

Humans, Horses and Events Management

Edited by Katherine Dashper, Guðrún Helgadóttir, and Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir

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On a personal note we are grateful for the support of our families, colleagues, friends and significant animal others. Last but not least we give thanks to all the horses and humans we have met at Landsmót and who have allowed us an insight into the intricate and interesting case of an equestrian event that is also a festival and a major celebration of the world of the Icelandic horse.

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1 Introduction: Managing and Experiencing an Equestrian Event

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Abstract

This introductory chapter begins with a brief discussion of key findings in the wider field of event studies, focusing mainly on sports events as our case study is primarily an elite sporting competition. We then introduce the idea of multispecies events, drawing on insights from human–animal studies to consider how the active involvement of nonhuman animals shapes all aspects of the event experience. After discussing equestrian tourism and equestrian events more broadly, we introduce the case study event – Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse – in more detail to provide the reader with important background information to the event which provides the empirical base and therefore unites subsequent chapters. The chapter ends with an overview of the research process underpinning the book and an outline of the chapter contributions that enable holistic critical examination of a multispecies event and cultural festival.

Key words

equestrian; events management; Landsmót; sports events; tourism

1.1 Introduction

Events are important social, cultural, economic and often political phenomena that bring people together in a specified place and time to share activities and experiences. Human societies have organized events for centuries, but the study of planned events and events management is still in its relative infancy. Numerous textbooks are now available to guide students through the core aspects of events management from concept, to implementation, to evaluation. An expanding number of articles and reports explore specific aspects of event design, delivery and experience through a wide variety of different case study examples. This developing body of knowledge illustrates the growing popularity of events at international, national, regional and local levels, and the complexity of understanding events from the perspectives of different stakeholder groups, ranging from organizers, to workers, to spectators and local communities.

Nonhuman animals play diverse and important roles in event experiences, yet are rarely acknowledged as stakeholders in the ways that humans are (Marinova and Fox, 2019). The events literature identifies different types of events and different stakeholder groups, yet conspicuously absent from most of these discussions are nonhuman animals, whether as the focus of an event, such as a horseracing meeting, as active participants in

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an aspect of an event, such as a falconry display, as companions to human event guests, such as a guide dog for a visually impaired person, or even as native species that clash with human event participants, such as wasps at a summer festival. This represents a serious gap in knowledge about events, as the involvement of nonhuman animals in event spaces – whether as active or passive participants – has profound consequences for all aspects of events management, design and experience (Dashper and Brymer, 2019; Dashper and Buchmann, 2020).

This book begins to address this gap in events knowledge through focusing on multispecies aspects of events through examination of a single case study: Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse (Landsmót translates literally as 'national championships'; Landsmót hestamanna means 'national equestrian championships'). This event is an elite sports competition focusing on a specific horse breed – the Icelandic horse – and also a social and cultural festival, celebrating aspects of Icelandic culture and heritage and offering a space for fun and hedonism. The event is a biennial week-long outdoor sports event and festival held at different sites around Iceland (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). From its inception in 1950, Landsmót has been one of the major regular sports events in Iceland. A relatively stable number of visitors has attended Landsmót since about 10,000 people gathered for the first event, which was held in the historically important site of the world's first parliament. Landsmót attracts domestic participants as competitors, spectators, volunteers and workers and to some extent international spectators and volunteers.

While this volume addresses sports events, and particularly equestrian sports events, there is a key concept that merits attention here: the term festival. Festivals are, like so many concepts close to the human heart, not easily defined. Mair (2018) suggested that the following should be factors in defining events as festivals: short term, recurring, publicly accessible, culturally celebratory and/or performatory, relevant to a community, entertaining or recreational and engendering a sense of belonging and sharing. Getz (2010) identified three main discourses on festivals that have relevance for this volume: classical, focusing on the core socio-cultural meaning of the festival; instrumental framing of the festival as a tool for promoting economic and social growth; and events management concerned with the production, management and marketing of festivals. In this volume we engage with all these aspects of the festival that is Landsmót.

This event, which is introduced in more detail below, provides a single case study for the contributions in this book, which draw on empirical research conducted at Landsmót to consider different aspects of events management, impacts and experiences in a multispecies context. The use of a single case throughout the book enables in-depth examination of the processes of managing an event and consideration of the larger theoretical implications of events management. Most textbooks and edited collections use multiple cases, where the description lacks the depth and detail to sustain thorough analysis and discussion. This book is based on original research by authors using various theoretical perspectives and disciplinary positions to offer a more complete picture of a single case, while also drawing wider comparisons within the broader events field (see Chapter 15, this volume, for a comparison between Landsmót and the World Equestrian Games).

The book is, consequently, a contribution to two fields: events management and human–animal studies. Chapters connect events management to larger themes in the social sciences, such as human–animal relations; events and nationalism; place branding through events; economic impacts of events; the nature of event experience; events and community building; and inclusion and exclusion at events. The book considers various

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issues in relation to events management, including the role of the event in community building and the practical aspects of running a sustainable equestrian event, as well as addressing issues that arise in the context of multispecies events.

This introductory chapter sets the context for subsequent chapters which present different aspects of events management and experiences, drawing on original research conducted at the multispecies event: Landsmót. The research team behind this project included participants from the UK, Norway, Sweden, France and Iceland. The team consists of specialists and researchers in events management, tourism, equestrianism/equine science, human–animal relations, veterinary science, business administration and economics. The multidisciplinary nature of the research team enables critical discussion of different aspects of events management from a variety of perspectives. The shared case study guides the reader through the event experience from multiple perspectives and positions.

1.2 Sports Events: Key Issues and Challenges

The focus in events management literature is on 'planned events'; that is, a deliberate, managed and choreographed (to varying degrees) occurrence that is a combination of programme, people and place (Getz, 2005). Events are temporal phenomena, with a beginning and an end and a programme that is planned and publicized in advance, to enable participants and spectators to choose if they want to attend (Getz and Page, 2016). Events can be classified in various different ways. One approach is in terms of size: mega-events are those with global reach and impact, like the Olympic Games; hallmark events are those so closely identified with a place that they become synonymous with that location, such as Glastonbury music festival; major events are large in size and reach, and attract considerable interest and attention, such as the Open Golf Championships; while local or community events refer to the vast majority of events that are targeted mainly at local communities, such as a food festival (Bowdin *et al*., 2011). Another means of classification is in terms of content or focus of an event, ranging from business events and conferences, to cultural events and sports events. Events are often symbols of celebration and ritual, and can mark the passing of time in contemporary societies (Roche, 2003). Events are varied in focus, scale, frequency, impact and legacy, but form integral parts of human societies around the world and thus warrant sustained academic examination.

Sports events form one of the largest sectors of the events industry and can take many formats, from the sports mega-events of the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, to hallmark events like the Wimbledon tennis grand slam, major events like individual sport world championships, and minor sports events which tend to be more community based with relatively low attendance and media attention (Parent and Smith-Swan, 2013). Sports events can be further classified according to criteria such as: professional or amateur; indoor or outdoor; regularly scheduled (leagues, championships) or one-off (exhibition or friendly matches); single or multi-sport events; for participants, for spectators, or both; and local, regional, national or international (Getz and Page, 2016). This indicates the diversity of the sports events sector and this wide variety of event formats may require some different management approaches and result in different types of experiences for spectators and participants.

Sports events, perhaps more than many other types of event, have the capacity to excite and inspire high levels of emotion and devotion among attendees, due to the popularity of sport as a phenomenon that both unites and divides people within and across

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societies (Green, 2009). Consequently, sports events can produce highly meaningful and intense experiences for attendees. Sport event tourism is a popular subsection of the tourism industry, as many sport fans choose to spend their holiday time engaging in sports events – whether actively as sports participants or more passively as fans and spectators – both at home and away (Weed and Bull, 2012).

All events have a variety of impacts, positive and negative, that can affect a wide range of stakeholders. Economic impacts have been widely researched, especially in relation to sports events, as this is one aspect that investors (whether public or private) may be particularly interested in. Mega and major sports events are believed to act as catalysts for economic growth in host communities, although these economic impacts may often be overstated (Li *et al*., 2013). Smaller sports events can also bring positive economic benefits to host communities as long as these impacts are planned and well managed (Wilson, 2006; see also Chapter 12, this volume). Sports events can contribute to positive social and cultural impacts, such as increased sense of pride and a general 'feel-good' factor (Leng *et al*., 2014). Sports events can also bring about numerous negative social and cultural impacts, however, such as marginalizing indigenous peoples and provoking increased incidents of domestic violence (Gantz *et al*., 2006; Sykes, 2016).

There is increasing attention being paid to the environmental impacts of sports events, which can be significant in terms of things like travel (of spectators, competitors, officials, etc.) and the building of facilities (Collins *et al*., 2009). Sports events may also have potential for contributing to more positive environmental impacts, such as through educating attendees about the outdoors and ways to experience nature responsibly. Many sports events also have political impacts, as has been demonstrated frequently in relation to the use of mega-sports events as political tools by governments around the world (Grix, 2012).

There is now a well-developed body of literature on sports events and sports events management that is beginning to pose critical questions related to sustainability, accessibility, inclusion and exclusion. However, the events field has yet to really consider the role of nonhuman animals in events and to question some of the practical, ethical and organizational issues posed. In the next section we introduce the idea of multispecies events and suggest some issues that will be relevant when human and nonhuman actors are together within event spaces.

1.3 Multispecies Perspectives on Events Management

Nonhuman animals are involved in events in many roles and positions, but in this book we concentrate on the active involvement of nonhuman animals (horses, in this case) as part of the core programme of the event. Horses and dogs are the animals we most commonly involve in events, although various other species, including certain birds, sea mammals and other land mammals, can also be found 'performing' for and with humans for our entertainment.

Events are run for human pleasure, or business needs, and not for the benefit of nonhuman animals. Consequently, when we involve other animals in events, we need to think carefully about how we involve them, what we ask them to do, what we expect from them and what we provide for them, in terms of things like facilities, care and respect. Jönsson (2012) argued that as horses cannot give informed consent to take part in sport, as human participants can, this places significant moral responsibility on humans who do involve them to ensure their welfare and wellbeing are taken into account. This does not mean

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that it is automatically morally indefensible to involve other animals in sport and events, but it does raise important questions to do with power, responsibility and welfare (Dashper, 2017a,b).

This leads on to practical, operational issues. As discussed in subsequent chapters, involving nonhuman animals in events raises complex logistical questions. What facilities will be required? How much space is needed for this? How will nonhuman animals arrive on site? Where will they be housed? How will the safety of human and nonhuman guests be safeguarded? How will interactions between humans and other animals be managed to reduce risk but ensure enjoyment and entertainment? What kinds of additional arrangements may need to be in place, such as veterinary support? What extra preparation is needed in case of an emergency, such as a venue needing to be evacuated? What will happen if there is an animal health crisis, such as the outbreak of an infectious disease, which may restrict movement? These, and other questions, illustrate some of the organizational complexity of multispecies events, in addition to the requirements of other forms of planned events.

There is increasing attention being paid in event studies to the importance of experiences in delivering memorable, and therefore successful, events (Morgan, 2008). This also applies to multispecies events, where nonhuman animals have important roles to play in helping to co-create those experiences (Dashper and Buchmann, 2020). Event managers try to create memorable experiences for guests, through carefully choreographing factors such as amenities (e.g. parking, accessibility, toilets, signage), marketing (e.g. promotion, providing enough quality information, technical aspects of the event), personnel and provisions (e.g. friendly, well-trained staff, good viewing, security) and comfort and visibility (Kruger and Saayman, 2012). The involvement of nonhuman animals adds an extra layer of unpredictability to this, as animals cannot know the schedule and expectations of the event format, and consequently may act in unexpected ways which have potential to disrupt the carefully choreographed programme and impact on the experiences of paying guests (Dashper and Brymer, 2019). This extra unpredictability adds further complexity to multispecies events management (see Chapters 5 and 11, this volume).

Here we have highlighted just a few potential issues that may arise in multispecies events that are not present in other, human-only focused event contexts. Multispecies events are complex and carry risk, but are popular and well established in many regions of the world. Our focus in this book is on horses and equestrian events and in the next section we introduce horses and tourism as the broader context in which equestrian events are positioned.

1.4 Equestrian Tourism

Tourism based on horses has been developing around the world for decades but academic research on this form of tourism is relatively new (Ollenburg, 2005, 2006; Helgadóttir, 2006; Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Vaugeois, 2015; Buchmann, 2017). In 2005, Claudia Ollenburg pointed out that there was at that time an existing 'specialist horse tourism industry in the same way that there are specialist ski, surf and dive tourism industries' (Ollenburg, 2005, p. 47). Her paper on the worldwide structure of the equestrian tourism sector was followed by a book chapter on horse riding as adventure tourism (Ollenburg, 2006). Before those publications, most research in this field had 'been on

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recreational horse riders; notably, on the demographics, social and environmental impacts, and management of recreational horse riders in national parks and other public lands in North America and elsewhere' (Ollenburg, 2005, p. 53).

The developing body of research on horse tourism stresses the cultural importance of horses in different regions of the world, from Australia to Iceland to France, and in various ways this is translated into different tourism offerings aimed at specialist and casual equestrian tourists (White, 2011; Nieminen, 2014; Pickel-Chevalier, 2015; Sigurðardóttir, 2018). Numerous challenges to the development of horse tourism have been identified, including high operating costs, safety, and access to and impact on trails in rural areas (Beeton, 2001; Newsome *et al*., 2008; Gilbert and Gillet, 2014). As a tourism practice centred around interactions between people and other animals (horses), equestrian tourism also raises questions about ethics, welfare, agency and wildlife management (Notzke, 2016; Sturød *et al*., 2019).

Equestrian tourism is a key aspect of the tourism industry in Iceland. Tourism in Iceland has grown exponentially in the first decades of the 21st century and the Icelandic horse has been an icon in the marketing of destination Iceland (Helgadóttir, 2006; Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Schmudde, 2015; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). The horse has taken an increasingly important role in the recreation and experiences of visitors, as well as in the leisure activities of local residents. Many Icelanders practise both long tours with groups of horses in the summer and equestrianism close to home year-round (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b). While horses were from the outset important for travel and transport in Iceland, commercial equestrian tourism for the international market started in Iceland around 1970 and has been in constant growth and development since (Sigurðardóttir, 2016), resulting in attention to Iceland as an example of best practice in the field of equestrian tourism and its development (Pickel-Chevalier and Evans, 2015).

While research on equestrian tourism is still scarce, Iceland is somewhat of an exception. Research on Icelandic horse tourism has focused on different topics, such as:

- the nature and development of horse-based tourism as a cultural heritage phenomenon (Helgadóttir, 2006);
- the business and industry development of equestrian tourism (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Sigurðardóttir, 2015, 2016);
- expectations, experiences and satisfaction of equestrian tourists (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2008, 2015a; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016);
- environmental and social impacts of equestrian tourism in national parks (Schmudde, 2015);
- marketing and product development relating to health, wellness and slow adventure tourism (Sigurðardóttir, 2018);
- the relationships between the horse, tourism and agricultural industries (Sigurðardóttir, 2016; Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2017, 2018); and
- infrastructure, particularly riding trails as a geotourism attraction (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2018).

