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## Evaluating the on-going and ex-post impacts on Braga (Portugal) from hosting the 2012's European Youth Capital

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**Abstract:** The primary objective of this paper was to assess the impacts of Braga (Portugal) being the 2012's European Youth Capital (EYC 2012), as perceived by the residents of the hosting city of Braga and the EYC 2012 event participants. To achieve these goals, two surveys were conducted: an on-going survey (2012 – 110 respondents) and an ex-post survey (2013 - 73 respondents). The comparative analysis enabled us to draw the conclusion that there was a more positive perception of the impacts of the hosting of the EYC 2012 in the ex-post period than in the on-going one. The best indicator of the perception of the effects of the hosting of the mega-event is, surely, the claim commonly expressed by the respondents that the city should apply for hosting similar future mega-events.

**Keywords:** Perceived impacts, quantitative approach, residents and participants' perceptions, mega-events, European Youth Capital 2012.

### Evaluación de los impactos *on-going* y *ex-post* en Braga (Portugal) como sede de la Capital Europea de la Juventud 2012

**Resumen:** El objetivo principal de este trabajo fue evaluar los impactos percibidos por los residentes y participantes de alojamiento por Braga (Portugal) de la Capital Europea de la Juventud 2012 (CEJ 2012). Para lograr estos objetivos, se realizaron dos encuestas: una durante el evento (2012 - 110 encuestados) y otra encuesta ex post (2013 - 73 encuestados). El análisis comparativo nos permitió llegar a la conclusión de que había una percepción más positiva de los impactos de la celebración de la EJC 2012 en el período ex post que durante el año del evento. El mejor indicador de la percepción de los efectos del alojamiento del mega-evento es, seguramente, la afirmación comúnmente expresada por los encuestados de que la ciudad debe concurrir para albergar similares mega-eventos en el futuro.

**Palabras Clave:** impactos percibidos, percepción de los residentes y de los participantes, mega eventos, Capital Europea de la Juventud 2012.

### 1. Introduction

On an annual basis since 2009, the European Youth Forum has provided a European city with the title of European Youth Capital (EYC). According to its defined aims ([www.youthforum.org/](http://www.youthforum.org/)-accessed the 29/05/2013), among other things, this cultural mega-event should contribute to: increase the active participation of youth in society; make the political elites aware of the achievement of public initiatives

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for valuing youth culture; adopt new approaches which promote youth entrepreneurship; promote multiculturalism; integrate ethnic minorities; and cooperate with international youth structures. At the same time, the organization of an EYC must assume the protection and promotion of the regional culture.

An EYC designation lasts for one year. The designation results in both positive and negative impacts for the city. These impacts are mainly of economic, sociocultural, and environmental nature.

In 2009, the municipality of Rotterdam (Netherlands) was appointed as the first EYC. Appointments that

followed included: Turin (Italy) in 2010, Antwerp (Belgium) in 2011 and Braga (Portugal) in 2012 ([www.youthforum.org/](http://www.youthforum.org/)- accessed the 29/05/2013).

The number of cities interested in hosting large and mega-events, like an EYC, has been increasing over the last few years. The main reasons for this increase in interest is the need to compete for public and private investments, notoriety, international respectability, and the influx of visitors and new residents (Correia, 2010).

Keeping in mind the motivations of the hosting cities and the nature of the EYCs, we undertook this research according to the following objectives:

- i) to determine respondents' perceived impacts on the city from hosting the EYC 2012;
- ii) to collect the opinion of the Braga residents and participants on the shows and other performances established as a result of the EYC and its public promotion;
- iii) to identify the main channels used by residents and participants to accede to the EYC 2012 program and its schedule.

It is important to highlight that this exploratory research is, so far, the only one that has envisaged analysing the perceived impacts of the EYC by taking an on-going and ex-post approach. Addressing only the on-going period, using a larger data set, a research on the issue was performed by Remoaldo, Duque and Cadima Ribeiro (2016).

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: in the second section, the concept of a mega-event is presented and discussed and some general information is produced on the genesis of and motivations behind the creation of the European Youth Capital; the third section refers to the impacts from hosting a mega-event; in the fourth section, we present the methods used in the investigation; the fifth and sixth sections presents the results of the empirical study and its discussion; the paper ends with the conclusions, where we produce a few policy recommendations and identify the main limitations of the research conducted.

## 2. Mega-events and EYCs

Roche (1994, 2000) and Hiller (1999) define mega-event (cultural, sporting, technical-scientific, commercial) as a large-scale event of a short-duration (less than one year), primarily conducted in urban areas. It has long-term consequences for host cities, particularly in terms of attracting tourists and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Many authors have emphasized its large-scale nature (Ritchie, 1984; Bramwell, 1997; Hall, 1997; Jago and Shaw, 1998; Greene, 2003; Essex and Chalkey, 2004; Roberts, 2004; Busa, 2010; Varrel and Kennedy, 2011; Barghchi et al., 2012; Liu, 2012; Sadd and Jones, 2012), its dramatic character, mass appeal and international significance (Jago and Shaw, 1998; Roche, 2000; Varrel and Kennedy, 2011; Liu, 2012).

