, we need to focus on other priorities
- I don't know

24. In your opinion, do international festivals contribute to the long-term economic development of regions?
- Yes, absolutely, if they are well managed.
- Yes, but only as a complement to other measures.
- Partially, as the effects are limited in time.
- No, they create a dangerous dependency.
- No, the benefits are overestimated.
- I don't know

25. What conditions do you think are essential for a festival to have a positive and lasting economic impact? (1 = most important, 8 = least important)
- Artistic quality and international renown
- Strong local roots and community involvement
- Diversity and accessibility of audiences
- Balanced partnerships and transparent governance
- Innovation and adaptation to change
- Long-term strategic vision for the region
- Respect for the environment and sustainable development
- Regular measurement and evaluation of impact

SPECIFIC CASES AND PERSPECTIVES

26. Focus on the Festival of Lyrical Art of Aix-en-Provence:
- I know it well and have been there
- I know it and would like to go there
- I've heard of it but don't know much about it
- I don't know it at all

27. If you are familiar with it, what image do you have of it?
- A prestigious festival that contributes to the region's reputation
- An elitist event that is not very accessible to the general public
- A good balance between artistic quality and openness
- I don't have a specific opinion
- I am not familiar with it

28. Focus on the Oktoberfest of Munich
- I know it well and have been there
- I know it and would like to go there
- I've heard of it but don't know much about it
- I don't know it at all

29. If you know it, what economic image do you have of it?
- A perfect model for an economically successful festival
- A highly profitable event, but with limited impact beyond the period itself
- Commercially successful, but with potential for negative consequences (alcohol, mass tourism)
- I don't have a specific opinion
- I am not familiar with it

30. Between the two festivals mentioned above (Festival d'Aix and Oktoberfest), which do you think is more economically beneficial for its region?
- Aix Festival

- Oktoberfest
- The two are complementary depending on the regional context.
- Difficult to compare, too different.
- I don't know enough about either to judge.

31. How do you see international festivals evolving over the next 10 years?
    - More numerous and diverse
    - More sustainable and eco-friendly
    - More digital/hybrid (face-to-face + digital)
    - More socially and financially accessible
    - More concentrated in large cities
    - More spread out across all regions
    - More integrated into regional strategies
    - Increased competition between regions
    - In decline due to digital entertainment
    - I don't know
32. Would you personally be in favor of your department investing more in attracting or creating an international festival?
    - Yes, absolutely
    - Yes, if the economic benefits are proven
    - Yes, but in addition to other priorities
    - Probably not, there are other urgent matters
    - No, that is not the role of the public sector
    - I don't know/It depends on the context

OPEN COMMENTS

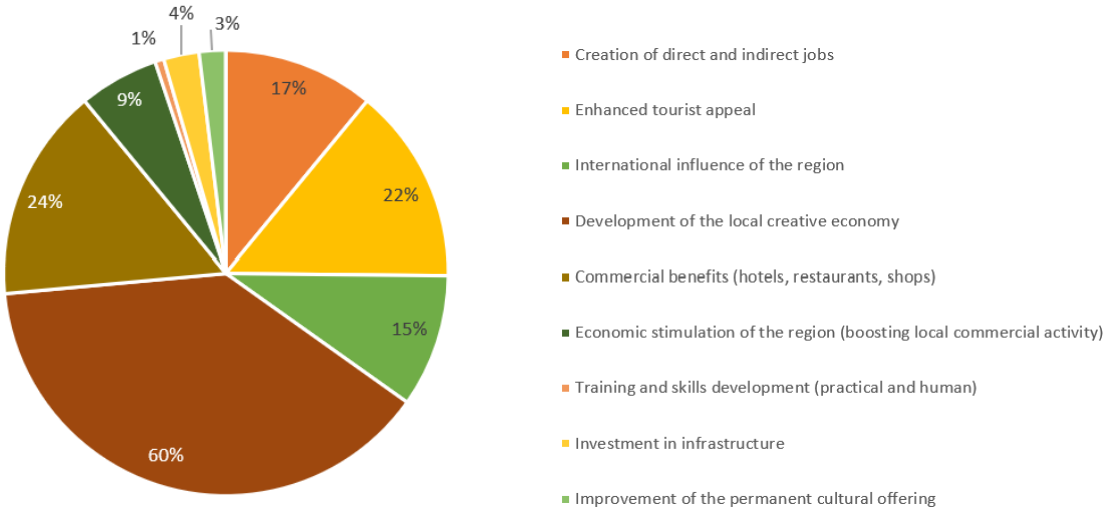
33. Do you know of any other international festivals that deserve to be studied for their economic impact?
34. Do you have any comments, suggestions, or specific experiences to share regarding the economic impact of festivals on local areas?