The fact that research on equestrian tourism has developed in Iceland relates to the importance of horse-based tourism services. In turn this is based on the importance of horses culturally and economically and the prevalent use of the Icelandic horse in the nation-branding of Iceland (see Chapter 10, this volume; for further discussion about the Icelandic horse see Chapter 3, this volume).

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1.5 Equestrian Events

Tourism and events are intrinsically linked, as whoever leaves their daily environment for more than a day to participate in an event is a tourist (McCabe, 2005), regardless of whether they are domestic or international tourists. Equestrian events have received remarkably little attention in the tourism, events and sports literature. This is surprising, given the long history of equestrian events such as horse-racing, and the status of equestrianism as a core and long-standing member of the Olympic programme.

Horse-racing events have been studied primarily in terms of the importance of the events to local communities, attendees and motivation, and have been found to be enjoyed largely in terms of entertainment, gambling and associated social status of attending certain events (Daniels and Norman, 2005; McManus *et al*., 2013; McManus and Graham, 2014; Fox, 2017). Other equestrian events, such as those related to the Olympic disciplines of show-jumping, dressage and eventing, have been studied in terms of issues related to gender, (dis)ability, athletic identity and relationships between horses and riders (Wipper, 2000; Dashper, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2014; Adelman and Knijnik, 2013; Hellborg and Hedenborg, 2015; De Haan *et al*., 2016).

There has been much less attention paid to any events management aspects of equestrian events, or the role these events can play in constructing identity. Helgadóttir and Dashper (2016) touched on this as they discussed how Landsmót attendees experience inclusion/exclusion in the 'world of the Icelandic horse' through the event. Their ethnographic research illustrates how positions of 'insider' and 'outsider' are complex and fluid, relating to equestrian culture, national culture and language, among other factors. Dashper and Buchmann (2020) investigated endurance riding events in the UK and Australia, arguing that horses and humans co-create event experiences together, helping shape and create encounters that can be both memorable and mundane. Dashper and Brymer (2019) used an ecological–phenomenological approach to understand the complex interactions between human riders, horses and the environment in the context of a pleasure horse-riding event. They argued that it is important to consider a range of actors – animate and inanimate, human and nonhuman – to appreciate the variety of affordances and possible outcomes in leisure practices. Monterrubio and Perez (2020) discussed human–horse interactions in leisure events in Mexico, arguing that a post-humanist perspective is useful for interrogating highly commercialized interspecies encounters in these settings.

Horse events attracting tourists also include non-sporting events that did not originally aim to gather spectators or tourists. An example of this is the horse gatherings in Northern Iceland, where horse farmers herd their horses back from summer pasture to sort them at the community corral and bring them back to the farm. This event has become a harvest festival and tourist attraction while remaining a community celebration (Helgadóttir, 2015, 2018; Helgadóttir *et al*, 2010). This book contributes to this developing body of work on equestrian events, through focus on one elite sporting competition: Landsmót hestamanna, the national championships of the Icelandic horse, hereafter referred to simply as Landsmót.

1.6 Landsmót

Annually a diversity of equestrian events take place in Iceland, both indoors and outdoors. The former are gaited competitions and shows, the latter comprise, in addition to the gaited competitions, ice tölt, breeding shows and, last but not least, horse gatherings

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(Helgadóttir, 2015, 2018; Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). The nature and objective of these events differ but all centre on the important factor of horse–human relationships, as well as human-to-human factors. Most of these events have not been the focus of academic research, with the exception of horse gatherings (Helgadóttir *et al*., 2010; Helgadóttir, 2015, 2018); and one peer-reviewed article (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016) and one book chapter on Landsmót have previously been published (Heldt Cassel, 2018).

An event such as Landsmót is a complex social phenomenon where diverse groups and individuals gather in a given time and space for a common interest and/or mission (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). In the case of equestrian events, it is most often a common interest in the horse that brings people to the event. In the case of Landsmót it is the Icelandic horse breed specifically that brings participants together (see Chapter 3, this volume). Equestrian sports events differ from most other sports in that men and women compete against each other (Dashper, 2012c). There is no formal distinction between amateur and professional riders when it comes to qualifying and at Landsmót they compete against each other. Furthermore, Landsmót distinguishes itself from other equestrian events as a festival or celebration of a particular breed and the horse culture around it (see Chapter 10, this volume).

Landsmót is a major event in Iceland and provides a good case study for exploring issues of events management within a multispecies context. In the summer of 2016 Landsmót was held at Hólar in Skagafjörður in northern Iceland for the second time; the first was 50 years earlier, in 1966. Landsmót is a biennial event with no fixed venue. Rather, it moves site each time (see Chapter 3, this volume). The location of each Landsmót is a contentious issue within the horse community in Iceland. Hosting the event brings multiple benefits to local communities and there is fierce competition between regions to gain the right to hold Landsmót (see Chapters 4, 6, 13 and 14, this volume).

Hólar is located in Skagafjörður in North Iceland (Fig. 1.1), a rural area steeped in equestrian tradition. The rural aspect of the 2016 event was an important feature, as discussed in numerous chapters in this book. The distance from Reykjavík, the capital city, to Hólar is 318 km. Hólar University offers degree programmes and conducts research on equestrianism/equine science, events management, tourism and outdoor studies. The university campus includes a stud farm and facilities for equestrian sport events.

Hosting the event at the university in 2016 provided the opportunity to conduct a multidisciplinary research project focused on a single large equestrian event. Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir, assistant professor with the Department of Rural Tourism at Hólar University, led the project with participation from: Leeds Beckett University, UK; Dalarna University, Sweden; University of South-Eastern Norway, Campus Bø; and The Arctic University of Norway, Campus Alta.

The majority of chapters in this book draw on empirical research conducted in relation to Landsmót 2016, supplemented as appropriate with wider comparisons of previous and later Landsmót events and with an international equestrian event in France. Data collection in 2016 started in spring and the research team gathered in Hólar during the event on 27 June to 3 July. Each researcher had their own emphasis and research problem to address and selected methodology to suit. Data collection methods included interviews before and after the event, participant observation and observation at the event, surveys conducted on site and online after the event, and the production of a documentary film (see Chapter 16, this volume). Among the topics were the economic importance of the event, the experiences and interests of local residents, visitors, breeders, riders and volunteers and the impact the event had on the destination image.

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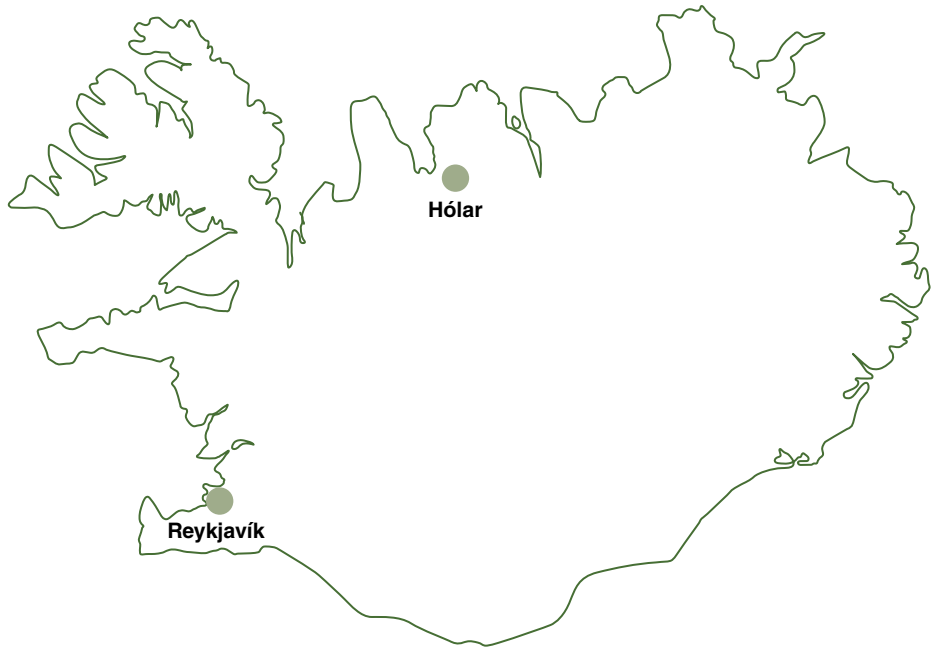


Fig. 1.1. Iceland, showing the location of Hólar, where Landsmót 2016 was held.

1.7 Outline of the Book

The remainder of this book is split into six sections, based around the planning, implementation and evaluation of a multispecies event. Each chapter stands alone in terms of offering theoretical and empirical insight on different aspects of multispecies events management, viewed from a range of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. Taken together, the chapters provide a holistic insight into the events management process.

The Making of an Event is the first section and it is made up of two chapters that provide important background information about the wider Icelandic horse community that surrounds Landsmót. In Chapter 2, Guðrún Helgadóttir introduces the concept of event community and the sport governing bodies that form an essential part of that community. Gunnar Sturluson and Gundula Sharman discuss FEIF (the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations) in Chapter 2A. FEIF operates in 21 countries and organizes the equestrian associations that care for the Icelandic horse, acting as a source of guidance and leadership in the international community of the Icelandic horse. Lárus Ástmar Hannesson then introduces the Icelandic Equestrian Association in Chapter 2B, where he discusses how the equestrian community in Iceland has organized around Landsmót.

In Chapter 3, Guðrún Jóhanna Stefánsdóttir and Víkingur Gunnarsson introduce the star of the show: the Icelandic horse. As the only breed of horse present on the island of Iceland, the Icelandic horse has a unique history and relationship with the country, factors that are important underpinnings of Landsmót. They present the characteristics of the Icelandic horse, its history, breeding aims, regulations and criteria for competition that are used at Landsmót.

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The second section, ***Managing the Event,*** turns the focus towards some of the core management aspects of the event. In Chapter 4, Runólfur Smári Steinþórsson and Hjörný Snorradóttir provide a strategic management analysis of the 1998–2008 Landsmót events. Their research draws lessons learnt from this 10-year period and introduces a strategic management approach that can be useful for future development of Landsmót and other events.

In Chapter 5, Áskell Heiðar Ásgeirsson, the event manager for Landsmót 2016 and 2018, offers a practical insight on the challenges and opportunities associated with organizing horse events. This chapter provides the reader with a real-world perspective, from the position of an experienced event manager. Among the subjects discussed are: organizing and managing the event, marketing, organizing the venue, technical issues, risks and security, and evaluation of success and failure in the events management process.

In Chapter 6, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir focuses on marketing and venue selection. She analyses the current visitor group of Landsmót and how the competitiveness of the event can be strengthened by deeper understanding of possible market segments, target groups and the relative attraction of different venues.

The third section, ***Experiencing the Event***, focuses on what many event scholars consider to be the essence of events management: experience. Chapters in this section consider 'experience' as a multifaceted concept, understood differently when considered from the perspective of different stakeholders.

In Chapter 7, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir and Anna Lilja Pétursdóttir look into the demand side of equestrian events. The chapter draws on survey data from visitors following the 2014, 2016 and 2018 Landsmót events. The chapter investigates expectations, experiences and satisfaction of both domestic and international visitors.

In Chapter 8, Kari Jæger and Guðrún Helgadóttir draw attention to an important event stakeholder group that can sometimes be overlooked: event volunteers. Their chapter considers different types of volunteers, specifically international volunteers and members of local charitable organizations, and issues in managing these at Landsmót. This chapter is based on field observations and interviews at the 2016 event.

No analysis of an equestrian event would be complete without consideration of one of the most important stakeholder groups: the horses. In Chapters 9A and 9B horse welfare is in focus. In Chapter 9A, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir briefly addresses some relevant issues regarding animal involvement in events and the importance of research on horse welfare issues at events.

In Chapter 9B, veterinarian Sigríður Björnsdóttir addresses the important issue of horse welfare during competition at Landsmót. She discusses the role of veterinarians at this multispecies event and some of the key welfare issues associated with Icelandic horse competitions, based on longstanding research into horse health and welfare at equestrian events in Iceland.

Events are often expressions of identity, rich with meaning for participants. In section four, ***The Meanings of the Event***, the authors analyse and discuss data about the meanings that various stakeholders attach to and derive from Landsmót.

In Chapter 10, Susanna Heldt Cassel considers how identity is expressed online in relation to Landsmót. She analyses Instagram posts in relation to the event and discusses how identity and belonging are constructed through social media connected to niche events. Her analysis shows how the event both reflects and helps construct ideas about Iceland as a country, linking the nation, the event and those associated with it to ideas about rurality, the outdoors and independence.

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Chapter 11 turns the focus to human–horse interactions, a key aspect of a multispecies event like Landsmót. Katherine Dashper draws on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical concepts of 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage' to consider different types of interspecies encounters that can occur between humans and horses around the event site. Drawing on interview data and observational field notes, she discusses interactions between horses and various different groups of humans, from audience members to trainers and competitors.

In the fifth section, ***Event Impacts and Legacies***, attention turns to the outcomes of the event, focusing on economic impacts, community impacts and the potential for longer term impacts and legacies.

In Chapter 12, Tobias Heldt explains principles and practices of economic impact analysis (EIA) of small and medium-size events like Landsmót. In this chapter, the practical use of EIA for decision making is discussed and economic impacts of Landsmót 2016 are analysed.

In Chapter 13, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir focuses on the impacts of Landsmót on local residents in Skagafjörður, North Iceland. Drawing on data collected before and after the 2016 event, she discusses local residents' expectations and experiences of hosting an event of 800 horses and 8000 guests in a community of just 4000 inhabitants.

In Chapter 14, Guðrún Helgadóttir and Katherine Dashper consider if a medium-sized event like Landsmót can result in a lasting legacy for the wider community. Drawing on interviews with stakeholders conducted three years after the 2016 event, they argue that it is appropriate to consider the potential of smaller events to contribute to a broader legacy, particularly within rural communities.

Section six, ***Comparisons and Conclusions***, is the closing section of the book and it steps back from the case study event, Landsmót, to consider how the issues discussed in previous chapters have relevance to the wider field of multispecies events and events management.

In Chapter 15, Céline Vial and Eric Barget offer an international comparison to the case of Landsmót through their research on the 2014 World Equestrian Games (WEG) which were held in Normandy in France. WEG can be considered a mega-event in the context of equestrian sport, encompassing eight different equestrian disciplines with over 60 countries represented. Although there are many differences between Landsmót and WEG, there are also many similarities that illustrate some of the core aspects of equestrian events and events management.

Chapter 16 briefly introduces the documentary film that forms an extra recourse in connection with the book, available online. Film maker Ragnhildur Ásvaldsdóttir presents footage taken at Landsmót 2016 to document various aspects of the story of the event.

Finally, in Chapter 17, Katherine Dashper, Guðrún Helgadóttir and Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir draw together key issues in the planning, management and experience of equestrian events discussed throughout the book, highlighting similarities and differences with other types of events and the wider lessons to be taken from the data and discussion presented in earlier chapters. They highlight areas for further research and suggest future challenges and opportunities that may affect multispecies events.