A lot of resources (human and financial) are required for staging a mega-event. As such, hosting a mega-event has long-term impacts on the host communities (Ritchie, 1984; Roche, 1994; Roche, 2000; Ritchie, Shipway and Cleeve, 2009; Gursoy et al., 2011; Liu, 2012). Mills and Rosentraub (2012) emphasized the extensive levels of participation and media coverage a mega-event produces. These events also require public investments in event equipment and general infrastructure.

Hosting a mega-event also provides a location with the opportunity for large external visibility. Taking profit from this enlarged visibility, the city, or territory, can be promoted as a welcoming location (Deccio and Baloglu, 2002; Kim, Gursoy and Lee, 2006; Strauf and Schere, 2010). Even if the implementation of a mega-event is limited in time, its preparation goes on for several years. Its future impacts also last several years. These impacts involve induced costs or benefits, including tourism (Santos, 2002).

In what regards how the impacts are perceived by residents, the empirical literature has generally found a difference in the way they are approached along the ex-ant, on-going and ex-post periods (Kim et al., 2006; Ritchie et al., 2009; Gursoy et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2013). Normally, the positive impacts tend to be perceived as lower and the negatives effects as larger than expected in the post-event evaluation vis-à-vis the ex-ant and on-going ones. This has to do with the fact that, in the post event, the respondents are able to make a more accurate evaluation, that is, less passionate and endowed with large information, on the real impacts of the events hosted (Kim et al., 2006; Ritchie et al., 2009; Gursoy et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2013).

People identify with different types of mega-events. Some identify with those of a cultural nature (e.g., European Capital of Youth, European Capital of Culture, Expo), while others identify with a sports (e.g., Olympics, World Cups, Pan American Games), technical-scientific (e.g., Eco Conference-92), commercial (e.g., World exhibitions) and/or religious event (e.g., Reception to the Pope).

The degree of external visibility and the associated reputation of the various mega-events varies significantly. The EYC, for example, is a quite recent initiative of the European Union. It has neither the projection nor the reputation of the Olympics or the World Cup. Indeed, the longevity, the number of resources committed and the geographical incidence of the mega-events counts. These factors relate closely to their degree of acceptance (attention paid) by the media, businesses and people. For example, while the Expo emerged in the nineteenth century and has been held on several continents, the EYC only emerged in 2009. As such, the EYC has been endowed with a small budget and aims to attract the youth segment of the population. In addition, it is only promoted on a continent (Europe) basis.

Portugal has welcomed the European Capital of Culture on three occasions (Lisbon, 1994; Oporto, 2001; Guimarães, 2012). It also welcomed exhibition/commercial mega-events, such as the Expo in 1998 (Lisbon), the finals of the European Football Championship in 2004, and the EYC in 2012 (Braga).

In 2012 was the fourth time that an EYC was organized in Europe. After the city of Rotterdam (Netherlands), in 2009, which was appointed to host the 1st EYC, Turin (Italy), in 2010, and Antwerp (Belgium), in 2011, where the predecessors of Braga ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org), 2013a).

Why was Rotterdam chosen to host the first EYC? It all began in 2004, when occurred the Declaration of Rotterdam (27 and 28 November 2004) by the European Council, on the eve of the meeting of General Directors for Youth of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Netherlands, the Dutch National Youth Council, the Netherlands Institute of Health and Welfare, and the European Youth Forum ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org), 2013b). The statement then produced asserts that the year 2004 was a crucial year for the redefinition of youth policies and of the role that should be attributed to young Europeans ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org), 2013b).

The declaration resulted in the European Youth Pact, with the emphasis put on youth employment. Following this Pact, the European Council has been designated to take decisions on the issue that could contribute to the reduction of unemployment ([www.juventude.gov.pt](http://www.juventude.gov.pt), 2013). Thus, the European Council did not want the European Youth Pact to be a new method/procedure but, rather, a new tool/instrument for the development of new ideas on the fields of employment, social protection and inclusion, education, and volunteering. This gave rise to the programs "Youth in Action" and the "European Youth Capital", in 2007 and in 2009, respectively ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org), 2013b).

As claimed by the European Youth Forum ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org), 2013b), the program "Youth in Action 2007-2013" gave a substantive contribution to improving the quality of life of the young Europeans.

The method of application and selection of the European Youth Capital is similar to the one of other mega-events. In a 1st stage, the municipality council submit its application to the European Youth Forum, containing the following parameters: i) description of the objectives and ambitions to achieve during EYC; ii) budgeting of planned expenditures; iii) list of the methods that will be used to involve the younger population. In the 2nd phase, a jury, which is composed of representatives of the civil society, media, academic and governmental institutions choose the best proposal among those that were submitted to the competition ([www.youthforum.org](http://www.youthforum.org), 2013a).

### 3. Impacts of an EYC

Early studies on mega-events refer to the nineteenth century and focused only on the historical evolution of the Great World Exhibitions (Steffani, 2011). Only since the 1980s were published studies about the economic impacts of the Olympic Games and other sporting mega-events (Hiller, 1999; Fourie and Santana-Gallego, 2010; Steffani, 2011; Hall, 2012).

In more recent years, studies on mega-events from economics and other areas of knowledge have been published. An example is a study on the analysis of the sociological impacts (Hiller, 1999; Richards and Wilson, 2004; Fourie and Santana-Gallego, 2010; Steffani, 2011). Geographers have also been producing these kind of studies. Getz (2008, 2012) has been a main driver over the last twenty-five years.