ABOUT YOU

35. What gender do you identify as?
36. Which age group do you fall into?
    - 18-25
    - 26-35
    - 36-45
    - 46-55
    - More than 56 years old
37. Where do you live?
38. What is your professional situation?
39. Do you work or have ever worked in the following sectors?
    - Culture/Performing arts
    - Tourism/Hospitality/Catering
    - Local government
    - Communication/Media
    - Commerce
    - Events
    - None of these sectors

Appendix D – Main economic benefits of international festivals

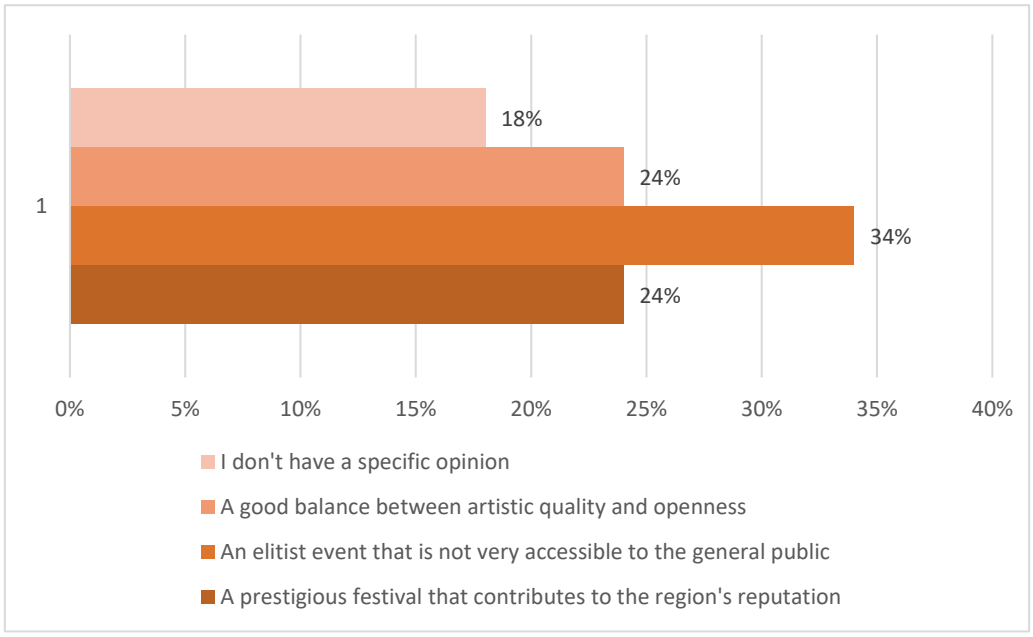
14. In your opinion, what are the three main economic benefits of international festivals?