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2 Event Communities

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Abstract

This chapter explains the concept of an event community and how this applies to 'the world of the Icelandic horse', as the members of the Icelandic equestrian culture fondly call their community. The chapter further provides an overview of the equestrian associations that form the backbone of this community devoted to the Icelandic horse on an international and national level. The history, mission, activities and structure of the associations are provided as background to Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse.

Key words

equestrian associations; Icelandic horse; equestrian events; breeding; competition; Landsmót; World Championship of the Icelandic horse

2.1 Introduction

Planned events of all shapes and sizes are important for community building. Events create community, solidarity and identity within target groups for the event. They can be celebrations of personal milestones or of a larger context such as nation building, but also serve global political agendas (Helgadottir, 2019). The scope can be personal, such as a wedding where two families meet and celebrate the community of two families joining as one. The mega-event of global reach such as the Olympic Games is also about community building, although in a more political sense, with higher risk and more at stake economically, environmentally and socially (Shone and Parry, 2004).

A sports event contributes to several communities. The community in which the event venue is located is impacted (Delamere *et al*., 2001) and the event is itself a community in time and space (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). Last, but not least, is the community of the sport, which in this case is the community of Icelandic horse equestrianism and its organizations (Helgadottir, 2006). Some understanding of this background is essential, as the organizations that manage, execute, sponsor and promote a sports event are extremely important stakeholders that shape the development of the event.

The event community could be regarded as a subculture, a group that shares particular values, has a long-term association with the event and 'knows the ropes' of how to behave at the event. This target market is the core of the event community and those who are new to the event or have been attracted to it on other premises may feel alienated and even resented by the established event community. Based on research at Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse, Helgadottir and Dashper (2016) raised the question of how widely destination marketers should cast the net to promote festivals to different target markets.

The events management literature is focused on humans, but in this study nonhuman animals – horses – are central to the event. They may be seen as an attraction, but it might

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also be argued that they are key stakeholders, as the competitions and shows at Landsmót always include both horse and rider. The visions and policies of the governing bodies for breeding and equestrian sports reflect this, as a core value in their mission is to safeguard the welfare of the Icelandic horse breed and of individual horses.

In parts 2A and 2B of this chapter, the authors describe the way in which the equestrian community around the Icelandic horse, 'the world of the Icelandic horse', is formally organized nationally and internationally. Lárus Ástmar Hannesson was president of the Icelandic Equestrian Association (IEA) at the 2016 iteration in Hólar. Gunnar Sturluson is President of the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations (FEIF) and Gundula Sharman is director of FEIF youth work.

2.2 Implications

- Landsmót plays an important role both nationally and internationally in sustaining the community around the Icelandic horse, or 'the world of the Icelandic horse'.
- Associations such as FEIF and IEA are cornerstones in the community's building and development of the competitions and the celebrations at Landsmót.
- Landsmót needs to balance the needs of at least three distinct human communities: the host community of each event; the community gathered at each event; and the community of Icelandic equestrian sport and breeding, represented by the competitors.
- Last but not least, Landsmót is of importance to the Icelandic horse as a breed and the welfare of the horses participating is of paramount importance.

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2A FEIF, the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations

Gunnar Sturluson[1] and Gundula Sharman[2]

[1]*President of FEIF;* [2]*Director of Youth Work FEIF*

2A.1 Introduction

FEIF was established in 1969 in Switzerland and the name is an acronym from the German *Föderation Europäischer Islandpferde-Freunde*, or federation of European Icelandic horse friends. Today, FEIF is known as the 'International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations' and represents the respective national Icelandic horse societies of 21 countries worldwide. That is, as a federation of national Icelandic horse bodies, FEIF includes the members of these organizations: about 80,000 people who love and ride, care for, breed and enjoy the Icelandic horse, wherever they may live, from Iceland to New Zealand.

2A.2 The Vision

The purpose of FEIF is summed up in this statement: *FEIF unites people in their passion for the Icelandic horse*. Further the vision of FEIF is expressed in five statements about what the federation stands for:

- We connect Icelandic horse culture, riding, lifestyle, enjoyment and passion by providing a platform for all people united in their love for the Icelandic horse. FEIF encourages this through seminars, events, the World Championships, ambassadorships, rides and publications.
- We focus on welfare, by putting the well-being of the horse first in everything we do.
- We believe that horses and humans have evolved a unique partnership, and that horses have an important role in society. By continuously improving and unifying standards in all our activities, we believe that we are taking responsibility for the welfare of the horse.
- We provide proactive service and knowledge by supporting members and aspiring member associations to develop their infrastructure as the basis for growth.
- We promote the pure-bred Icelandic horse throughout the world and maintain a sole register (studbook) for Icelandic horses in WorldFengur.
- We improve recognition of the Icelandic horse by defining aspects of the Icelandic horse culture and promoting these.

2A.3 Structure

As an international organization with many roles, FEIF has developed both a regulatory framework and an organizational structure that is shown in Fig. 2.1 and discussed below.

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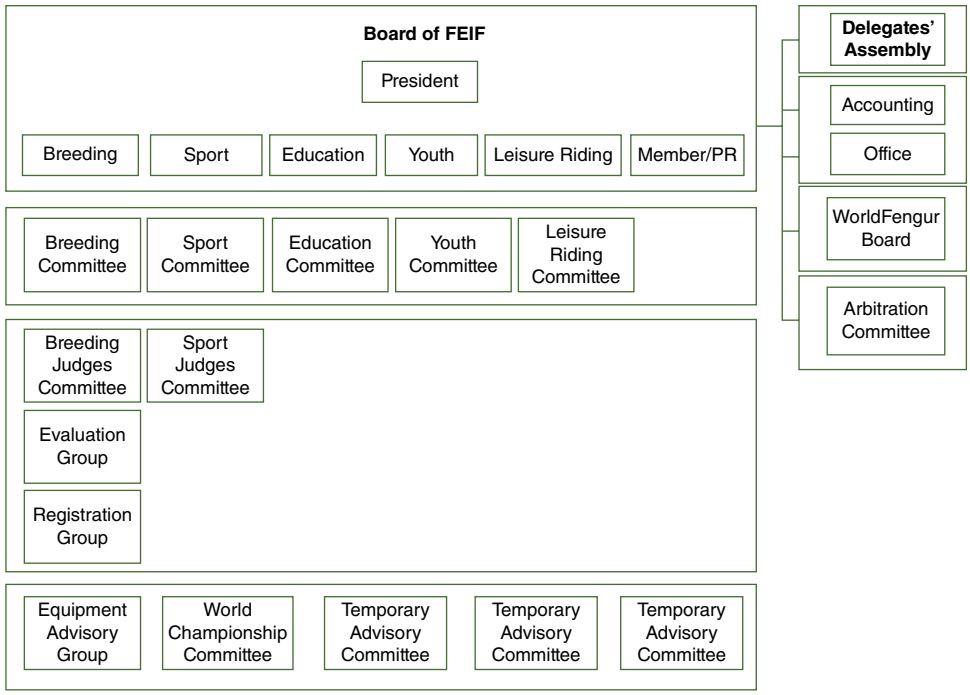


Fig. 2.1. The organizational structure of FEIF, 2019.

The Delegates' Assembly (DA), which meets annually during the FEIF Conference, is hosted by a different member country each year. The DA consists of representatives from all FEIF member countries and it is the decision-making body of FEIF. Usually, about 100 delegates visit the DA, to discuss and pass the annual budget, and to vote on changes and suggestions proposed by either individual countries, or any given FEIF committee. Proposals can include specific rules, for example rules on permitted tack or equipment, or the level of the membership fee, or how many embryo transplants are permitted per mare in any given year. And the list goes on. In short – the DA decides on FEIF Rules, which affect mostly sport, breeding and welfare issues concerning the Icelandic horse. The DA also elects the board of directors of FEIF, which consists of the president and the directors of breeding, education, leisure, sport and youth work, plus up to two additional board members.

The FEIF Board of Directors, supported by the FEIF Office operated out of Vienna, makes sure that FEIF undertakes the ambitious project of holding together the Icelandic horse world across the globe. Particularly in sport and breeding, it is essential to ensure that there is only one set of standards and rules. The education committee ensures that all FEIF instructors on the matrix have a comparable skill set, regardless of whether they trained in Finland or Switzerland. To create a sense of common identity and community, whether you are crossing the Rocky Mountains, or riding along the Danube, is the work of the leisure-riding department. Youth work aims to strengthen that which we all share, the love for and understanding of the horse, and – particularly for young people – to overcome any differences in culture, politics and language, which so often divide us.

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2A.4 Communication and Collaboration

The actual work of FEIF is coordinated by five committees, each chaired by the directors of the departments. This structure is shown in Fig. 2.1. Each committee consists of about five members who are elected for two years.

Most member associations mirror the structure of FEIF, with a chairperson and trustees for breeding, education, leisure, sport and youth work. After the DA, the assembled national representatives meet with the respective FEIF committees (breeding, education, leisure riding, sport and youth work) for one or two days, to ensure good communication and a proper exchange between the work done in the national member associations and the direction taken by the FEIF committees. Delegates contribute hugely to maintaining good communication between the countries and FEIF; they meet others and they learn to see things from an international perspective.

2A.5 Breeding Goals and WorldFengur Studbook

Purebred Icelandic horses all over the world are registered in a single database called WorldFengur. A purebred Icelandic horse will have an Icelandic name and this name is chosen in accordance with rules set by FEIF, which follow the Icelandic tradition for horses, linking the horse to the farm or the breeder.

If the full name of any given horse is known, it is possible to find information about the age and gender (mare, stallion or gelding), the place where the horse was born, details about the parents and grandparents of the horse, and any offspring it might have had. If it is a sport horse, sporting achievements are listed, and if the horse or its parents or grandparents have been evaluated at a breeding show, WorldFengur holds the actual scores the horse was given.

Having every Icelandic horse in the world registered in one place is an amazing project and the envy of many other horse breed societies all over the globe. It is also a constant challenge to keep the information up-to-date and accurate. Without a single set of rules and a single set of standards in breeding (and in sport), this would not be possible. Setting, maintaining and reinforcing these rules, which apply universally from Iceland to Australia – that is the work of FEIF. In other words, horse naming and most other aspects of breeding and breeding evaluation are governed by FEIF.

2A.6 Sports and Sportsmanship

There is a certain consensus that the most precious thing about the Icelandic horse is its range of different gaits. Therefore, FEIF classes showing tölt only, or four or five gaits, one round at a time, are what makes up the Icelandic horse competition scene (see Chapter 3, this volume). Particular classes have evolved over many years and will continue to develop and change in the future. Most gaited tests are performed on a 250 m oval track, which makes this form of competition different from many other horse sports. Discussions on the ideal way to show off tölt, and the full range of gaits at various speeds, led to the decision to use oval tracks for the presentation of Icelandic horses. This decision was taken in 1970, and since then different competition classes have been developed on the oval track for four-gaited and five-gaited horses, as well as a range of tölt classes at various

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levels. This also includes Gæðingakeppni (a term that implies competition for horses of good quality) for four- and five-gaited horses, which is shown on a 300 m track. Pace race and pace test are done on a straight track, and in the past Icelandic horses also raced in gallop and trot.

The FEIF WorldRanking is a system to compare results of riders on purebred Icelandic horses gained at selected sport events all over the world with each other. FEIF started the WorldRanking in 1995. The system is continuous: every day a new ranking list is computed, and thus riders' positions in the ranking lists may vary all the time. The rankings for all FEIF classes, run under WorldRanking rules, are found on the FEIF website.

2A.7 World Championships for Icelandic Horses

The biggest and most visible event run in the name of FEIF is the biennial World Championships. A group of national organizers undertakes the detailed planning of the event, including the infrastructure of the venue, the catering, the programming and advertising, plus a million other matters. Prospective organizers submit a proposal for the venue and a feasibility plan, usually about four years before the event. While the event and venue are locally managed, the actual competition is run by FEIF and in compliance with FEIF rules.

This is where it all comes together: the elite of horses and riders compete on the oval track, surrounded by on average about 12,000 spectators who celebrate the achievements shown before them. Wherever horse people meet, there are always many things to talk about, and events like the World Championships are of course also a major social event. The World Championships are somewhat mirrored by annual international youth events, run by FEIF and hosted by national member associations. Selected young riders from all 21 member associations will spend a week together, training and competing, meeting each other and learning something about the (horse) culture of the host nation.

The other major event for Icelandic horses is the biennial Landsmót held in Iceland. The difference between the two events is that at Landsmót the horses are competing in Gæðingakeppni for four- and five-gaited horses, but the breeding show and the tölt classes are World Ranking FEIF events. It is also worth mentioning that, because of the special ban on horse imports into Iceland, the Icelandic team has to take their horses permanently out of Iceland every time they compete at the World Championships, and Landsmót is therefore obviously not open for international riders and their horses.

2A.8 Sharing a Common Language

What is described above in one short section is the result of years and years of work in negotiating a common understanding between different horse people from different traditions and speaking 12 different languages. For the FEIF meetings, members come together to discuss far-reaching rules and other matters, important to the development of the international Icelandic horse world. It is our belief that the reason why – in the face of numerous obstacles – the FEIF community works so well is the fact that, even when the debate gets heated, it is easy to remember that, ultimately, we all want the same thing. Out there are 80,000 people who share a single goal: to do our best for the Icelandic horse.

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2B The Event Community: The Icelandic Equestrian Association

Lárus Ástmar Hannesson

President of the Icelandic Equestrian Association (2014–2020)

2B.1 Introduction

The establishment of a national organization for the horse clubs in Iceland took some time. In 1940, the topic of increased collaboration among the clubs was discussed at a members' meeting of Fákur, the Reykjavík horse club (Guðmundsson, 1951). The chairman of the Sleipnir club wrote to the board of Fákur, suggesting that they host a nationwide equestrian event in Þingvellir, the ancient site of the parliament (Alþing), in the summer of 1941. The board agreed and the event, with four clubs participating, took place on 28 June 1941. This event heralded what became 'Landsmót hestamanna', the National Championships of the Icelandic horse (Gestsson, 1987).

Gunnar Bjarnason, the national horse breeding consultant, challenged the horse clubs in the country to focus on the breeding of the Icelandic riding horse (Bjarnason, 1980). The idea that the clubs should collaborate to host a large equestrian event in Þingvellir developed (Gestsson, 1987). Subsequently the idea of a national horse club association gained support and the organization of these national events was one of the identified roles of such an association. The inaugural meeting of the Icelandic Equestrian Association (IEA) was held on 18 December 1949, where representatives of 11 horse clubs met. It was decided that a national championship would be established: 'Landsmót hestamanna', to be held over four to five days and consisting of breeding shows and competition. It was a stated goal for the event to shape horse breeding, with an emphasis on riding horses (Gestsson, 1987).

Hosting Landsmót was therefore one of the main reasons why a national association was created. Other goals of the association were, from the outset, horse welfare, breeding for riding qualities and the promotion of equestrian sports. The goals and work of the Icelandic Equestrian Association have changed over time and, in addition to competitions, breeding and training of horses, the association also focuses on public health benefits of equestrianism and plays an important role in promoting the interests of horses and equestrians in society. The association represents its members on a wide range of issues such as urban and rural planning, transport infrastructure, sports, tourism, land use and environmental protection. At present the board of the association is revising its stated goals to reflect the changes in equestrianism in Iceland.