Within the positive impacts of economic nature, the most underlined have been the increase in tourism revenues, the decline in the unemployment rate and the investment in various types of infrastructure (Matheson, 2004, 2006). Even so, one cannot forget the negative economic impacts, especially the increase in the prices of goods and services (Matheson, 2004, 2006).

Higher prices of housing, goods and other local services affect, directly and indirectly, residents. Thus, it is perceived by them as burden resulting from hosting a mega-event (Müller, 2011). In the opposite direction, one should count the increase of tourists and their spending on the local economy, contributing, albeit indirectly, to the emergence of new jobs and the increased tax revenue of the host cities (Greene, 2003; Richards, 2010; Müller, 2011).

The impacts of mega-events in host cities include transfer of internal capital, the rise in the prices of catering, hospitality and real state, effects on the projected image, and the enhancement of the expectations of the community at large regarding several aspects of their daily lives (Hiller, 1999; Ritchie, Shipway and Cleeve, 2009). Not all of those expectations will be satisfied, which can cause frustration. In this regard, it is worth underlining that, in many cases, this kind of mega-events emerges as a kind of artificial performance, that is, is not based on the expectations of the residents and they are not listen about, and organizers do not look at the local population as the event main target, either as active participants or attendees (Gursoy and Kendall, 2006).

Most studies published so far have disregarded the sociocultural and environmental impacts of such events (Ritchie and Hudson, 2009; Raj et al., 2013; Remoaldo et al., 2015), focusing, above all, as highlighted previously by Kim and Petrick (2005), on the economic aspects. The difficulty in quantifying and measuring these aspects is one of the reasons behind this fact (Santos, 2000; Kim and Petrick, 2005; Remoaldo et al., 2015).

Greater pride and self-esteem by the host community, patriotism, the increase in the quality of local life and the increase in the social and cultural interaction levels can be advanced as the main positive impacts of a sociocultural nature, namely, if the community is called to participate in it. In contrast, increased insecurity and crime, as well as the increase in conflict between visitors and residents can be considered relevant sociocultural negative impacts.

In the last decades, several studies on the impacts of various mega-events have been published, resulting in a more complete and accurate reading of their influence. The focus of the empirical research on mega-events conducted until the eighties of the past century, by scientific area, show us that History was the leading science, beginning in 1880 investigating the historical evolution of Expos (Steffani, 2011). In the 1980 decade, Geography and Economy continued this kind of investigation. The first one was mostly concerned with several type of impacts of Festivals and European Capitals of Culture and the second one with the economic impacts of Olympic Games, World Football Championships and other major sporting events. Since the late nineties, together with those scientific disciplines, Urban Policy, Sociology, Urban Studies and Cultural Studies have continued this research (Steffani, 2011).

Keeping in mind the relative absence of research on the European Youth Capitals until the present time and the novelty of the event, we decided to investigate the impacts perceived by the residents of the EYC 2012, which was hosted by the city of Braga, Portugal.

As mentioned in the Introduction, a research on the issue was performed by Remoaldo, Duque and Cadima Ribeiro (2016), addressing only the on-going period. The main impacts of the hosting by Braga of the EYC, as perceived by the survey respondents, were found to be: the enhancement of the social cohesion among residents; the economic profit experienced by the retail and services sectors; and the equipment built in the aim of the implementation of the EYC, even if being residual (Remoaldo, Duque

and Cadima Ribeiro, 2016). Additionally, taking the respondents as a whole, that is, residents and visitors, they both have expressed the view that the hosting of the EYC did not show to be a misuse of public money, having enhanced the cultural environment of Braga, even if the hosting of the EYC did not attract a large amount of visitors to the city (Remoaldo, Duque and Cadima Ribeiro, 2016).

#### 4. Methods

The method of collecting the information for the purpose of capturing the residents and event participants' perceived impacts of the EYC 2012 consisted of two surveys, using two random samples.

The structure and questions in both questionnaires were similar. The largest difference was between the time of their application: the first one was applied on the on-going period of the EYC 2012 (December 22, 2012); and the second was applied on the ex-post period (1, 2 and June 5, 2013). In a matter of fact, the first survey was conducted in a specific day: the one of the official closure of the mega-event.

With the implementation of the first survey to 110 participants of the EYC 2012, we intended to inquire the respondents' perceptions on the level of participation by them in the shows/performances of the mega-event and the perceived impacts on the city of hosting the EYC 2012 (that is, economic, sociocultural and environmental derived effects). In a second line, we envisaged to know how they got the information about those activities of the EYC 2012 program and what they thought about the program promotion strategy which had been followed.

The main limitation of the samples results from the limited amount of questionnaires fill in that were collected, questioning the statistical consistency of the results attained. The samples have envisaged capturing, both, the perceptions of the residents of Braga on the shows and the general performances of the EYC 2012 and the one of other participants. Even being a quite preliminary and limited approach to the issue, the empirical results gotten allow identifying certain features of the hosting of the mega-event in what regards its impacts, successes, failures and promotion strategy.