Source: Own elaboration

Appendix E – Aix Festival Public's Image

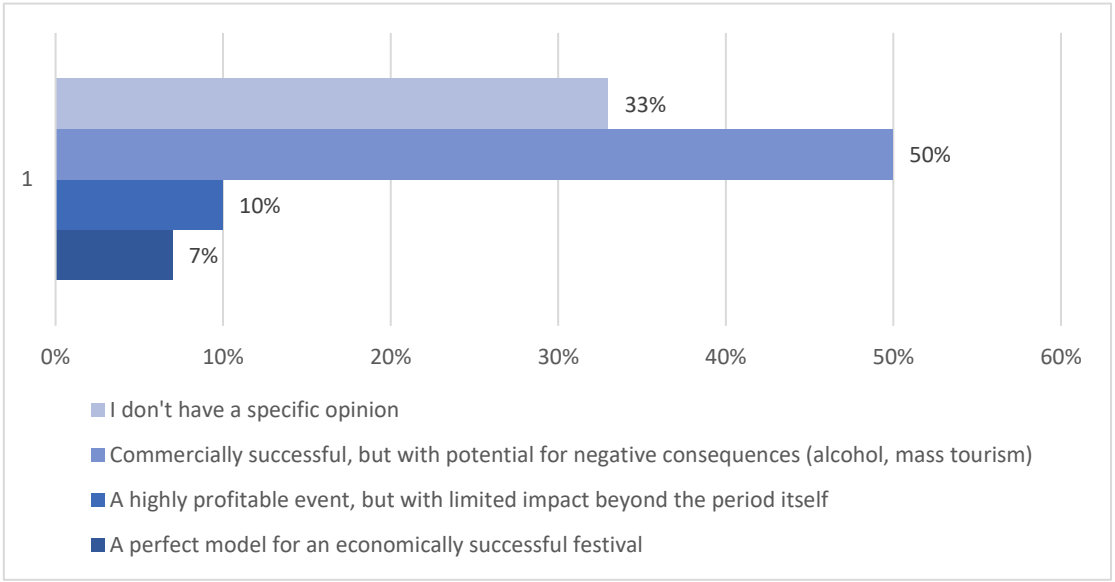
27. What image do you have of the Aix Festival?



Source: Own elaboration

Appendix F – Oktoberfest Public's Image

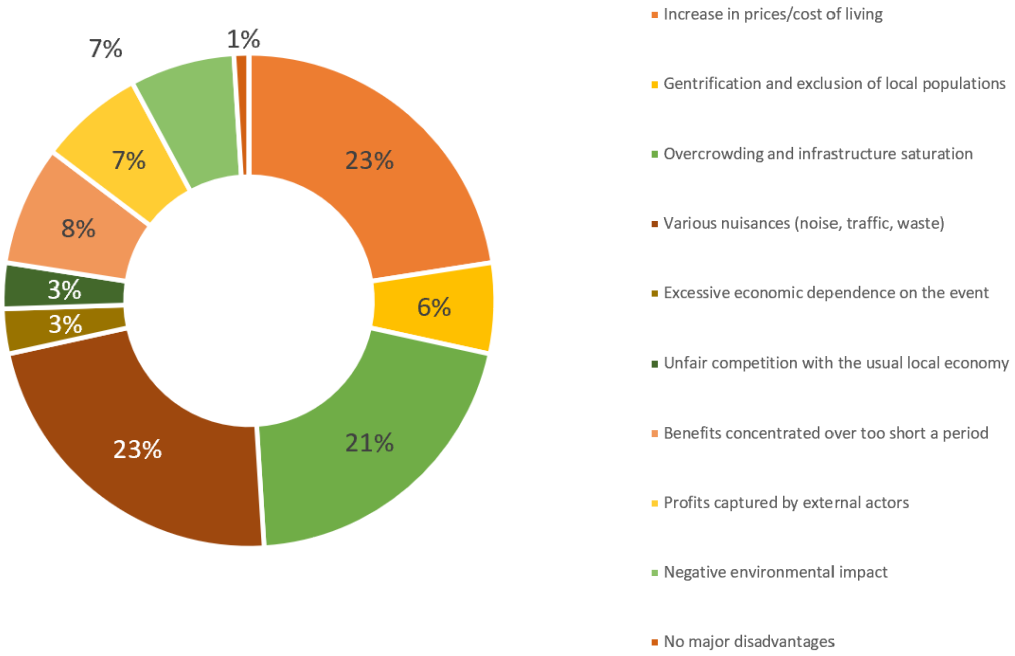
29. What image do you have of the Oktoberfest?