From 1941 the association has grown so that in 2018 it consisted of 44 horse clubs throughout Iceland with a membership of 11,800 people, making it the fourth largest sports association in Iceland topped only by soccer, golf and gymnastics. The gender balance is quite equal with 51% female members, and 29% of members are under 16 years old (Íþrótta- og Olympíusamband Íslands, 2019). The Icelandic Equestrian Association became a member of FEIF – the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations – in 1980, after having sent horses to the European Championships of FEIF since 1970.

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2B.2 Landsmót hestamanna, the Cornerstone of IEA

Landsmót hestamanna [national equestrian championships] is one of the largest sports events and family-friendly events in Iceland. This is where the best riders and horses compete, and visitors of all ages are entertained with a varied programme and the chance to enjoy the spirit of the equestrian community.

The best breeding horses are shown and judged in the breeding shows while the top riding horses and riders compete in the sports events. The age range begins with children's classes, and the oldest riders can sometimes include senior citizens. In addition to the breeding shows, sports competitions and entertainment, the event is also a fair where goods and services for the equestrian sector are showcased.

Landsmót hestamanna has been held since 1950 when the first nationwide event was held at Skógarhólar, near Þingvellir (see Chapter 3, this volume). The Icelandic Equestrian Association was founded the year before, in part to be the organizer of the national championships. These were held every fourth year from 1950 to 2000, when the championships became biennial. The only exception was 2010 when the championships at Vindheimamelar in Skagafjörður were deferred for a year due to a horse influenza outbreak that raged from winter to summer 2010 and made training and competing impossible. Landsmót was deferred again in 2020, this time as a result of the human health emergency brought about by COVID-19.

2B.3 The Economics of the Event

The Icelandic Equestrian Association was the organizer of the championships until after the event in 2000, when the IEA and the Farmers Association formed a private company around the event, called Landsmót ehf [Landsmót Ltd]. This company ran the national championships 2002–2016. The economics of the event was a challenge and Landsmót Ltd accumulated debt. To address this, major changes were made to the business model for the event, and from 2018 the Farmers Association transferred their assets, which accounted for one-third of the total assets in Landsmót Ltd, to the Horse Farmers Association. The new business model is that the host clubs pay Landsmót Ltd for the right to host the event, corresponding to the rules for hosting the World Championships, which are run under the remit of the international association, FEIF.

The host clubs then form a company to run the event. This has proved to be a better way to engage the grassroots riders and horse community and local sponsors, such as municipalities and business communities, as any revenue and profit associated with hosting the event now remains with the local organizers and can benefit the local community.

2B.4 Qualification and Selection of Horses and Riders to Compete at Landsmót

Competing at Landsmót is very prestigious and qualification and selection processes for horses and riders are rigorous. The selection process is threefold. For the gæðingakeppni (the term refers to a competitive class particular to Icelandic equestrian sports; see Chapter 3, this volume, for a further explanation), each club can enter a fixed number of competitors, based on the membership count of the club. For the breeding shows up until 2016 a

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certain minimum score was required for a horse to qualify for the breeding show at Landsmót. Those minimum scores were different depending on the age and gender of the horse. This system was difficult for the event's management as the final number of horses achieving the minimum score to enter the competition was not known until shortly before Landsmót. For the 2016 and 2018 events the advisory group for horse breeding announced the maximum number of horses that can qualify for the competition in each category (see further discussion in Chapter 3, this volume). This makes all planning for the event much more efficient and the event schedule easier to plan and stick to. For the tölt and pace races the number of competitors is also limited, and ranking nationally determines who can participate.

2B.5 The Development of Event Venues and Facilities

One of the important legacies of Landsmót for the equestrian community in Iceland is the development of excellent venues with a capacity to host large events (see Chapter 13, this volume). These venues are used for hosting local, regional and national equestrian events. The criteria for the quality of the facilities are constantly becoming stricter, which helps develop the equestrian infrastructure around the country. The Landsmót venues are, however, quite different; some are rural while others are in the suburban area of the capital. This can be seen as a positive aspect of the event as different venues can cater to different interests and wishes among the target market.

Landsmót 2020 was to be held at Rangárbakkar, Hella, in south Iceland, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022 the event will take place at Rangárbakkar and in 2024 the event will be held in Kópavogur, in the capital region.

2B.6 The Importance of Landsmót in the Icelandic Equestrian Community

Since its inception Landsmót has always been one of the most important and largest equestrian events in Iceland, for a number of reasons. Thousands of domestic and international equestrians have attended. At Landsmót the best horses in the country are presented, which is imperative for the breeding of the Icelandic horse and the quality of the breed. The best breeding horses are judged and compared in their categories and, for the interested international visitor, a comparison can be made between the breeding in Iceland and in other countries. This comparison is not possible at the World Championships of the Icelandic Horse, as the best horses from Iceland are not always present at that event, which is hosted outside Iceland. Many breeders are reluctant to enter their best horses at the World Championships because if they are taken to compete at that event they cannot return to Iceland, due to the strict quarantine rules that prevent horses (re)entering the country. The breeding enthusiasts can also follow how the stallions are performing as breeding horses through the scores their offspring achieve. Last, but not least, an invaluable historical archive is being developed as the competitions at Landsmót are filmed and archived, enabling comparison over time. The video archive is accessible on WorldFengur, the impressive worldwide data bank on the Icelandic horse.

Landsmót is hugely important for the development of equestrian skills and knowledge where the riders can show their competence and ability. For a rider it is an ambition to

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qualify to compete at Landsmót. A comparison over time of the number of equestrians meeting this goal is possible and it is a positive sign for equestrians in Iceland that the numbers are increasing. This suggests that a broader range of people are reaching the required level for qualifying, and the impact of formal equestrian education and riding instruction is evident in the sector. Further, the historical archive gives insight into the growing professionalism in the management of the Landsmót as an equestrian event.

With the growing ambition for qualifying to enter the Landsmót competitions, the demand for equestrian instruction is also growing. Increased competition also leads to improved quality in the breeding of competition horses. The increasing professionalism in equestrian events in Iceland provides further opportunities for showcasing and developing the quality breeding and training of horses to meet the standards of competitive events that are constantly becoming higher.

2B.7 Community and Social Aspects of Landsmót

Finally, this section addresses possibly the most important aspect of the Landsmót: the social aspect. Equestrians meet and enjoy the feeling of belonging to a large community of people with a passion for the horse and for the horse culture that has developed around it. Part of the attraction of horsemanship is the joy, the song and the solidarity. Equestrians are like a big family where age, gender, region or nationality do not create borders. It has been very important to invite international guests to experience the spirit of Landsmót, to enjoy and be proud of being part of the family of the Icelandic horse (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). Icelanders should not forget that Iceland is the land of origin of the breed of the Icelandic horse, and all who wish to join us must be welcomed to experience the joy and fulfilment of belonging to this international community.

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3 The Star of the Show: the Icelandic Horse

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Abstract

The Icelandic horse is one of the purest horse breeds in the world, reaching an average 140 cm (13.3 hh) height at the withers and weighing 340 kg. The conformation is rectangular and compact, with a sloping croup, and a long, thick mane and tail. The breed is most known and appreciated for the lateral gaits tölt and pace, which it has in addition to the basic gaits (walk, trot and canter/gallop). The breed is found in more than 30 countries, with more Icelandic horses abroad (ca. 175,000) than in Iceland (ca. 65,000). There is one international studbook, WorldFengur, with breeding associations in 21 countries and a common breed evaluation system. Following mechanization in Iceland around 1950, the role of the Icelandic horse changed from being 'the most useful servant' to that of a leisure and sport horse. Also in 1950, Landsmót – the largest outdoor sporting event for the Icelandic horse in Iceland – was held for the first time. It was then repeated every four years until 1998 and biennially after that. Landsmót has been held 23 times in total, at seven different locations in the south and north of Iceland, lasting for 3–8 days in the high summer period. The event has expanded over time with an increasing number of horses, riders and competition disciplines. This chapter introduces the disciplines, qualification of horses and riders and facilities required for Landsmót.

Key words

breeding; characteristics; competition disciplines; horse; Landsmót; origin

3.1 Introduction

The horse is an amazing creature which has had a critical effect on human life. Horses have many abilities making them attractive and useful to humans, like speed, strength and, crucially, their ability to carry a human individual, an attribute which contributes to giving the horse a special status and importance in human life. The horse is also a social animal with great abilities to create strong relationships, with other horses but also with humans. Before mechanization and industrialization, for centuries the horse was 'the most useful servant' to humankind, being indispensable for transport, agricultural work and to conquer land and social status. More recently, the horse has mostly been used for various leisure activities, equestrian sports, competitions, shows and events. Worldwide, there is a tradition for practising different equestrian sports and competitions, the most common being racing, endurance, eventing, dressage, show-jumping and polo. Some of those disciplines originally developed from the use of horses for military purposes, such as eventing (previously known as 'military'), dressage and show-jumping. There are also more specialized and less common equestrian disciplines, like barrel racing, chuck-wagon racing, reining and cutting (working horse), and gaited-competitions/shows (e.g. Icelandic horses, American Saddlebred, Paso Peruano, Mangalarga Marchador).

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This chapter introduces the Icelandic horse: its origin, history, characteristics, role, breeding and use, and the scope of the Icelandic horse industry. Particular emphasis will be placed on the greatest national event associated with the Icelandic horse held in Iceland, named Landsmót, and the history, development, disciplines and facilities for the horses associated with the event will be discussed.

3.2 Origins of the Icelandic Horse

In Iceland, an island in the North Atlantic, only one horse breed exists – the Icelandic horse – and its ancestors came with the human settlers in the period 874–930 (Adalsteinsson, 1981). The exact origin of the Icelandic horse breed is not known (Wutke *et al*., 2016) but the settlers came mainly from Scandinavia and the British Isles, bringing farm animals, including the horse (Adalsteinsson, 1981). The Icelandic horse is a naturally gaited riding horse (Andersson *et al*., 2012). While most horse breeds have only three gaits – walk, trot and canter/gallop – gaited horses have in addition lateral movements like tölt and pace. Some have only tölt and others both tölt and pace. A recent study on the origins of ambling horses (gaited, slow gait where legs move in lateral pairs, usually having a four-beat rhythm) strongly suggested that the 'gaitedness' came to Iceland with horses from the British Isles (Wutke *et al*., 2016) but the gaited gene (*DMRT3*) was first seen in a Great Mongolian Empire horse and increased its frequency thereafter (Fages *et al*., 2019). Based on an extensive ancient genome of horses, it has been suggested that the Icelandic horse is a descendant of European horse breeds existing in Viking times (Fages *et al*., 2019). This is also supported by another study which showed that the Icelandic horse breed was not subjected to introgression waves of genetic material (incorporation, usually via hybridization and backcrossing of genes from one species into the gene pool of another) from oriental horse breeds, like many modern European horse breeds were (Wallner *et al*., 2013).

It is generally accepted knowledge that the Icelandic horse is one of the purest horse breeds in the world, as import of horses to Iceland was always restricted since settlement (874–930) and has been completely prohibited since 1909 (Adalsteinsson, 1981; Hendricks, 1995; Saastamoinen and Mäenpää, 2005; FEIF, 2019a). Thus, the Icelandic horse genetically represents the European horse breeds originally transported to Iceland in Viking times (Fages *et al*., 2019). Icelandic horses that are exported can never return to Iceland, and no horses from abroad can come into Iceland (Icelandic Parliament, 1990). The main reason for this is to avoid the many serious diseases that exist worldwide in horses but have still not reached horses in Iceland because of the country's geographical isolation (Björnsdóttir *et al*., 2017). In addition to being descended from European horse breeds, systematic breeding of the Icelandic horse within Iceland has increased the frequency of some genes, for example the *DMRT3* gene which has a critical effect on the gaiting ability of horse breeds (Andersson *et al*., 2012; Kristjánsson *et al*., 2014). Thus, while gaitedness has been bred out of most horse breeds in Europe, because these horses were often used as draught and pack animals (Promerová *et al*., 2014; Staiger *et al*., 2017) or for military purposes (Clayton and van Weeren, 2013), the Icelandic horse was selected for its gaitedness, because the breed was used primarily for riding and therefore soft gaits were appreciated for the comfort of the rider (Wutke *et al*., 2016; Staiger *et al*., 2017).

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3.3 The History, Role and Breeding of the Icelandic Horse

The Icelandic horse was a prerequisite for living in the country from the time of settlement well into the 20th century (Björnsson and Sveinsson, 2006). It was the only means of land transport for humans and goods, and was necessary for agricultural work in the severe and near-roadless country. It was called 'the most useful servant' in Iceland (Björnsson and Sveinsson, 2006). However, after mechanization, which took place in Iceland around 1950, the importance of the horse in Icelandic society changed dramatically and many people thought there was no longer any use for horses in the country. This development in Iceland mirrored what had happened in other countries following industrialization and mechanization, as it is estimated that horse numbers in Europe declined by approximately 90% following the Second World War (Evans, 2015). However, thanks to enthusiastic Icelandic horse people, the horse got a new role as a leisure and sport animal in Iceland (Björnsson and Sveinsson, 2006). This also mirrored what happened in Europe, where the remaining horses were 'kept for reasons of affection, tradition, sport and in some cases leisure' (Evans, 2015, p. 13). Thus, around 1950, a new chapter started in the history of the Icelandic horse as riding clubs and breeding associations were founded. At the same time the breeding work became more organized and horses were selected for breeding based on conformation and riding abilities (gaits and temperament) (Björnsson and Sveinsson, 2006).

3.4 Description/Characteristics of the Icelandic Horse

The Icelandic horse is rather small compared with many other riding horse breeds (e.g. Standardbred, Warmbloods, Thoroughbred), which often reach 155–170 cm height at the withers (International Museum of the Horse, n.d.) and weigh 450–550 kg (Standardbred: Ringmark *et al*., 2013; Thoroughbred: Martinson *et al*., 2014), but the average height at the withers of the Icelandic horse is ca. 140 cm and the average weight when the horse is in proper body condition for riding is ca. 340 kg (Stefánsdóttir *et al*., 2014). This is a slightly lower body weight than often reported in scientific studies for Icelandic horses, which is 350–370 kg (Ragnarsson, 2009; Árnason and Bjarnason, 1994). The reason for this might be that no study has previously estimated the body weight of a large number of horses assumed to be in top training condition, as in the study of Stefánsdóttir *et al*. (2014). The experience of those working in the Department of Equine Science at Hólar University (the central place of education and training of Icelandic horse trainers and riding teachers) shows considerable difference in body weight of horses depending on the size, body condition, the time of the year and the role of the horse (range 280–430 kg).

In terms of conformation, the Icelandic horse is rectangular and compact, with a sloping croup and a long, thick mane and tail. In winter the coat is very thick, long and protective but in summer it is short and shiny (FEIF, 2019a). Almost all horse colours except Appaloosa can be found in the breed, but the most common are black, chestnut and bay; 70–80% of active breeding and riding horses have these colours. Light colours, such as grey, red dun, blue dun, palomino, buckskin, roan, tobiano and splashed white, can also be found, but it is more common to find these colours in herds of Icelandic horses that are not used for breeding or riding but for meat production.