As mentioned, the first survey was administered during the closing ceremony of the EYC 2012 (to 110 residents/visitors), which accounted for around 60.000 participants ([www.bragacej2012.com](http://www.bragacej2012.com), 2013; [www.theatrocirco.com](http://www.theatrocirco.com), 2013). The second survey was administered after the EYC 2012, in June of 2013, in the centre of the city of Braga, to 73 residents/visitors.

The structure and issues approached were similar in both surveys, so the results attained could be more easily compared. The questionnaires were divided into two main parts, namely: i) profile of the respondent (i.e., gender, age, education level, employment status and marital status); and ii) the participation on/perception towards the EYC 2012 event. They contained 23 questions, 8 of them being directed to the reasons for visiting Braga and the participation in the 2012 EYC events and 4 questions inquiring about several types of impacts.

A pre-test was performed on 2nd October 2012 to 10 university students at the University of Minho (Braga). From there, we conclude that the survey did not take more than 10 minutes, in average terms, to fill in. A few minor adjustments were made following the results obtained from the pre-test. Namely, a few sentences were rewritten for turning easier to understand.

This research was conducted with the aim of the production of a master's dissertation in Geography. Even so, it took profit from the study on the impacts of the event commissioned to a research team of the University of Minho (Portugal) by the *Bracara Augusta* Foundation, the entity held responsible for organizing the Braga European Capital of Youth 2012 (Cadima Ribeiro et al., 2013). The collaboration, which was obtained, concerns only the on-going period. It materialized in the authorization of using a few of the surveys collected (in this case, the ones directly collected by the master's student, as collaborator of the commissioned research team).

The data obtained was treated using descriptive statistics, complemented by a cluster analysis.

The two samples of the empirical research undertaken have similar socio-demographic characteristics (Table 2). In the on-going and in the ex-post periods, we got more male respondents (above 54%) than female. The remaining socio-demographic variables used in this study show us a more pronounced presence of respondents between 10 and 29 years old (above 60%), having a secondary education (above 34%) and being unemployed (above 45%). Regarding the place of residence, the majority lived in Portugal, most of them in the municipality of Braga (above 70% - Table 1).

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characterization of the respondents of the two samples**

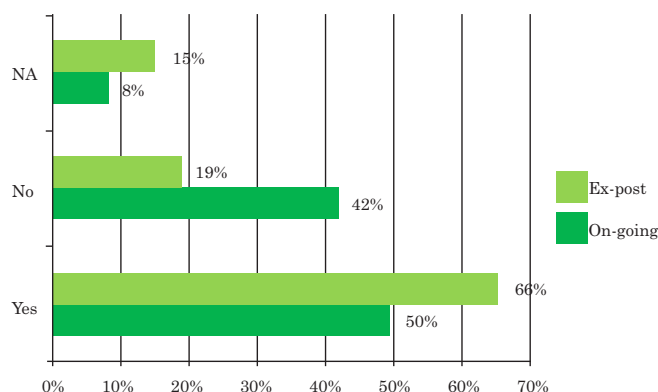
	On-going (N=110)	Ex-post (N=73)
Gender	(%)	
Woman	43.6	45.2
Men	56.4	54.8
Age groups		
10 to 29 years old	62.3	60.3
30 to 49 years old	26.4	21.9
≥ 50 years old	11.3	17.8
Education		
Until 9 years of schooling	18.9	32.8
Secondary education	39.6	34.2
University degree	41.5	32.9
Professional situation		
Student	15.9	8.2
Employee	36.6	32.9
Unemployed	46.7	45.2
Retired	3.7	13.7
Concerning Braga municipality		
Resident	70.9	80.8
Visitor	29.1	19.2

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Opinions on the promotion of the program and participation in the EYC 2012 events

Looking to the answers collected on the questions related to the way the program of the event was disseminated, one can conclude that the majority of respondents said that it had been diffused in the most convenient way (Figure 1). From the results attained, we can conclude that, in the ex-post evaluation, an increase was noticed, in percentage terms, of the respondents who subscribed the dissemination strategy of the EYC 2012 program used (Figure 1). “NA” identifies the percentage of those who did not answer the question raised.

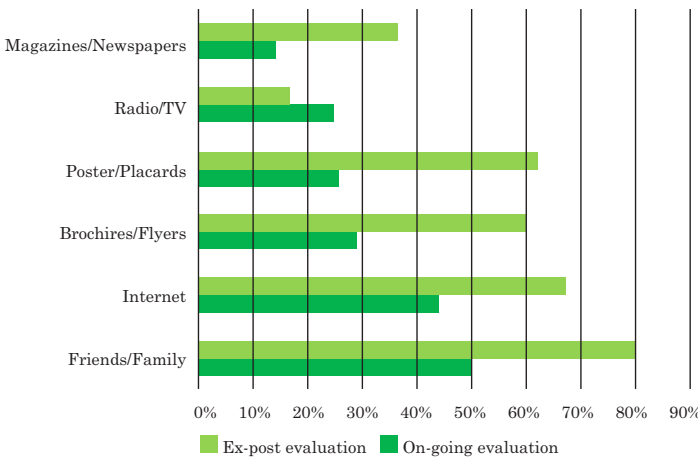
**Figure 1. Answer to the question – The program was released using appropriate channels having in mind the target audience?**





When asked about the channels used to accede to details on the activities and events of the EYC 2012, most respondents mentioned, both in the on-going assessment and in the ex-post one, friends/family (Figure 2). Thus, the personal sharing of information about the events that were to be held within the EYC 2012 proved to be very relevant as a source of its dissemination. By degree of importance, the Internet was the second most preferred channel of access to the schedule of the events of the EYC 2012 (Figure 2), especially in regard to the younger segments (48.3% - on-going evaluation; 58.7% - ex-post evaluation).