Source: Own elaboration

Appendix G – Main Economic Risks of International Festivals

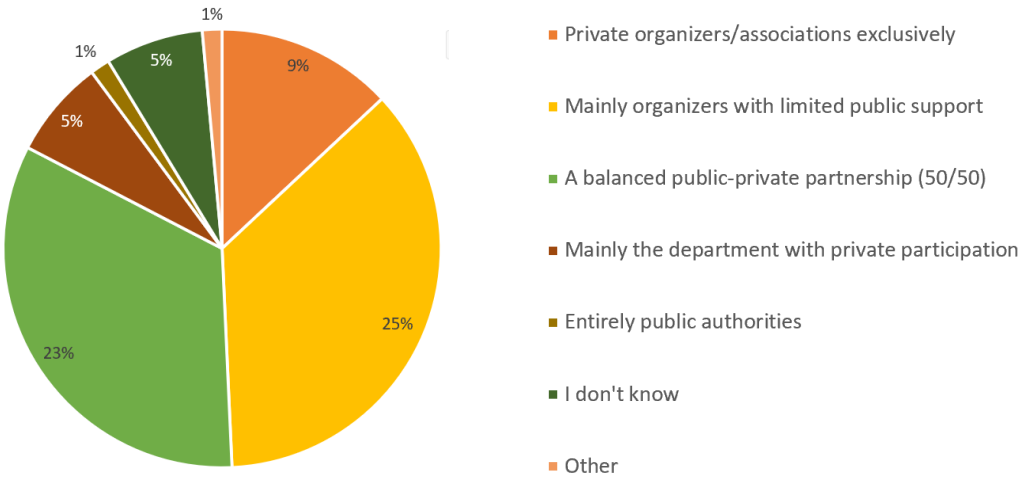
15. In your opinion, what are the three main economic risks or disadvantages of international festivals?



Source: Own elaboration

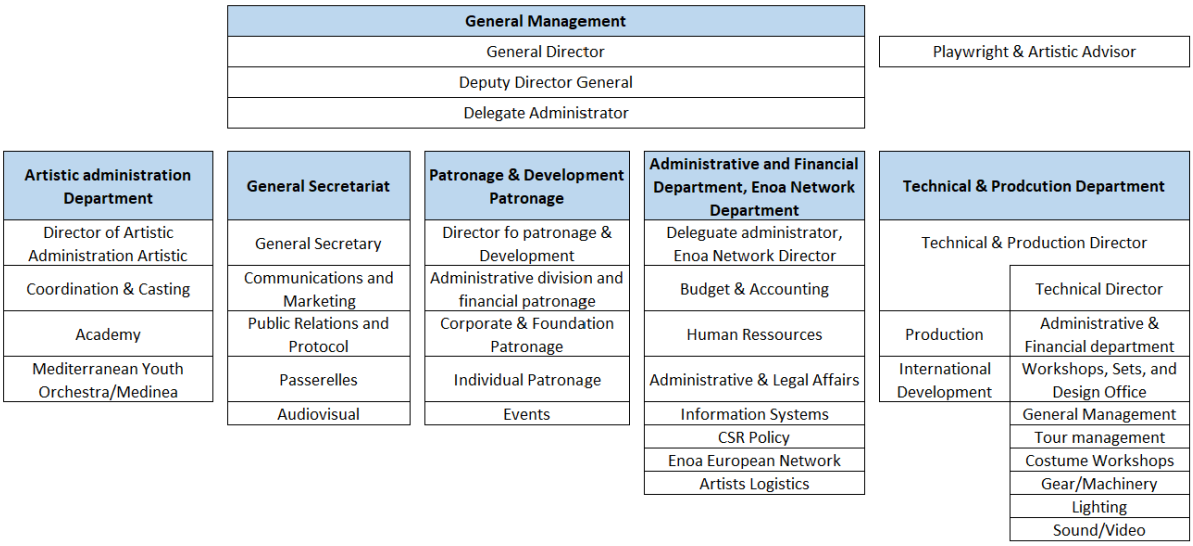
Appendix H – Responsibility for Financing International Festivals