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From a biological perspective the Icelandic horse can in many ways be defined as a pony (Fig. 3.1), firstly because of the size (< 147 cm height at the withers, which is often used to discriminate between a pony and horse) and secondly because of many physiological characteristics (e.g. nutritional requirements, digestion, metabolism and voluntary feed intake) which differ to some extent between horses and ponies. There are indications that ponies have more abilities than horses to thrive on fibre-rich grass and hay (Udén and Van Soest, 1982; Ragnarsson and Jansson, 2011) and have lower energy requirements than horses (Ragnarsson, 2009); they are often referred to as 'easy keepers' (Ragnarsson and Jansson, 2011). Ponies also have less ability than horses to tolerate simple carbohydrates (Bamford *et al*., 2014) that are found in concentrates (e.g. oats, corn and barley).

However, as this is the only horse breed in Iceland it is always called a horse, and in the ears of Icelanders it is humiliating to call it a pony, partly because usually only children ride ponies. It is a tradition, based on good experience, that both adults and children ride Icelandic horses and physiologically the horses cope well with carrying adults (Stefánsdóttir *et al*., 2017). The great riding abilities, strength, stamina, speed capacity and versatility of gaits support the argument that the breed deserves to be called a horse. In contrast, not many pony breeds are gaited and, as mentioned, they are usually not ridden by adults because of lack of strength and power.

It is the gaitedness (tölt and pace) for which the Icelandic horse is most known and appreciated. Virtually all Icelandic horses have tölt in addition to walk, trot and canter/gallop and many also have the flying pace (FEIF, 2019a). Tölt is a lateral, four-beat symmetrical



Fig. 3.1. An Icelandic horse – a stallion. Photographer: Guðrún J. Stefánsdóttir.

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gait with one or two legs always on the ground, i.e. without suspension (Fig. 3.2). The footfall sequence is left hind, left front, right hind and right front (Hildebrand, 1965). The flying pace is a symmetrical gait with suspension, where the two lateral legs move together, and the gait is two-beat or slightly four-beat (Reynisson, 2017; Gunnarsson *et al*., 2018). The footfall sequence is left hind and left front together and then right hind and right front together (Hildebrand, 1965). Tölt and pace are very popular gaits because of their softness and suppleness, which provide comfort for the rider. The speed of these lateral gaits in the Icelandic horse can also be fascinating; good tölters have a wide speed range (3–10 m/s) and a real pace can reach high speeds (12–14 m/s). However, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between the two gaits as the footfall sequence is the same, but pace includes a moment of suspension (when no hoof touches the ground) whereas tölt does not (Gunnarsson *et al*., 2018).

Commonly, Icelandic horses live free outside for their first three years of life and usually spend no or only a short time in the stable. If they are kept inside during their first three years of life it is usually only during winter time (January–May) and most often only during their first year of life. When kept outside, which is the most common practice, they have a lot of land and space to play and move, meaning their locomotion is natural and healthy for their physical development. Additionally, they grow up in a group of horses and learn to be 'a horse', in terms of behaviour in nature, communication with other



Fig. 3.2. An Icelandic horse (stallion) in tölt. Photographer: Óðinn Örn Jóhannsson. Photo processing: Þorkell Magnússon.

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horses, etc. This is important for their cognitive development which in turn is important to establish before being tamed by humans, for example learning the language of horses, responsiveness to aids, communication, role of friendship and leadership. Systematic training starts later in Icelandic horses compared with many other sport competition horses such as Standardbred trotters, Thoroughbred and Warmblood breeds. Training under saddle does not start until horses are in their fourth year, or approximately 3.5 years old, and sometimes later. According to a study on closure time of growth plates in the bones of limbs of the Icelandic horse, it is ready for training under saddle at that time as most appendicular growth plates are closed at 3 years of age (Strand *et al*., 2007).

The Icelandic horse is renowned for having good health, high fertility and longevity, and it is not uncommon that individuals reach 20–30 years of age (Björnsson and Sveinsson, 2006; FEIF, 2019a). The high age of the Icelandic horse was confirmed by Sigfusson (2003) where 50% of the 772 horses studied were still alive at 18 years of age. It is known that Icelandic horses continue to compete with great success at high ages, not least in pace races (Jansson *et al*., 2014). The average age of the ten fastest horses in the 100 m and 250 m pace race competitions in the five most recent world championships for Icelandic horses (held every second year from 2011 to 2019) was 13.8 ± 3.5 years (FEIF, 2019b; WorldFengur, 2019). To be eligible to participate in sports competition events (e.g. pace racing), Icelandic horses have to be at least five years of age and for the World Championships and other international competitions they must be at least six years old (FEIF, 2019a). For comparison, the most common racing horse breeds – Thoroughbred and Standardbreds – start to race earlier in life than Icelandic horses, most usually 2–3 years old (More, 1998; Knight and Thomson, 2011) and racing is rather rare after 5 years of age in Thoroughbred (flat) and Standardbred (Cheetham *et al*., 2010). The racing career is also usually shorter, commonly 4–5 years (Physick-Sheard, 1986), and they reach their fastest racing times between 4 and 5 years old (Gramm and Marksteiner, 2010). Thoroughbreds who participate in jump racing can be over this age and continue to race for longer.

3.5 Scope of the Icelandic Horse World

Iceland is formally recognized as the country of origin of the Icelandic horse (Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, 2011) and the horse population in Iceland stands at about 65,000 individuals (Statistics Iceland, 2019). Export of Icelandic horses was not common until the 19th century, and in the years 1850–1900 horses were exported mainly to work in coal mines, predominantly in Britain. In the years 1900–1950, horses were mostly exported for agricultural work to small farms in Europe, primarily to Denmark (Guðlaugsson, 2006). When the Icelandic horse got a new role following mechanization after the Second World War, export of riding horses started for real and increased rapidly in the following years. The Icelandic horse truly became international in May 1969 when the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations (FEIF) was founded by six countries: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands and Switzerland (FEIF, 2019c). Today, Icelandic horses can be found in more than 30 countries and there are breeding associations in 21 countries (FEIF, 2019d). There are now more Icelandic horses abroad than in Iceland, with the total number outside Iceland being about 175,000. The highest numbers are in Germany (ca. 55,000), Denmark (ca. 40,000), Sweden (ca. 30,000) and Norway (13,000), whereas in other countries numbers are fewer than 6000 per country (FEIF, 2019d). Abroad, as in Iceland, the Icelandic horse is first and foremost used as a riding horse for leisure activities, sport and competition.

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Table 3.1. Traits assessed in breeding shows of Icelandic horses and their weighting proportions in a total score (last changed in 2020).

Conformation traits	%	Riding abilities	%
Head	2	Tölt	16
Neck, withers and shoulders	8	Trot	9
Back and croup (topline)	5.5	Pace	10
Proportions	7	Canter	4
Leg quality	4	Gallop	3
Leg joints	2	Spirit	7
Hooves	5	General impression	10
Mane and tail	1.5	Walk	6
		Slow tölt	0
Total	35		65

There are over 500 riding clubs with around 65,000 members in the FEIF countries (FEIF, 2019d) and there are 44 riding clubs in Iceland (Icelandic Equestrian Association, n.d.). In the years 2014–2018, there were on average 650 (range 278–834) competition events held per year in the FEIF countries (FEIF, 2019d). The biggest competition events are Landsmót and the World Championship.

The breed evaluation system and the studbook, WorldFengur, are international and are accessible on the website of the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations (FEIF, 2019a; WorldFengur, 2019). Since 1950 a graded judging scale has been used to assess breeding horses for both conformation and riding abilities (Björnsson and Sveinsson, 2006). The official breeding goal includes 16 traits (eight conformation and eight riding ability traits), which are assessed individually at breeding shows and are standard for all countries (Table 3.1) (FEIF, 2020). The score for slow tölt is only given for information, as it does not carry weight itself but is taken into account in the score for tölt (Table 3.1).

The breeding show consists of three parts: (1) objective body measurements (used for collecting information on size of the Icelandic horse and for assistance of judging the conformation); (2) judging of conformation; and (3) riding abilities, where horses show all their gaits while carrying a rider. This means that the horses that perform best on gaits while carrying a rider have been selected for breeding for approximately 70 years, which is an important issue considering the long tradition that both adults and children ride the Icelandic horse. The judging scale, where the score for each trait is explained, is described in detail in the international breeding standard (FEIF, 2019a, 2020), but the weighting proportions and some requirements/descriptions for obtaining a certain score in the judging scale were changed in 2020. In the five years 2014–2018, 1800–2300 Icelandic horses were fully judged on the assessment scale in breeding shows per year (FEIF, 2019d).

3.6 Landsmót

3.6.1 The historical development of Landsmót since 1950

The year 1950 was in many ways a critical moment in the history of the Icelandic horse: it was the year when enthusiasts of the Icelandic horse began Landsmót, the National Icelandic Horse Competition (Landsmót hestamanna, 2020). It is described as 'the largest

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outdoor sporting event in Iceland showcasing Iceland's best horses and riders' (Landsmót hestamanna, 2020). The first Landsmót was held at the Þingvellir National Park, on 6–11 July 1950 (Icelandic Horse Historical Center, 2018) and has been held regularly ever since at rotating locations around Iceland (Guðlaugsson, 2006; Landsmót hestamanna, 2020). From 1950 to 1998 it was held every four years, but thereafter biennially (Icelandic Horse Historical Center, 2018). Table 3.2 lists all the Landsmót events, with locations, dates and novelty of each event. Landsmót has been held 23 times: 13 times in the south of Iceland and ten times in the north of Iceland (Table 3.2 and Fig. 3.3). These are the two areas in Iceland that have the highest ratio of horses per person (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015). It has always been held in the time period from the end of June to the middle of July. This is the time in Iceland when there is 24 hours of daylight and it is the summer high season in the country.

Landsmót has expanded greatly since it was first held in 1950 (Icelandic Horse Historical Center, 2019). In the beginning (1950) the framework of the event was completely different from what it is today. The number of competition disciplines, classes of breeding horses and number of horses attending the event were much fewer, there were grass tracks but no specially made gravel tracks, all horses were ridden to the event and not transported to the showground in trailers, and at the competition venue all horses were kept outside in fields and not in stables. The facilities provided for the horses at Landsmót today will be described later in the chapter.

3.6.2 Horses' performances at Landsmót

There are two main categories of performance that Icelandic horses are trained for (Stefánsdóttir, 2015). The first is a breeding show, sometimes referred to as a breed evaluation field test (Stefánsdóttir *et al.*, 2014), which aims to evaluate horses according to the breeding standards (FEIF, 2019a, 2020). The second category includes the specialized gait competitions. There are three main types of gait competitions for Icelandic horses: (i) sport competitions; (ii) pace race competitions; and (iii) Gæðingakeppni (the Icelandic word *gæðingur* means a quality horse, and in Gæðingakeppni more emphasis is placed on the speed capacity in the gait and powerful performance than in sport competitions). The structure and judgement of these competitions are internationally standardized for the Icelandic horse (FEIF, 2019a, 2020).

At the first Landsmót in 1950 there were five categories of horses exhibited: three for breeding horses, one for Gæðingakeppni and one for racing horses. At Landsmót 2016 the horses that attended could be divided into two main categories: competition horses and breeding horses. There were nine different competition disciplines at Landsmót 2016 and eight classes of individually shown breeding horses (Table 3.3). Additionally, there were two classes of stallions with offspring: those with a first prize or those with an honour prize (see further descriptions of qualifications below).

3.6.3 Facilities and Landsmót

Special facilities are needed for both horses and people at the venue where Landsmót is held. The tracks need to fulfil official requirements of size, design and quality, e.g. level, firm and well compressed surfaces that are maintained throughout the whole event (FEIF,

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Table 3.2. List of Landsmót held in Iceland regularly since 1950 (with permission of Icelandic Horse Historical Center, 2018).

Number	Year	Location	Date	Description of novelty
1	1950	Þingvellir, South Iceland	6–11 July	First event; five categories of horses
2	1954	Þveráreyrar Eyjafjörður, North Iceland	7–11 July	Same categories of horses as 1950
3	1958	Skógarhólar, Þingvellir, South Iceland	17–20 July	Start of a special category of stallions with offspring and mares with offspring for the first time
4	1962	Skógarhólar, Þingvellir, South Iceland	13–15 July	
5	1966	Hólar in Hjaltadalur, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	13–17 July	
6	1970	Skógarhólar, Þingvellir, South Iceland	8–12 July	The Gæðingakeppni was split into two categories: A (5-gaited) and B (4-gaited) gæðinga
7	1974	Vindheimamelar, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	10–14 July	Racing was flourishing and the last part of the Landsmót was the final runs in racing
8	1978	Skógarhólar, Þingvellir, South Iceland	12–16 July	Sport competition included for the first time in Landsmót both tölt (T1) and pace test
9	1982	Vindheimamelar, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	7–11 July	Breeding farms with exhibitions included for the first time at Landsmót. Youth competitions started and number of competitive disciplines increased, e.g. 150 m pace race. The last time that a money prize was awarded for breeding achievements
10	1986	Gaddstaðaflatir Hella, South Iceland	2–6 July	The event was moved to earlier in July as people were no longer expected to arrive at the event on horseback. The youth competition was divided into two age groups: older and younger. Six categories of racing horses. The tölt competition had been firmly established
11	1990	Vindheimamelar, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	3–8 July	An International Sport Competition took place, but people from abroad took part on borrowed horses from Iceland. Money prizes considerable in the racing competitions
12	1994	Gaddstaðaflatir Hella, South Iceland	28 June–3 July	A children's category established to replace the 'younger' youth category
13	1998	Melgerðismelar, Eyjafjörður, North Iceland	8–12 July	From now on Landsmót would be held biennially

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14	2000	Reykjavík, Viðidalur, South Iceland	4–9 July	Landsmót held in a city for first time
15	2002	Vindheimamelar, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	2–7 July	For the first time at Landsmót a competition in a 100 m flying pace held. A new limited company, Landsmót ehf, owned 2/3 by the Icelandic Horse Association and 1/3 by the Agricultural Society of Iceland, went into operation. The aim was to share knowledge between events and to secure profit for Landsmót
16	2004	Gaddstaðaflatir Hella, South Iceland	28 June–4 July	Before this Landsmót a system was adopted where the number of competition horses in tölt and pace racing was decided beforehand, as was the number of breeding farms allowed to participate in the event. Gallop racing was no longer on the agenda
17	2006	Vindheimamelar, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	26 June–2 July	
18	2008	Gaddstaðaflatir Hella, South Iceland	30 June–6 July	
19	2011	Vindheimamelar, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	26 June–3 July	Landsmót 2010 had to be cancelled and postponed to 2011 because a serious disease (so-called cough disease) broke out among horses within Iceland. It led to a temporary export ban of horses from Iceland and caused considerable disarray
20	2012	Reykjavík, Viðidalur, South Iceland	25 June–1 July	This event was organized so that all the horses taking part could be stabled at the exhibition ground
21	2014	Gaddstaðaflatir Hella, South Iceland	29 June–6 July	
22	2016	Hólar in Hjaltadalur, Skagafjörður, North Iceland	27 June–3 July	A new system was adopted for the admission of a fixed number of breeding horses in each category at Landsmót
23	2018	Reykjavík, Viðidalur, South Iceland	1–8 July	
24	2020	Gaddstaðaflatir Hella, South Iceland	6–12 July	Cancelled due to Covid-19

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Fig. 3.3. A map of locations where Landsmót has been held in Iceland.