**Figure 2. Channels used to gain access to the EYC 2012 program**



This is in line with what was expected in regards the use of the Internet as a preferred channel for disseminating information on cultural activities, promoting events by the cities, and the popularity of the Internet among youth. In what regards the previous EYCs, beginning by Rotterdam EYC 2009, the internet also took a prominent role (www.youthforum.org, 2013a).

It should also be noted that *Facebook* was, by far, the social media channel where there was more intensive and prolonged sharing and viewing of information about the events EYC 2012 (Table 2).

**Table 2. Web channels with the schedule of the EYC 2012 used by the participants**

Web channels	N.	%
Facebook	27	71.1
Official site of the EYC 2012	8	21.1
Other websites ( <i>Correio do Minho</i> , YouTube)	3	7.8

The traditional media were instrumental for respondents of 50 and more years of age (e.g., Brochures/Flyers: 60.7% on-going and 66.7% ex-post; Radio/TV: 66.6% on-going and 66.7% ex-post). This allowed them to stay informed on the various activities carried out under the EYC 2012.

Due to the significant amount of events held as part of the celebrations of the Braga EYC 2012, one of the questions raised was precisely about the number of events they had attended. In the on-going period, the majority of the respondents claimed to have participated in one event, at least. In this regard, one must keep in mind that the survey was applied during the closure ceremony of the mega-event).

In the ex-post period, the majority attended to more than 3 events, but 24.7% did not attend any event (Table 3).



Table 3. Amount of events attended in the aim of the EYC 2012

Number of EYC 2012 events attended	On-going evaluation		Ex-post evaluation	
	Nº	%	Nº	%
1 event	87	79.1	7	9.6
2 to 3 events	10	9.1	23	31.5
More than 3 events	13	11.8	25	34.2
Did not attend any event	-	-	18	24.7
Total	110	100.0	73	100.0

By analysing the events, according to their category, it was observed that some had more participation than others. In fact, musical events, including the *White Night*, because of its predominant musical vocation, were, by far, the most frequented in both evaluations (Table 4). It is well known the attraction exerted by events and music festivals on Portuguese people (e.g., Rock in Rio, NOS Alive, MEO Arena, nightspots). This Portuguese and European culture became more visible in the last ten years. Some of those events are even certified by EFA - European Festivals Association. In contrast, *Pop up* events (small shows performed in the streets and emerging in a way for looking as spontaneous) were the least frequented by respondents (Table 4).

Table 4. Type of event attended

Type of event	On-going evaluation			Ex-post evaluation		
	Nº	%	Ranking	Nº	%	Ranking
Music	55	64.0	1st	45	81.8	2nd
White Night	49	57.0	2nd	48	90.6	1st
Theatre	26	30.2	3rd	6	11,1	7º
Exhibitions	23	26.7	4th	16	29.6	4th
Trade shows	23	26.7	4th	16	29.6	4th
Dance	22	25.6	5th	18	33.3	3rd
Workshop	14	16.3	6th	9	16.7	6th
Cinema	11	12.8	7th	1	1.9	9th
Debates/Conferences	6	7.0	9th	2	3.8	8th
Pop up shows	5	5.8	10th	0	0	10th

From the data (Table 4), we concluded that, although other factors may have influenced the decision of the respondents to participate in the shows/performances, including the level of disclosure that was made of them, their participation varied a lot. As underlined, it mainly depended on the category of the event performed.

5.2. Perception of the impacts of the EYC

In order to obtain the perceptions of the respondents on the impacts of the EYC 2012, we raised four questions. In the present paper, we highlight the most relevant ones. The respondents were approached on advanced statements, asking them to rate their perception on the issue using a five point Likert scale (where 1 represented strong disagreement and 5 complete agreement). Generally speaking, respondents claimed having kept a positive opinion of the impacts of the EYC 2012 (Table 5), both in the on-going sample and in the ex-post sample.

Regarding the positive dimension of the issue by item, the mean calculated attained between 2.6 and 3.3 in the on-going evaluation and between 2.8 and 4 points in the ex-post evaluation. The averages of the statements with negative connotations varied between 2.6 and 3.3 on the on-going evaluation and between 2.3 and 3.6 on the ex-post one (Table 5). The statements which got the highest averages were those related to the eventual hosting by Braga of future mega-events, as well as the added value that the EYC brought to the city (Table 5).

Focusing on the positive impacts as a whole (Table 5), we found that there was no major difference in what concerns the evaluation made by respondents (means of 3.41 and 3.44 for the on-going and ex-post periods, respectively). If we look to the negative impacts, the difference found among the two periods is also not large but, even so, the total average figure shows to be slight smaller in the post-event evaluation (Table 5). This makes sense and is according to what is usually found in the literature (Kim et al., 2006; Ritchie et al., 2009; Gursoy et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2013). In the post event, the respondents are able to make a more accurate evaluation (less passionate and endowed with large information) on the effects of the events hosted.