21. Who do you think should bear the main responsibility for financing major international festivals?



Source: Own elaboration

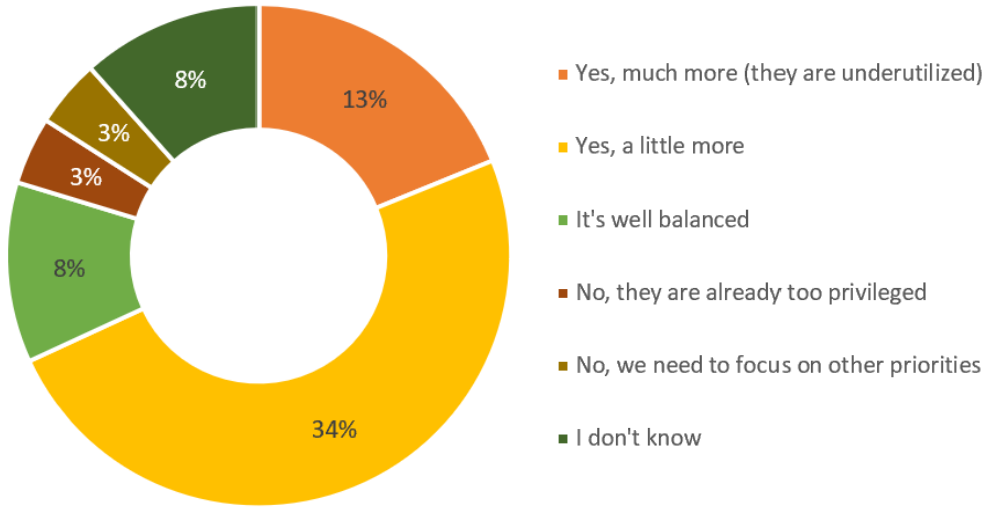
Appendix I – Simplified Organizational Chart of the Aix Festival



Source: Own elaboration

Appendix J – Integration of Festivals into Local Economic Development Strategies

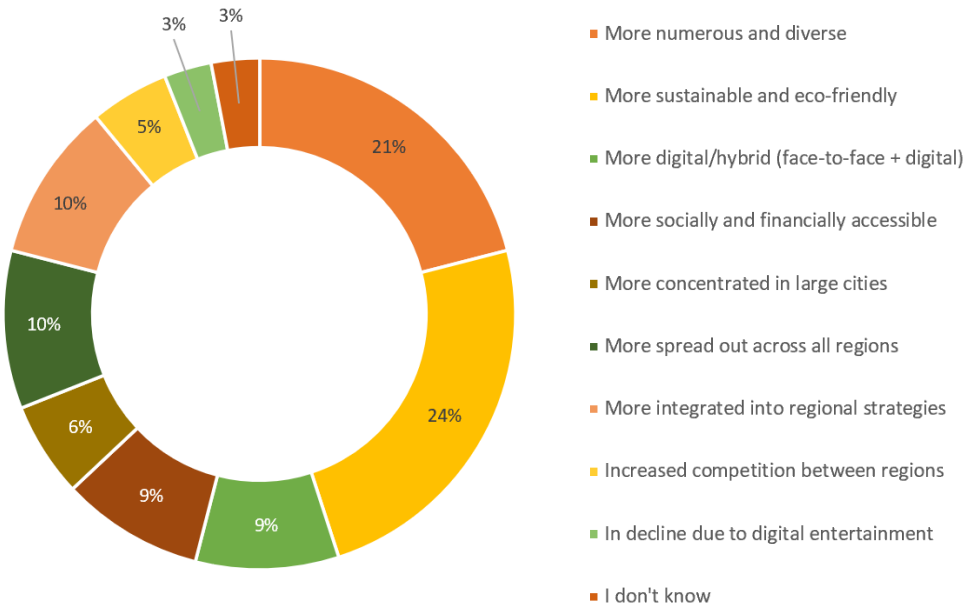
Q.23 Do you think international festivals should be more integrated into local economic development strategies?