2019a, 2020). There needs to be a 250 m oval track for the tölt competition and a 300 m oval track for the Gæðingakeppni, and these two are often connected in the same track (FEIF, 2019a, 2020). For the pace races and the show of breeding horses, 300 m straight tracks are required. In recent years there have been at least two tracks at the Landsmót venue: one for the gæðingakeppni and tölt competition (oval with a connected straight track) and one for the breeding show (straight track). Judges of breeding horses need to have a small hut (dry and weather protected) located opposite the middle of the breeding horses' track and with a clear view of the track (FEIF, 2019a, 2020). There is also a demand for stables for all the competition and breeding horses, preferably at the venue or at horse farms in the surrounding area.

Tables 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 provide an overview of the competition categories and facilities needed at a Landsmót competition venue, based on Landsmót 2016.

3.7 Qualification of Horses and Riders for Landsmót

3.7.1 Qualification for breeding horses

There are limitations on the number of breeding horses that can attend Landsmót. It is the Horse Breeding Council in Iceland which sets the criteria for the number of individual breeding horses that can qualify for each Landsmót. Until 2016 each sex and age class had to reach a certain minimum score to qualify for Landsmót, but since Landsmót 2016 only a fixed number of individual breeding horses can qualify in each class. There are breeding shows around the country in the spring before Landsmót, where individually shown breeding horses can qualify, and a fixed number of the highest judged horses in each class within the

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Table 3.3. Description of breeding show for Icelandic horses, approximate distance ridden and type of track required at Landsmót 2016 (from Landsmót hestamanna (2016) Handbook, programme).

Discipline/ Performance	Description of the test: gaits and speed	Approx. distance	Type of track
Breeding show / Breed evaluation field test	**First assessment:** The horse must show all its gaits, with one horse on the track at a time. A minimum six times along the track and a maximum ten times, where 150 m of the track are used for judging the gaits. The rider decides in what order and for how long each gait is shown and each gait can be shown more than once. Each gait, spirit and form under rider are scored within the range 5.0–10.0, with 0.5 increments. A score of 5.0 is given if a gait is not shown and 10.0 is given for an excellent trait. In total eight classes, where stallions and mares are shown in separate sex and age classes (4, 5, 6 and ≥ 7 years old) (FEIF, 2019a). The weighting proportions of each trait in the judging scale were according to the scale described in FEIF (2019a) but not the new weighting proportions described in Table 3.2 and according to FEIF (2020)	1500–2500 m	Straight track 250 m
	Second assessment: Two to three horses on the track at the same time and each horse can be ridden six times along the track. The horses can only improve the scores from the first assessment if they perform better, but will not get a lower score if the performance is worse than in the first assessment. In 2019 the change was made to the judging scale that if the horse shows clearly much worse spirit in the second assessment than in the first one, then the score for it can be lowered	1500–1800 m	Straight track 250 m

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Table 3.4. Description of Gæðingakeppni for Icelandic horses, approximate distance ridden and type of track required in Landsmót 2016 (from Landsmót hestamanna (2016) Handbook, programme).

Gæðingakeppni	Description of the test: gaits and speed	Approx. distance	Type of track
B-class (four-gaited Gæðingar)	**Preliminaries:** Three horses are on the track at a time, and ride on the left or the right rein under instructions from the commentator. Performance is up to 2 rounds in slow tempo tölt, up to 2 rounds in free tempo trot, and up to 2 rounds where fast tempo tölt is ridden on long sides. No objective speed measurements, just subjective estimation by the judges. Scores from 5 to 10 for each trait, where the weight of each gait (slow tölt, trot and fast tölt) is ×1, willingness/spirit ×2 and form under rider ×2. The judges divide the sum of scores by 7	~1800m (6 rounds)	Oval, 300m
	Semi-finals: The 30 highest scored horses from the preliminaries will reach the semi-finals. One horse on the track at a time. The rider has three rounds to show all gaits (walk, slow tölt, trot, fast tölt and gallop). The rider can turn around once and can use the straight track once to show the fast tölt if the rider wishes	~ 900m (3 rounds)	
	Finals (A and B): The 15 highest scored horses from the semi-finals will reach the finals, the horses in places 8–15 in the B-finals and horses in places 1–7 in the A-finals. All horses in each final (B or A) are on the track at the same time. The winner of the B-finals earns the right to compete in the A-finals. The riders should show slow tempo tölt up to 2 rounds per rein, trot with speed variation up to 2 rounds per rein and fast tempo tölt on the long sides up to 2 rounds per rein	~3600m (up to 12 rounds)	
A-class (five-gaited Gæðingar)	**Preliminaries:** Three horses are on the track at a time and ride on the left or the right rein as per instructions from the commentator. Performance is up to 2 rounds in free tempo tölt, up to 2 rounds in free tempo trot, and one sprint pace on the straight track, one horse at a time. No objective speed measurements, just subjective estimation by the judges. For each trait the scores are given from 5 to 10, where the weight is: tölt ×2, trot ×1, pace ×2, willingness/spirit ×2 and form under rider ×2. The judges divide the sum of scores by 9	~1375m (4 rounds + a sprint on the straight track ~175m)	Oval, 300m and a straight track at least 175m long
	Semi-finals: The 30 highest scored horses from the preliminaries will reach the semi-finals. One horse on the track at a time. The rider has three rounds to show all gaits (walk, trot, tölt, gallop and pace). The rider can turn around once and can use the straight track once to show the pace if they wish	~ 900m (3 rounds)	
	Finals (A and B): The 15 highest scored horses from the semi-finals will reach the finals. Horses placed 8–15 reach the B-finals and horses placed 1–7 the A-finals. All horses in each final (B or A) are on the track at the same time. The B-finals take place first and the winner of those earns the right to compete in the A-finals. The riders should show any/free tempo tölt up to 2 rounds per rein (direction), trot up to 2 rounds per rein and two pace sprints, both on the same rein. For the pace runs the straight track is used and one horse shows pace at a time	~2750m (up to 8 rounds + 2 pace sprints ~175m each)j	

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Young classes **Gæðingakeppni**			
Children **10–13 years old**	**Preliminaries:** Three horses are on the track at a time, ridden on the left or right rein under instructions from the commentator. The riders will show one/two rounds tölt and/or trot, and two sprints gallop on a long side of the track. One rider at ja time will show the gallop. Both gaits of the horse and seat and aids of the rider are judged. Weighing of the scores are seat and riding skills ×2, tölt/trot ×1, gallop ×1. The judges divide the sum of scores by 4	~800m (2 rounds + 2 sprints, each ~100m)	Oval, 300m
	Semi-finals: The 30 highest scored rider and horse combinations from the preliminaries will reach the semi-finals. One rider and horse on the track at a time. The rider should show tölt or trot, up to 2 rounds per rein and two gallop sprints with variation in speed	~1400m (4 rounds) + 2 gallop sprints (each ~100m)	
	Finals (A and B): The 15 highest scored rider and horse combinations from the semi-finals will reach the finals. Riders placed 8–15 reach the B-finals and riders placed 1-7 the A-finals. All horses (eight) in each final (B or A) are on the track at the same time. The B-finals take place first and the winner of those earns the right to compete in the A-finals. The riders should show tölt or trot, up to 2 rounds per rein (direction) and two gallop sprints with clear variation in speed	Same in the finals as in the semifinals.	
Teenagers **14–17 years old**	**Preliminaries:** Three horses are on the track at a time, ridden on the left or right rein under instructions from the commentator. The riders will show two rounds slow tölt, two rounds trot at any speed, two rounds fast tölt on the long sides of the track. Both gaits of the horse and seat and aids of the rider are judged. Weighing of the scores is each gait (slow tölt, trot and fast tölt) ×1, seat and riding skills ×1. The judges divide the sum of scores by 4	~1800m (6 rounds)	Oval, 300m
	Semi-finals: One horse on the track at a time. The rider has three rounds to show all gaits (walk, tölt, trot, fast tolt/fast trot and gallop). The rider can choose either tölt or trot as the fast gait on the long sides	~900m (3 rounds)	
	Finals: The 15 highest scored rider and horse combinations from the semi-finals will reach the finals. Riders placed 8–15 reach the B-finals and riders placed 1–7 the A-finals. All horses (eight) in each final (B or A) are on the track at the same time. The B-finals take place first and the winner of those earns the right to compete in the A-finals. The riders should show slow tölt, up to 2 rounds per rein. Trot with speed variation, up to 2 rounds per rein and their choice of fast gait (tölt or trot) on the long sides, up to 2 rounds per rein	3600m (up to 12 rounds)	

Continued

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Table 3.4. Continued.

Gæðingakeppni	Description of the test: gaits and speed	Approx. distance	Type of track
Young riders 18–21 years old	**Preliminaries:** Three horses are on the track at a time, ridden on the left or right rein under instructions from the commentator. The riders will show 2 rounds slow tölt, 2 rounds free/any tempo trot, 2 rounds fast tölt on the long sides of the track. Weighing of the score is each gait (slow tölt, trot and fast tölt) ×1, willingness/spirit ×1, form under rider ×1. The judges divide the sum of scores by 5	~1800m (6 rounds)	Oval, 300m
	Semi-finals: One horse on the track at a time. The rider has 3 rounds to show all gaits (walk, trot, slow and fast tölt and gallop) and is allowed to turn around once. The rider can use the straight track once to show the fast tölt if they wish	~900m (3 rounds)	
	Finals: The 15 highest scored rider and horse combinations from the semi-finals will reach the finals. Riders placed 8–15 reach the B-finals and riders placed 1–7 the A-finals. All horses (eight) in each final (B or A) are on the track at the same time. The riders should show slow tölt, up to 2 rounds per rein. Trot up to 2 rounds per rein and fast tölt on the long sides of the track, up to 2 rounds per rein	~3600m (up to 12 rounds)	

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Table 3.5. Description of the tölt competition (T1) for Icelandic horses, approximate distance ridden and type of track required in Landsmót 2016 (from Landsmót hestamanna (2016) Handbook, programme).

Sport discipline	Description of the test: gaits and speed	Approx. distance	Type of track
Tölt (T1)	**Preliminaries:** One rider and horse combination on the track at a time. The rider can choose which rein to start on, and has to show: (1) slow tölt, 1 round, stop and turn around (change rein), (2) tölt with speed variations 1 round, with slow tölt on the curves and lengthen stride distinctly on the long sides, (3) extended (fast) tölt, 1 round. Weighing of the scores is slow tölt ×1, tölt with speed variations ×1, fast tölt ×1	750–810 m	Oval, 250 m
	Finals (A and B): The finals are divided into A and B finals, a total of 10 horses. The B-finals take place first and the winner of those earns the right to compete in the A-finals. The riders should show slow tölt, up to 2 rounds per rein, tölt with speed variations, up to 2 rounds per rein, and fast tölt, up to 2 rounds per rein	3000 m (up to 12 rounds)	

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Table 3.6. Description of pace races for Icelandic horses, distance ridden and the type of track required in Landsmót 2016 (from Landsmót hestamanna (2016) Handbook, programme).

Pace races	Description of the test: gaits and speed	Distance	Type of track
100 m pace / Speed pace	The 100 m pace with a **flying start** is performed individually on a straight track. The gait before the start line and after the 100 m timed pace race is voluntary and decided by the rider and horse. Timed (electronic) distance is 100 m (in pace). The rider has two attempts, with a few minutes of rest in between, to get an approved (correct gait) pace run (the horse has to be in pace over the start line and keep pace for at least 100 m to get an approved pace run). The better time of the two runs is used as the result in the competition	150–250 m whereof at least 100 m after starting line have to be in flying pace	Straight, 150–250 m
150 m pace	150 m pace with a **standing start from start boxes**. For the first 49 m in any gait, but has to be in pace at the 50 m line and for 100 m and pace over the finishing line. Timed (electronic) distance is 150 m (start and 100 m in pace). Four sprints (rounds) and the best time out of the four is used as the result in the competition. In general, two horses run together on the track	150 m whereof the last 100 m in flying pace at racing speed	Straight, 200–250 m
250 m pace	250 m pace with a **standing start from start boxes**. For the first 49 m in any gait, but has to be in pace at the 50 m line and for 200 m and over the finishing line. Timed (electronic) distance is 250 m (start and 200 m in pace). Four sprints (rounds) and the best time out of the four is used as the result in the competition. In general, two horses run together on the track	250 m whereof the last 200 m in flying pace at racing speed	Straight, 200–250 m

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country will earn the right to go to Landsmót. Stallions with offspring have to have sired a certain number of individually judged offspring at breeding shows and to have a minimum Best Linear Unbiased Prediction (BLUP) score to have the chance to attend Landsmót. The minimum requirement for a stallion to get a first prize for offspring is that 15 of his offspring have been judged individually at breeding shows and that the stallion has a BLUP score of at least 118 (FEIF, 2019a, 2020). The minimum requirement for a stallion to get an honour prize for offspring is that 50 of his offspring have been judged individually at breeding shows and that the stallion has a BLUP score of at least 118 (FEIF, 2019a, 2020).

Because of the qualification criteria, only the best breeding horses at any time in Iceland can attend Landsmót and it is regarded as a great honour for these horses and their owners.

3.7.2 Qualification for competition disciplines

There are several disciplines for the competition horses at Landsmót:

- Gæðingakeppni, which is divided into A- and B-class gæðinga for adults, and classes for children (10–13 years old), teenagers (14–17 years old) and young adults (18–21 years old) (see Table 3.4 for further description of the Gæðingakeppni);
- tölt competition (T1) (see Table 3.5 for description); and
- pace races, which can be divided into 100 m flying pace (flying start), and 150 m and 250 m pace with a standing start from start boxes (see Table 3.6 for further description of the pace races).

The system for the Gæðingakeppni is different from that for breeding horses and it is based on each riding club (there are 44 in Iceland) sending their best horse-and-rider combinations to Landsmót. Each club has permission to send to each Gæðingakeppni discipline (A- and B-class, children, teenagers and young adults) one competitor (horse and rider) per every 125 registered members.

Thus riding clubs with 1–125 members can send one horse per discipline, those with 126–250 members can send two horses per discipline, those with 251–375 members can send three horses per discipline, etc. (Hjörný Snorradóttir, Iceland, 2019, personal communication). Because the riding clubs are located all over Iceland, they have very different membership numbers, ranging from 19 to 1668 (before Landsmót 2018) depending on how many people live in the area and general interest in horses in the area (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015). Therefore, the quality of the horses coming from the smallest riding clubs can often be much lower than the quality of the horses from the largest clubs, and the same with the riders. For the same reason the riders who qualify for Gæðingakeppni in Landsmót can be both amateurs and professionals.

To qualify for the tölt competition in Landsmót, horses have to reach minimum scores in competitions earlier in the same year. To qualify for the pace races, horses have to reach a certain time limit in competitions earlier in the same year. There is also a limited number of horses that qualify for these disciplines.