In this approach to the evaluation of the perceived impacts of the EYC 2012 it is worth keeping in mind, as already said, that the surveys used in both periods were similar but not the same. That explains the differences in statements used, as shown in Table 5. Part of the statements used in the on-going period did not make sense in the ex-post one and vice-versa.

**Table 5. Perception of the respondents on the impacts of the EYC 2012**

Statements with a positive connotation	On-going (Mean)	Ex-post (Mean)	Category
Should the city host future mega-events like the EYC?	3.9	4	Image impact
The EYC added-value to the city of Braga.	3.8	3.9	General impact
With the EYC, Braga has become a more dynamic city in cultural terms.	3.5	3.5	Cultural impact
I enjoyed the program of the EYC a lot. It fulfilled my interests.	3.4	3.4	Programming
The EYC helped integrating minorities and other cultures in our society.	3.4	2.8	Sociocultural impact
The events performed with the aim of the EYC opened new horizons to many young people.	3.3	3.3	Social impact
The main social impacts of the EYC, in the coming years, will be expressed in the enhancement of the international profile of the city of Braga and the increase of the self-esteem of its population.	3.3	-	Social impact/ Image impact
The EYC made possible to me attending events that I otherwise would not be able to participate in.	3.2	2.8	Sociocultural impact
The economic and social impacts of the EYC will still be relevant after 2012.	3.1	-	Socioeconomic impact
The main economic impacts of the EYC in the coming years will express, in terms of turning more dynamics, its trade and services sectors and in terms of job creation.	3	-	Economic impact
The EYC has contributed to the economic enhancement of the city of Braga.	-	3.6	Economic impact
The EYC has contributed to a greater international visibility of Braga.	-	3.7	Image impact
The EYC has contributed to improving my self-esteem.	-	2.8	Social impact
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>3.44</b>	-
Statements with negative connotations	On-going (Mean)	Ex-post (Mean)	Category
The program could have been much more diversified	3.3	3.6	Programming
The program of the EYC and its schedule did not meet my expectations.	3	-	Programming
The event had no major impact on the city of Braga	2.8	2.5	Socioeconomic impact/Cultural impact
The program of the EYC and its schedule did not meet the needs of the youth.	2.7	2.3	Programming
The EYC was a waste of public money.	2.6	2.4	Socioeconomic impact
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>2.72</b>	-

Taking into account the positive opinion of the respondents on the major impacts (taking into account the more common ones identified by the empirical literature, as mentioned before) of hosting the EYC 2012, we believe that the city of Braga should develop strategies to timely prepare applications for hosting new mega-events. In this regard, it is worth to underline, mostly, the statements on the “The EYC added-value to the city of Braga” and the one addressing specifically the issue (Should the city host future mega-events like the EYC?). They, both, got the highest averages rates (Table 5).

### 5.3. Cluster analysis

A cluster analysis is a multivariate analysis technique that groups a set of entities with equal or approximate characteristics in relatively homogeneous groups (Ferreira, 2008). In this case, we have used a cluster analysis to aggregate respondents according their perceptions on the EYC 2012 impacts.

To do that, we followed other studies performed at the international and national levels (e.g., Brida et al., 2010; Vareiro et al., 2013). The empirical research of Vareiro et al. (2013) was centred on the perceptions of the residents of the municipality of Guimarães, Portugal, towards its tourism development, using a single period of analysis. The empirical research performed by Brida et al. (2010) was focused on the perceptions of residents families in the municipality of Folgaria (Italy), using also a single period of analysis.

From that analytical approach, we got three clusters (Table 6) by using a non-hierarchical clustering technique (k-means cluster analysis). It did imply a previous decision about the number of groups to be formed. The decision was based on the average scores of the tourism impact items.

**Table 6 - Perception of impacts of EYC 2012 (Cluster analysis)**

Perceptions of the impacts of EYC 2012	Cluster 1 (Optimists)				Cluster 2 (Neutral)				Cluster 3 (Sceptical)			
	Mean		Σ		Mean		Σ		Mean		Σ	
	On-going	Ex-post	On-going	Ex-post	On-going	Ex-post	On-going	Ex-post	On-going	Ex-post	On-going	Ex-post
The EYC was a waste of public money	3.58	4.70	1.03	0.47	3	3.17	1.32	1.15	1.44	-	0.73	-
The EYC was an asset to the city of Braga	4.46	4.61	0.50	0.50	3.10	3.11	0.74	1.37	1.90	3	0.88	0
The events of the EYC opened new horizons to many young people	3.87	4.04	0.75	0.64	2.20	2.67	0.63	1.24	1.90	1	0.88	0
With the EYC, Braga has become a more dynamic city culturally	4.15	4.61	0.60	0.50	2.10	2.67	0.57	1.33	1.70	1	0.68	0
The EYC helped integrating minorities and other cultures in our society	3.80	3.91	0.58	0.79	2.90	2.17	0.99	1.15	1.90	1	0.88	0

According to the clusters, and in relation to the initial variables (Table 7), we decided to call them the optimists (Cluster 1), the neutral (Cluster 2) and the sceptical (Cluster 3).