Source: Own elaboration

Appendix K – Future Evolution of International Festivals

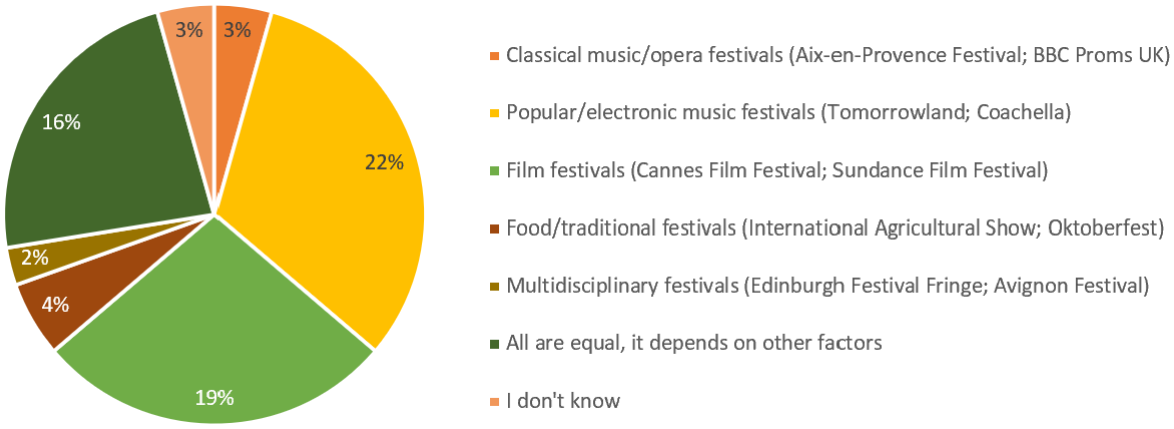
30. How do you see international festivals evolving over the next 10 years?