3.8 Conclusion

The Icelandic horse is pure bred with no introduction of new genetic material since the time of settlement of Iceland. The character and traits of the Icelandic horse have made the

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breed internationally recognized and now it is bred and kept worldwide. Its distinctive traits are the lateral gaits tölt and pace, and the spirit. These traits have played a major role in the popularity of the breed and have guided the development of organized breeding work and competition sport disciplines that are very specialized and differ from disciplines for other horse breeds, as summarized in Tables 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. Well-defined breeding objectives and judging scales, both in breeding and in competitions, have played a key role in improvements in breeding, training and riding of the Icelandic horse.

The National Icelandic Horse Competition called Landsmót hestamanna has been held regularly in Iceland since 1950. Landsmót has been built upon the organized local work of riding clubs and breeding associations all around the country, with their preselection competitions and breeding shows ensuring broad participation of the general horseman. This promotes general interest amongst horse people and media interest in Landsmót, and has been one of the key factors in making Landsmót among the biggest sporting events in Iceland in recent decades, attracting thousands of spectators both from Iceland and from abroad.

3.9 Implications

- The model described in this chapter is to keep the Icelandic horse pure and to have the official breeding work and competition rules standardized internationally. These are all key factors for future development, distribution and the divergent industry of the Icelandic horse worldwide.
- The National Icelandic Horse Competition 'Landsmót hestamanna' is a focal point to promote the Icelandic horse for riders, trainers, breeders, owners and spectators from Iceland and abroad.

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4 Strategic Management of Horse-related Events: the Case of the National Championships of the Icelandic Horse (Landsmót) 1998–2008

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Abstract

Horse-related events have been popular in Iceland for many decades, as well as in other countries. Such events attract many people that are both enthusiastic about and involved in horse-related activities. The biggest horse event in Iceland since 1950 has been the National Championships of the Icelandic Horse – Landsmót – which enables the owners of the best horses in Iceland to come together and compete in various categories. Landsmót is organized by the Icelandic Equestrian Association (Landssamband hestamannafélaga [National Association of Equestrian Associations], referred to as LH) and the Farmers Association of Iceland in cooperation with local horse clubs that act as hosts for Landsmót. In this chapter, the Landsmót events held in the years 1998–2008 are studied from a strategic management point of view. The chapter looks into the lessons learnt from the events, based on a four-dimensional approach to strategic management. The main goal of the research, which was completed in 2010, was to bring forward important knowledge and information on the Landsmót events that could be used in the strategy and the development work for upcoming events over the following years. The study of Landsmót 1998–2008 was based on a case study method. Six cases were studied from an illustrative and explorative point of view. The study also made use of focus groups, interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. The study concluded that Landsmót as a biennial event is a celebration of success in breeding and training of the Icelandic horse. Landsmót is also a social gathering, uniting people who are dedicated to the Icelandic horse, both within Iceland and from abroad. The study also concluded that Landsmót is about competition and ranking of the best horses, while at the same time it is an event true to tradition and family activity. Finally, the main conclusions reveal that Landsmót is very important for marketing and communication of the qualities of the Icelandic horse.

Key words

strategy; management; dimensions; events; service; horses

4.1 Introduction

How is it possible to study, learn and develop lessons for improvement from a series of horse-related events that have taken place over many years in different locations in a particular country? That was the question when Hjörný Snorradóttir, an MS student in the

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field of strategy and management, approached her supervisor, Professor Runólfur Smári Steinþórsson, at the School of Business, University of Iceland. That question became the start of a journey to investigate what lessons could be learned from the experience of hosting and managing Landsmót (the National Championships of the Icelandic horse). The first Landsmót was held in 1950 and it marked a milestone in the breeding and sports competitions of the Icelandic breed of horses, as it made it possible for the owners of the best horses all over Iceland to come together and celebrate through competition between the horses, and to enjoy the shared community that Landsmót provides for guests and participants.

In the initial steps of study reported here (Snorradóttir, 2010) it was decided that a strategic management framework would be used to help bring forward the lessons of Landsmót. Regarding the choice of theoretical framework of the study, the conclusion was to use a model that had been developed earlier by the supervisor of the study and identified as 'the four dimensions of strategic management' (Steinthorsson, 1995, 2003a). In addition to the focus on strategy, the theoretical framework would include theories of events (Getz, 1997), events management (Shone and Parry, 2004) and service management (Zeithaml *et al*., 2006; Grönroos, 2007, 2015).

A genuine interest in the Icelandic horse and the series of Landsmót events was the main motivation for the research for both authors. The Landsmót events have been held regularly. From the start in 1950 they were held every four years, rotating between different competition sites, until 1998, after which they have been held every two years (see Chapter 3, this volume). Landsmót has been very popular among horse enthusiasts in Iceland and can be described as the richest and most interesting regular horse-based event that features the best horses in Iceland, and now attracts Icelandic horse enthusiasts and the best riding professionals from both Iceland and abroad.

Landsmót has a long and interesting history and has been held 23 times. The Landsmót programme has been similar through the years but the events have gradually developed and been modernized (see Chapter 3, this volume). Up to the time of the 1998–2008 case study (Snorradóttir, 2010), the number of horses registered to compete at Landsmót had been increasing steadily throughout the years, from around 130 in 1950 to around 1100 horses at the 18th Landsmót in Hella in 2008. The number of visitors, riders, staff and volunteers were reported to be around 14,000 at Landsmót in 2008. The duration of the whole event in 2008 was one week.

Despite the unique status of Landsmót as the only nationwide horse-related event in Iceland focused on competition and breeding, general qualities of the horses (Gæðingakeppni A-flokkur and B-flokkur (four gaits; five gaits)) and sports (tölt and pace) and with a history of development spanning more than half a century, the year 2008 did mark a milestone. In the aftermath of Landsmót 2008, for the first time an open review meeting was held, making it possible for the different stakeholders to review the event (Hestafréttir, 2008, in Snorradóttir, 2010, p. 16). At this meeting, many issues regarding the event were discussed and criticism was brought into the open. The points and problems that were raised in this meeting about the design and conduct of Landsmót did have an influence on how the research presented here was designed and what methods were used.

The main goal of the research, which was finalized in 2010, was to follow up on the critical issues and problems mentioned in the open review meeting, bringing together data on Landsmót and generating knowledge on Landsmót for managerial purposes. The aim of the project was to provide an informative timeline of the event and prepare a profile of the event, as well as to gather information in a systematic way on the current views of the

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main stakeholders. The intention was to bring forward new knowledge and information that could be used in the strategy and development work for the upcoming events over the following years.

The research questions for the project were the following (Snorradóttir and Steinþórsson, 2011).

1. What are the main lessons of the six Landsmót events held in 1998–2008 in relation to what could be done to improve the preparation and implementation of the Landsmót events for the future?
2. How could Landsmót best meet the interests and requirements of both the professionals and the attending horse enthusiasts, domestic as well as international?
3. What are the main strategic issues and managerial challenges regarding the future development of the Landsmót events?

In the remainder of the chapter we introduce the strategic management framework used in the 1998–2008 study, the methods used for data collection and generation of the results of the study and a summary of the main findings of the first comprehensive study on Landsmót by Snorradóttir (2010).

4.2 A Strategic Management Framework for Event Studies

As in all studies, there are many possibilities regarding the choice of a theoretical framework to be used for positioning and discussing the empirical material. For studies of events it is possible to make inquiries from various fields and perspectives. In this chapter the focus is on studies from a strategic management point of view. A strategic management perspective of an event is seen here as a theoretical approach that focuses on why the event exists and for whom. It also highlights the question of direction in the development of the event and how the event is or has been effectively managed in times of change and challenges, both within the chain of events and in the external environment of the events. A strategic management perspective opens up questions that address how the event has been performing in the past and enables a managerial understanding of the present situation, and also on what could be important to consider regarding future strategy for the event.

A review of key literature on strategy helps in developing an understanding of this perspective. The book *Fundamental Issues in Strategy* (Rumelt *et al*., 1994) discussed the intellectual backbone of the field. 'Why firms succeed or fail' has been presented as one of the central questions of strategy (Porter, 1994, p. 423) and 'strategy is about direction of organizations' (Rumelt *et al*., 1994, p. 9). This means that strategy reveals 'how firms and organisations in general make assumptions and decisions about context' (Rumelt *et al*., 1994, pp. 20–21). Other fundamental questions of strategy are 'How do firms behave?', 'Why are firms different?' and 'What limits the scope of the firm?' (Rumelt *et al*., 1994, pp. 41–45).

There are of course many other questions that can be regarded as important in the strategy field. That is not surprising, because the literature on strategic management is huge (Mintzberg *et al*., 1998). Strategies have been defined in various ways. As a summary of the different views and definitions in the field they can be seen as plans, patterns, positions, perspectives and ploys (Mintzberg, 1987). In short, strategy enables organizations to deal with uncertainty in the environment. The main goal is to succeed and ensure value for the different stakeholders through the activities of the organization and by the use of the necessary resources.

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When reviewing the literature on event studies from a strategy perspective, many of the contributions come from the field of tourism (Stokes, 2006, 2008; Stokes and Jago, 2007; Crowther, 2010). The focus on sports is also considerable, both small-scale events (Pereira *et al*., 2015) and mega events (Grix and Houlihan, 2014). The contributions mentioned above have been based on studies that were conducted at different levels of analysis and with different research aims. The papers by Stokes (2006, 2008) and Crowther (2010) presented reviews of the field of events and strategy that in many ways correspond to the subject of the study that is presented in this chapter. Yet Stokes (2006) focused mainly on tourism and networking, while Stokes (2008) highlighted tourism strategy and events tourism.

The study of Landsmót that is discussed in this chapter made use of a particular strategic management framework that was developed to enable studies of how organizations are strategically managed from a comprehensive processual and contextual point of view (Steinthorsson, 1995). The model of the four dimensions of strategy was developed by Runólfur Smári Steinþórsson. He was inspired by the work of Andrew Pettigrew (1987) on contextualist research, K.A. Jörgensen's (1977) focus on descriptive models and Berg and Jonsson's (1991) ideas on strategic issues in political markets. The framework was first introduced in his PhD dissertation (Steinthorsson, 1995) and it has been further presented and discussed in Steinthorsson (1996), Steinthorsson and Söderholm (2002), Steinþórsson (2003a,b) and Steinthorsson (2014). It has been used as a framework for strategy studies and for strategy recommendations in many empirical and practice-based strategy assignments in Iceland. Examples of studies in Iceland where students have made use of the model are Sigurgeirsdóttir (2010), Snorradóttir (2010) and Þórðarsson (2019).

Steinþórsson's four-dimensional model (Fig. 4.1) puts forward four dimensions of strategic management (Steinthorsson, 1995, 1996, 2003a). The dimensions are: (i) the existence dimension, covering the main base and grounds for existence of the organized activity in question; (ii) the content dimension, outlining the main activity areas and the positioning of the activities; (iii) the process dimension, emphasizing the chain of activities, paths and timing of action processes; and (iv) the context dimension, highlighting the various external and internal contextual aspects that can have an impact on the development of organizations

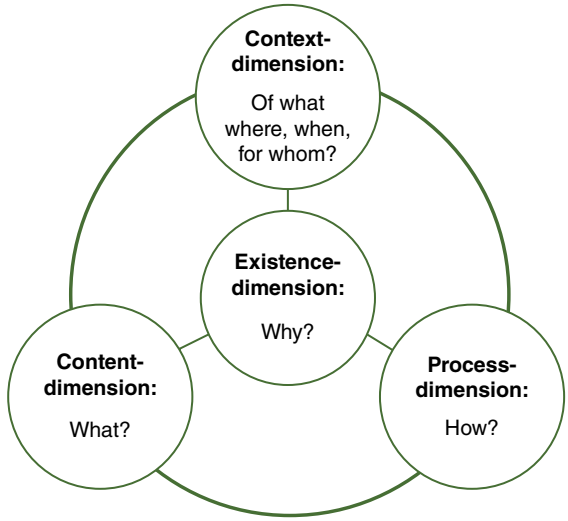


Fig. 4.1. Four dimensions of strategic management (Steinthorsson, 1995).

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and organizational units, including the location of the activities, the role and importance of customers and other stakeholders, the mode of interaction, the resources available, cultural manifestations and staff issues. Each dimension in the four-dimensional model is thoroughly discussed and illustrated in Steinthorsson (1995).

In the Landsmót 1998–2008 study, Steinþorsson's model was used as the main theoretical framework for analysing the Landsmót events. The understanding of strategy that was highlighted was based on a definition of strategy that stresses that a strategy of an organization and organized activity is reflected in the various manifestations of the issues and activities that are revealed through the four dimensions (Steinthorsson, 2003a). The strategy of the organizational activities in question can be studied from the pattern in the past activities, through manifestations of the present state of activities and based on information that can reveal expressions of intentions and aims for the future, like a vision, organizational goals and investments (Steinþórsson, 2003a). This definition of strategy was based on the review and understanding of strategy discussed in Steinthorsson (1995) and further in Steinþórsson (2003b, 2007, 2019) and Steinthorsson (2014) with references to various sources, among them the works of Mintzberg (1987, 1994), Mintzberg *et al*. (1998), Porter (1980, 1985, 1990) and Lynch (2003).

As mentioned in the introduction, the theoretical framework for the study of Landsmót in the period 1998–2008 was mainly based on the strategic management dimensions illustrated above. The theoretical frame of reference was also based on theories on events (Getz, 1997, 2007), events management (Watt, 1998; Shone and Parry, 2004) and service management (Zeithaml *et al*., 2006; Grönroos, 2007, 2015). This literature enhanced and complemented the theoretical framework used. The focus on events and services contributed to the understanding of the temporary character of the organization studied and the focus on services provided a richer understanding of the immaterial aspects of the content of the activities that were to be studied, illustrated through the concepts of service offering and service delivery (Grönroos, 2007, 2015). In addition to the model of the four dimensions of strategic management, discussed above, the Landsmót study also made use of the stakeholder model (Freeman, 1984), the PESTEL analysis (Lynch, 2003), the five forces of competition model (Porter, 1980) and the SWOT analysis (Andrews, 1987).

4.3 Methodology

The study of Landsmót was based on the case study method (Yin, 2003) as a main research method. The research was conducted from a qualitative point of view (Burton, 2000) and the focus was on exploration as a way to understand the key elements of Landsmót. Under the umbrella of the case study method, the focus was on data collection through the use of interviews, focus groups and collection of secondary data available. Data was also obtained through use of questionnaires. In all the attempts to gather primary data the work was guided by the research design of the study and the research questions.

The decision to use the case study method was made on the basis of the suitability of the method to answer the research questions. As informed by Yin (2003), the method is useful for studying contemporary phenomena on the basis of few empirical examples or cases. In this study the goal was to look back and thoroughly review the six Landsmót events that had been held in 1998–2008, and the case study method made it possible to identify each event as a separate case and study it in a direct way (Ghauri *et al*., 1995; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). In fact, the method made it easier for the researchers to focus

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on specific issues and the unique characteristics that could be seen in the examples (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Simons, 2009). It is also reported as a strength of the case study method that it welcomes the use of many data sources (Yin, 2003). At the same time, the method makes it clear that the boundaries of understanding and knowledge which the method helps to bring forward are limited to the few cases studied (Stake, 1995).