Cluster 1 (optimists) is, in both samples, the largest of the clusters (on-going assessment: 69.6%; ex-post evaluation: 50%). That is where there is a more positive opinion of the EYC 2012 impacts and, moreover, the cluster where the average of the ratings of the original variables presents the higher values (Table 7). It is also there (Table 7) where we found the respondents which have expressed the most negative opinion on the management of the public funds made available to carry out the activities of the EYC 2012, even if this was the less important perceived negative effect (see Table 5) (3.58: on-going; 4.70: ex-post). Additionally, in the ex-post period, there was a significant worsening of the perception of the enthusiasts on this issue. Regarding the remaining items, from the first to the second stage of the inquiry, the perceived impacts improved (Table 7).

Unfortunately, the amount of questionnaires collected does not allow us extracting solid conclusions on the dominant socio-demographic traits of each cluster. Even so, looking to the data on this issue of the respondents profile according to the clusters grouping (Table 7), the more advised conclusion is that there is no a remarkable difference among clusters. While in the on-going period, there is a greater presence of men, in the ex-post evaluation one, there is a greater presence of women,

respondents endowed with secondary education and students (Table 7). Even so, as said, once we are dealing with quite small figures, it would be too risky trying to relate this marginal sociodemographic differences with the assessment of the impacts found.

Cluster 2 (neutral) is the second largest cluster, consisting of 15.2% of the respondents on the on-going evaluation, and 39.1% in the ex-post evaluation (Table 7). We decided to call the respondents included in this cluster neutrals, as the average rate of the impacts perceived are below 3.20 values. Comparing the average of all ratings in the two moments, only in relation to “The EYC helped integrating minorities and other cultures in our society” there was a decrease in its average (2.90: on-going; 2.17: ex-post - Table 7). Therefore, in general, in the ex-post period, neutrals were more positive on the impacts perceived than in the on-going period.

Regarding the socio-demographic traits in common to both periods of inquiry, while in the on-going period there was a greater presence of men, respondents with a secondary education and people with a job, in the ex-post evaluation one we found a greater presence of women, of respondents with an academic under-graduation degree or more and students (Table 7). Meanwhile, as mentioned, due to the amount of questionnaires collected we cannot extracting solid conclusions on this.

Cluster 3 (sceptical) is the smallest of the three clusters, with only 15.2% of respondents in the on-going evaluation and 10.9% in the ex-post evaluation. Moreover, the small number of sceptics identified on the ex-post period does not allow exercises of inductive nature. The average rating of the perceived impacts suggests a highly negative general evaluation.

**Table 7 - Sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents**

Sociodemographic Profile		Cluster 1 (Optimists)				Cluster 2 (Neutral)				Cluster 3 (Sceptical)			
		On-going		Ex-post		On-going		Ex-post		On-going		Ex-post	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Concerning Braga municipality	Resident	46	69.6	23	50	10	15.2	18	39.1	10	15.2	5	10.9
	Visitor	30	65.2	20	87	7	70	17	94.4	9	90	5	100
Age groups	10 to 29 years old	16	34.8	3	13	3	30	1	5.6	1	10	0	0
	30 to 49 years old	33	71.7	15	65.2	6	66.7	9	50	5	55.6	4	80
	≥50 years old	10	21.7	2	8.7	3	33.3	6	33.3	3	33.3	1	20
Gender	Male	3	6.5	6	25.1	0	0	3	16.7	1	11.1	0	0
	Female	24	52.2	11	47.8	6	60	8	44.4	8	80	2	40
Civil state	Single	22	47.8	12	52.2	4	40	10	55.6	2	20	3	60
	Married/living with a partner	38	82.6	17	73.9	8	88.9	10	55.6	6	60	4	80
	Divorced	8	17.4	2	8.7	1	11.1	3	16.7	3	30	1	20
	Widow	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	27.8	1	10	0	0
Education	Until to 9 years of schooling	-	-	4	17.4	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0
	Secondary	10	21.7	11	47.8	0	0	5	27.8	1	10	1	20
	University degree	16	34.8	9	39.1	7	77.8	4	22.2	1	10	0	0
Professional situation	Unemployed	17	37	3	13	2	22.2	9	50	8	80	4	80
	Employee	17	37	2	8.7	2	20	2	11.1	6	60	0	0
	Student	21	45.7	4	17.3	6	60	6	33.3	3	30	1	20
	Retired	7	15.2	13	56.5	2	20	7	38.9	1	10	4	80
		1	2.2	4	17.4	0	0	3	16.7	0	0	0	0

## 6. Discussion

Looking to the empirical results we got, a first one we would like to comment regards the channels used to accede to details on the activities and events of the mega-event hosted by Braga. From there, we could conclude that the information on the activities and events of the EYC 2012 was, mainly, obtained through personal contact (friends and family), and followed by the Internet. This last channel was expected as it is a channel especially used by the younger segments. The traditional media (e.g., Brochures/Flyers and Radio/TV) were instrumental for respondents of 50 and more years old, which is also not surprising as, commonly, they are less familiar with the use of the Internet.

As mentioned, the role of internet and of the social networks, namely Facebook, was found to have a prominent in sharing the information on the events in all the EYCs organized, since the first one, that is, Rotterdam 2009 ([www.youthforum.org/](http://www.youthforum.org/)- accessed the 29/05/2013).