Source: Own elaboration

Appendix L – Festivals with the Greatest Economic Impact

17. In your opinion, what type of festival generally has the greatest economic impact on its region?



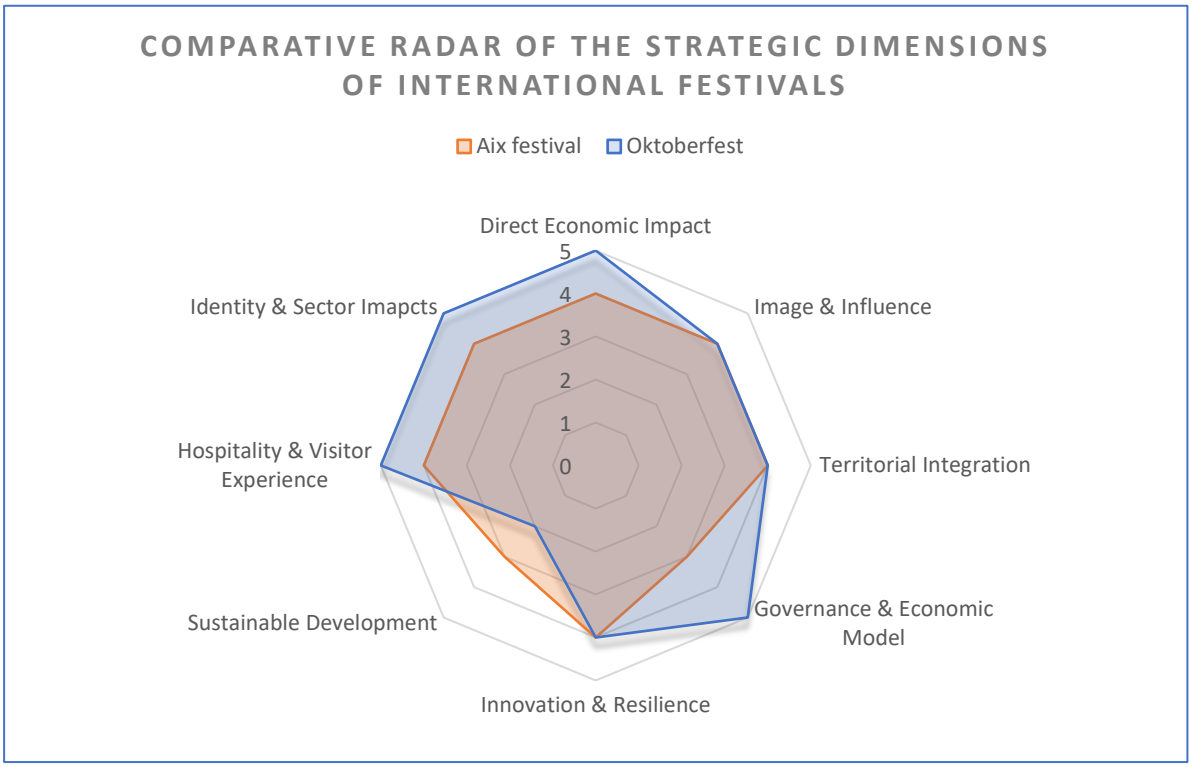
Source: Own elaboration

Appendix M – Comparison Table of the Festivals Impacts

	Analysis Dimensions	Festival of Aix-en-Provence	Munich Oktoberfest	Convergences (C) /Divergences (D)
General info	**Nature of the event**	Elite cultural festival, lyrical arts and contemporary creation	Mass popular festival, traditional Bavarian folklore	D: opporsite approaches (culture vs entertainment)
	Attendance	70 000	6 million	D: qualitative vs quantitative model
	International audience	20% foreigners	20% foreigners	C: same proportion
Proposition 1	**Revenue generated**	€28M (2023)	€1.25B (2023)	D: different scales but confirmed impact
	Visitors spending/day	€50-200	€30-100	C: substantial unit spending
	Job creation	60 permanent → 1200	13 000 temporary	C: massive increase in employment
	Economic model	50% self financing, 25% public	Mostly private	D: public dependance vs. private autonomy
Proposition 2	**Communication strategy**	Multi-channel, TV/radio partnerships, free initiatives	Global coverage, massive social media	C: confirmed international reach
	Image Conveyed	Prestigious, cultural, can be seen as elitist	Conviviality, risk of folkloric clichés	D: prestige vs accessibility
	Loyalty	Loyal but limited audience, 30% return outside of the festival	Quick loyalty, 70% plan to return separately	C: confirmed tourism attraction effect
	Extended stay	3-5 days (cultural discovery)	2-3 days (festive experience)	C: longer stays
Proposition 3	**Governance structure**	Association of the law 1901	Municipal and private operator management	D: association vs municipal governance
	Integration of local policies	Regional cultural strategy, targeted subsidies	Pillar of the municipal tourism strategy	C: strong integration into local strategies
	Infrastructure investments	Heritage sites	Large-scale temporary + permanent site	C: public investment
	Stimulation of creative industries	Cultural cluster, training, co-productions	Brewing ecosystem, seasonal jobs, merchandising	C: bossting related sectors
Proposition 4	**Target audience type**	International, high purchasing power	Diversified, average spending, large	D: differentiated economic models
	Financal resilience	Fragility, dependance on subsidies	Stability, shared public/private risks	D: vulnerability vs robustness
	Adaptability	Digital innovation, education initiatives, sustainability	Complementary tourism products, year-round development	C: confirmed adaptability
	Structural benefits	3% local artistic jobs, international training	3% local GDP, brewing industry	C: structural economic impact

Source: Own elaboration

Appendix N – Radar Graph of the Strategic Dimensions of International Festivals



Explanation table of Radar Graph

Areas of analysis	Aix festival	Oktoberfest
Direct Economic Impact	**4/5** - Significant impact but limited in volume	**5/5** - Massive impact, milions of visitors and record consuption
Image & Influence	**4/5** - Strong international reputation in opera, elitist image	**4/4** - Global notoriety, symbol of German culture but various nuisances
Territorial Integration	**4/5** - Good local cooperation, strong cultural roots	**4/5** - Strong territorial roots, especially logistical and economic
Governance & Economic Model	**3/5** - Dependance on subsidies and patronage, fragile model	**5/5** - Solid self-financing, very little reliance on subsidies
Innovation & Resilience	**4/5** - Digital and artistic innovation, post-Covid resilience	**4/5** - High organizational resilience, little artistic innovation
Sustainable Development	**3/5** - Sustainability efforts underway, but still limited	**2/5** - High ecological footprint, low sustainability commitment
Hospitality & Visitor Experience	**4/5** - High-end, polished experience, small audience	**5/5** - massive, friendly hospitality, unique immersive experience
Identity & Sector Imapcts	**4/5** - Strong lyrical identity, sectoral impact on the music industry	**5/5** - Global identity, major impact on local industries

Source: Own elaboration