The majority of the survey respondents claimed to have participated in the on-going period, at least, in only event of the EUC2012 (the closing ceremony of the mega-event) and in the ex-post period in more than three events. This relates, of course, with the fact that the survey was applied in the aim of that specific event. Even so, it is worth to say that the closing ceremony was the most participated event of all EYC 2012 celebration and was performed, mainly, in public spaces and free of charge. It was also one of the most advertised events.

11.8% of the respondents repeated more than three events in the on-going period and this was the second more claimed amount of events participated by the respondents. What led respondents to repeat their participation in the events of the EYC 2012? One may expect that had to do, mainly, with the positive experiences they got from the previous events they attended. Anyway, one cannot disregard the gratuity of most of the events performed.

The musical events were the most frequented in both evaluations. *Pop up* events spaces were the least frequented. The novelty of the concept of a *Pop up*, and the few *Pop up* events held within the celebrations of the EYC 2012 can also explain its minor success.

Regarding the perception of the impacts, in general terms, there was a more positive perception of the impacts of the hosting of the EYC 2012 in the ex-post period than in the on-going one. The clusters analysis, by their turn, has shown that only a small group of participants has shown to be sceptical on the benefits provided to the city of Braga by the hosting of the EYC 2012. A good indicator of the perception of the effects of the hosting of the mega-event is, surely, the claim commonly expressed by the respondents of the utility of applying for the hosting of future mega-events.

This results tell us that, even if hosting a mega-event can drive higher prices of housing, goods and other local services affecting, directly and indirectly, residents, as underlined by Müller (2011), among others, it can be bring also several benefits, namely: investment in new infrastructures and equipment; increase of tourists; emergence of new jobs; increased of tax revenues (Greene, 2003; Richards, 2010; Müller, 2011). So, in the case of Braga, the respondents (residents and visitors) seem to have clear perceived more advantages in the hosting than burdens brought by it. To have just a small group of "sceptical" among the respondents on the effects of the event is a clear indication of that. Of course, one has to assume that the data from the survey allows extract an indication that as some value for the universe of the residents of Braga residents, at least.

In this regard, if the data used in this research faces major limitations due to the scarce samples collected, for the on-going period, one can rely on the results of the research performed by Remoaldo, Duque and Cadima Ribeiro (2016). Those results tell us that the hosting of the EYC was perceived by the residents and visitors inquired as not having been a misuse of public money, allowing, instead, enhancing the cultural environment of Braga. Additionally, it seems to have allowed the enhancing of the social cohesion among residents, the economic profit of the retail and services sectors and the cultural equipment of the city (Remoaldo, Duque and Cadima Ribeiro, 2016). Being so, we can claim that the empirical results of this exploratory study are in line with the ones previously invoked.

## 7. Conclusions

A comprehensive assessment of a mega-event has, necessarily, to rely on a detailed analysis not only of the economic impacts but also of the environmental and social and cultural ones. Until not long ago, the organizers of major events tended to disregard people's opinions (perceptions) on the assessment of the events they hosted, fearing it did not conform to the image of success they wanted to pass. More

recent research has given considerable attention to this issue but many of those studies have not been focusing on more than one period, being more common the after period.

The main purpose of this study was to analyse the perceptions of residents and participants on the impacts of the 2012 EYC, hosted by Braga, Portugal, together with an evaluation made of the quality of the program and the promotion strategy that was followed. As the EYC is an event for young people, the program, outlined by the *Bracara Augusta* Foundation for 2012, had to be built according to them, that is, it should envisage, primarily, pleasing them.

This issue of the dissemination of the information on the EYC 2012 program raised a harsh criticism within the city council's opposition political parties (Cadima Ribeiro et al., 2013). Generally speaking, they claimed that the promotion made of EYC 2012 abroad has shown lack of efficacy and that increased investment should have been made on that to reach a wider range of participants. However, there are no studies to confirm that claim. It is also true that the majority of foreigners who were asked questions were unaware, or barely knew, of the hosting of the EYC 2012 by the city of Braga. No matter the reason for it, following the results of Remoaldo, Duque and Cadima Ribeiro (2016), we know that the EYC 2012 did not attract to the city a large amount of visitors.

In what regards the impacts perceived, there was a more positive evaluation of the hosting of the EYC 2012 in the ex-post period than in the on-going one. This is an interesting result as, usually, it is the opposite that happens (Gursoy et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2013). Some of the effects of the hosting just turn visible in the post event period and not all of them are necessarily positive. Only a small group of participants has shown to be sceptical on the benefits provided by the hosting of the EYC 2012. The best indicator of the perception of the effects of the hosting of the mega-event is, surely, the claim commonly expressed by the respondents of the utility of applying for hosting new mega-events.

This study suffers from several limitations, and thus, its results should be carefully interpreted, namely in relation to policy implications. The main limitation results, as said in the methods section, from the amount of surveys collected: it was too small to extract results to obtain statistical consistency. Even so, the results allow for an underlining of certain features of the hosting of that mega-event in what regards its impacts, successes, failures and promotion strategy. Resources constraints did not allow us to have survey samples as large as we would like to have.

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