A research design of a study that uses the case study method as a way to bring forward knowledge requires that the research questions are in line with the aim of the study (Yin, 2003). Usually the research questions start with the words *how* or *why*. If the study is illustrative the questions can start with *what*. It is also necessary to specify the unit of analysis in the cases (holistic or embedded) and inform about the propositions that are put forward at the beginning of the study, if any. Further, if possible, any intentions regarding how to analyse and interpret the data material are preferred.

In the present study, as outlined in the introduction, the research is explorative and illustrative. The research questions start with *what* and *how*. The cases are multiple (six cases) but with a holistic focus. The study is open, but the interpretation is limited to the insights that can be brought forward with the help of the theoretical framework outlined in the previous section. Regarding specific data gathering and analysis, the following methods were used.

The study made use of focus groups (Bloor and Wood, 2006). This method makes it possible to put together a small group of people where each person has an exceptional insight into the subject matter. The data that were gathered from focus groups came from six meetings that were organized in an identical way, as open meetings that were held in the various regions of Iceland. In those meetings the discussion was in two parts: the first part focused on Landsmót 1998–2008 and the second part focused on the Icelandic Equestrian Association. The participants discussed several predetermined open questions and, before the discussion started, each participant had an opportunity to make personal notes (for the first 10 minutes). The time for discussion in each of the parts was limited to 30 minutes. Each group was limited to ten participants and in each group there was a discussion facilitator. Next, a special meeting was organized with professionals – that is, people who represented the competitors at Landsmót. All in all, 59 people participated in the meetings. The discussion in the focus groups was recorded and analysed based on the questions and the theoretical framework introduced above. The results of the discussion were made public in a separate report using direct references from the discussion (Snorradóttir, 2010).

The study also made use of open-ended interviews (Kvale, 1996; Esterberg, 2002). The interviews as a method were thought to be the best way to gather information from the managers of the six Landsmót events that were studied. Usually the manager of a Landsmót event is only responsible for one event, but in the six cases studied it turned out that one of the managers had been responsible for two Landsmót events. So in total five managers were interviewed. It is important to bear in mind that the core staff of each Landsmót event is very small and sometimes it is only the manager. A total of six interviews were conducted with managers, with one manager being interviewed twice.

The interview method was also used to gather information from representative stakeholders. There were four interviews: one with an experienced professional rider; one with a parent of a young rider, as competition between young people (children, teenagers, young riders) is an important part of Landsmót; and two further interviews with people who were considered to be representatives of the visitors to the event. The interviews were recorded and analysed with the use of open coding (Kvale, 1996). In the instances of direct quotes to be used in the records, they were sent back to the respondents for verification.

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Data gathered through the use of questionnaires (Bryman and Bell, 2007) made it possible to collect responses from many members of the Icelandic Equestrian Association and also from people interested in the Icelandic horse who were among the visitors that attended the World Championships for Icelandic Horses that was held in Switzerland in 2009. The idea was that by getting people from the audience in Switzerland to respond to the questionnaire it would be possible to gather information from experienced spectators as well as potential international visitors who might attend Landsmót in Iceland. Therefore, there were two versions of the questionnaire: one version sent to people who had visited Iceland and Landsmót before and one to the group that had not visited Iceland and therefore Landsmót. A lot of effort was put into making the list of questions as strong as possible and in total 300 questionnaires were prepared and handed out (150 for each group). The number of responses was 269, giving a response rate of 89%. Of the respondents, three out of four were women and there was good participation from people in almost all age groups from 18 to 65. Responses were very few in the group older than 65.

The questionnaire that was prepared for the respondents in Iceland was made available using Questionpro.com. The list of questions was developed by the researchers, and people from 38 local horse clubs throughout the country participated. The survey was open for seven days and aimed to reach 1680 members out of a population of 11,107. The response rate was 35% and the respondents were evenly distributed between men and women. The participation was good in all six age groups, from 18 to older than 65. The responses were also well spread throughout the country. Only the east of the country was not well represented (with 5% of the answers), while the Reykjavik area had the highest share with 35% of the answers. The responses were analysed using SPSS with a focus on descriptive statistics, cross-tables and T test.

Finally, the extensive document analysis was completed. Based on various sources of secondary data, a comparative illustration of the six Landsmót cases 1998–2008 was prepared in a single table that covered six pages. The information covered: (1) the manager; (2) the board (steering committee); (3) the hosts; (4) sponsors; (5) operators (voluntary associations) and volunteers; (6) participation fee (age groups, days); (7) number of guests; (8) the programme; (9) facilities for guests (visitors); (10) number of horses; (11) illustration of the facilities for shows and competition; (12) facilities for the horses, indoors and outdoors; (13) food for guests and participants; and (14) the financial results of the events.

This research is based on various data sources and with the help of different methods. In the following sections the results of the study of Landsmót in the period 1998–2008 by Snorradóttir (2010) are presented.

4.4 Landsmót 1998–2008 from a Strategic Management Perspective

In this section the focus is on findings based on the four dimensions of strategic management: existence, content, process and context (Steinthorsson, 1995).

4.4.1 The existence dimension

In the existence dimension, attention is focused on issues that reflect the purpose of Landsmót in six related areas: (i) foundation and history; (ii) ideal; (iii) mission; (iv) vision; (v) activity concept and main ideas; and (vi) management concept and main ideas (Steinthorsson, 1995, 2003a).

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Regarding the *foundation* of Landsmót in 1950, the main purpose was to contribute to improvements in the breeding of the Icelandic riding horse and to be a venue for the horse community in Iceland to come together and celebrate (see also Chapter 2B, this volume). At the time when Landsmót was established, a horse breeding adviser of the Farmers Association in Iceland, Gunnar Bjarnason, had an influential role. Gunnar was a forward-thinking man and was actively working on improvements to the Icelandic horse breed, both within Iceland and abroad. The document analysis presented in Snorradóttir (2010) revealed that the initial idea was that the main associations, the Icelandic Equestrian Association established in 1949 and the Farmers Association in Iceland, would work in cooperation regarding the leadership and supervision of the direction of breeding, as well as in developing Landsmót. However, this did not happen, due to a disagreement between the chairman of the Icelandic Equestrian Association, H.J. Hólmjárn, and the horse-breeding adviser of the Farmers Association in Iceland, resulting in closer cooperation between the Icelandic Equestrian Association and the local horse clubs in the area where the event was held. The Farmers Association was still involved in the Landsmót but more directly with the breeding part of the event. It is also important to reveal that, already at this early time, there was a lack of agreement among the key stakeholders on where the event should be located – an issue which still remains problematic today (see also Chapter 6, this volume).

The study did not reveal that the Landsmót was based on any specific *ideal*, but there were many sources that contain information about the *mission* of the event. Interestingly, no formal mission for Landsmót exists, but the rules of the Icelandic Equestrian Association are informative about the Landsmót event and provide guidelines for how it should be prepared and conducted in various aspects. Based on interviews and the focus group discussions, the working mission of Landsmót 1998–2008 seemed to be a kind of 'harvest celebration festival' where the best horses were presented and the people who were interested in the Icelandic horse came together to enjoy each other's company and build relationships (Snorradóttir, 2010, p. 177).

When it comes to a *vision* for Landsmót, a general formal statement does not exist. The focus seems always to be on the next specific event, without guidelines from a general strategy or a future orientation. According to the interviews with the managers of the Landsmót events 1998–2008, it can be stated that their views differed on some specific issues regarding the future orientation of the event, but they were in agreement that the event should include both the breeding show and the sports competition and also that the different groups of competitors – young and adult – should also be included at the same event.

Regarding *business and management related goals*, there are no data on general goals that have been made public. The data imply that each event does have some working goals that are not publicly stated, like doing many of the same things as at the previous event but making improvements on some of the performance issues, such as increasing the number of guests and improving financial results. The discussion in the focus groups brought up some more articulated goals, such as supporting the broader promotion of the Icelandic horse in Iceland and abroad, increasing the professionalism of both the sports competitions and the breeding of the Icelandic horse, and improving the activities and the solidarity of the members of the local horse clubs and associations. It was also revealed that the managers and the other stakeholders who participated in the discussions were more interested in business-related goals, indicating what activities were to be accomplished in relation to Landsmót, rather than management-related goals on how the activities could be managed. The discussion did not reveal any manifestation of a common management

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policy across the events, but it was apparent that the workload of the temporary event managers was heavy and for that reason it was mentioned that it was important to preserve and distribute management knowledge. Little had been achieved in that regard, due to the fact that the managers only committed to a single event and the knowledge that was generated was mainly of a tacit nature.

4.4.2 The content dimension

In the content dimension, attention is focused on issues that give insight into the activities of Landsmót from a business point of view. The focus is on three issues: (i) key product or service offerings; (ii) value creation processes; and (iii) competitive advantage (Steinthorsson, 1995, 2003a).

In the study of Landsmót 1998–2008 the content of the events was identified and discussed as a service offering (Grönroos, 2007) that is delivered to the customers and the stakeholders of the event. The main target group was visiting guests who are in general very interested in the Icelandic horse and who may be members of horse clubs and associations. This group is the largest at the event and consists of visitors from many countries. Also, this group is very loyal to the event, with 95% of the visitors responding that they would come again and visit future events (see also Chapter 6, this volume). Other groups included participants in the competitions and riders in the horse shows. There were also other stakeholders, like people in management roles in the associations and horse clubs, the media and the local government. Also, there were sponsors and firms that could have a role in supporting the variety of activities and services that are on offer at the event.

The service offering is regarded, for the most part, as entertainment but also for the competitors it is a setting to perform and hopefully achieve good results. There are many things that come into play in a service offering. The core service is the show and competition of horses and riders. These are achieved through various categories. To enable the show to take place there are many aspects that have to be ready, like the competition tracks, warm-up area, parking area for the trailers, an area for feeding and grooming the horses and other facilities for the horses and riders. Also, it is very important that there are ample opportunities for the visitors to be able to sit down and be comfortable when watching the show. There are other facilitating elements like parking spaces, toilets, restaurants, etc. In addition, some aspects of the service offering can be regarded as supporting the service, like the possibility of offering a stable to the competing horses and accommodation for the professional riders.

The different aspects of the service offering were discussed in the focus groups. The stakeholders were in agreement on the need for good variety and quality in the programme of the event. There is a need for an interesting blend of intense competition between the best horses and riders in the country, breeding horse shows and other types of entertainment. The programme also has to be suitable and attractive for different types of audience, including mixing the programme at different times throughout the day and evening. The discussion among the stakeholders revealed that this variety was considered essential to ensure customer satisfaction, competitor satisfaction, good publicity, good competition and professionalism in the shows and competition. Positive financial results were seen as a necessity, but profit was not a primary motive.

The study also revealed that it was difficult to recruit the staff needed to ensure that the Landsmót events were properly executed. It was also problematic that the staff usually

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came in very late in the process and that preparation and coordination often were poor. The facilities and staff support were also very different, depending on the locations of the Landsmót event. The more remote a location was from an infrastructure point of view, the more difficult it was to get the necessary supplies. The study of Landsmót 1998–2008 also revealed that the technological infrastructure and quality of data management and information technology were, at some of the events, inadequate.

Inspired by the content dimension, the study asked whether the preparation and management of the Landsmót events were based on any specific strategies or ideas that could be identified as elements of competitive strategy. The study did not reveal any information on such a strategy, but it was highlighted that the main characteristics of the event were also related to its uniqueness. No other event with Icelandic horses was as well known internationally, as original in its reach (covering Iceland, the homeland of the Icelandic horse) and offering such a rich programme.

4.4.3 The process dimension

In the process dimension attention is focused on issues that give an insight into the development of Landsmót events over time and the results of competitions. The focus is on three issues: (i) phases of development; (ii) routines and practices; and (iii) past performance (Steinthorsson, 1995, 2003a).

The Landsmót events have been held regularly since 1950 and there is evidence that indicates certain phases of development. It is clear that there were good intentions shared by all stakeholders of the event prior to its establishment, but it did not take long before two of the main parties started to disagree. In hindsight it has been stated that the conflict was more a matter of distrust and disagreement between the two leading persons who were in charge of the two main associations that established Landsmót, but there have also been views that highlight that the conflict is rooted in competition and disputes between different parts of the country on breeding issues (Bjarnason, 1980; Gestsson, 1987). Yet, the Landsmót 1998–2008 study confirmed that many issues and concerns were still debated and discussed among the stakeholders. Regarding Landsmót, there has been particular disagreement on where to locate the events. It has also been problematic that there has been a severe lack of consistency in management development and transfer of knowledge between different iterations of the event. A step towards improvement was taken in 2002 when a joint company (Landsmót Ltd) was established by the main stakeholders to govern Landsmót (see Chapter 2B, this volume). When focusing on important events it can be noted that the decision in 1995 to have two years between Landsmót events instead of four years represented a big change. It was also an important step when the Icelandic Equestrian Association undertook structural changes to become accepted as a member of the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland (ÍSÍ). When looking back on Landsmót 1998–2008 it is evident that expectations and demands from all the groups that had a major interest in the event were on the rise, especially regarding the quality of the content (the programme of the event) and the quality of the conditions for the horses and the riders, as well as the audience.

Regarding routines, practices and past performance, the Landsmót events are characterized by their temporary nature and the fact that the managerial burdens rest for the most part on the shoulders of very few people (see Chapter 5, this volume). The main rule has been that those in charge of the practical management and the conduct of the Landsmót

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event in question are usually involved with that one event only. Since 2002 there has been some continuity in the corporate governance of the event through the work of the board of the company Landsmót Ltd that was established to enable better coordination of the events. The exception from the rule of discontinuity was the work of Lárus Dagur Pálsson, who was recruited as the general manager of Landsmót in 2002. Lárus Dagur was also in charge of Landsmót in 2004, then on the board of Landsmót in 2006 and then chairman of Landsmót Ltd in 2008. In his work he was in active contact with the different stakeholders of the event and he explained many of the issues and learning opportunities that could be taken into further consideration. The interviews with the other managers of Landsmót revealed that institutionalization in the form of routines and practices had been limited.

On performance, the results of the competition and shows are well documented and it is possible to track the performance of horses and riders over time. Regarding culture and identity related to the Icelandic horse, each event made a positive contribution. Regarding documentation of the actual conduct and operational results for the events in the period 1998–2008, there were considerable shortcomings, especially after the establishment of Landsmót Ltd.

There are good reports available for Landsmót in 1998 and 2000. After that it was only the event in 2008 that was properly documented. These facts are interesting in the light of changes in the structure of Landsmót discussed above.

4.4.4 The context dimension

In the context dimension, attention is focused on issues that provide information about the environment of Landsmót, both externally and internally. The focus is on eight issues: (i) location of the event; (ii) the customers; (iii) stakeholders; (iv) competition; (v) collaboration; (vi) resources; (vii) staff; and (viii) structure (Steinthorsson, 1995, 2003b).

Regarding the location of the event, the study revealed that there has always been a debate and often a conflict among the stakeholders on this issue. Recently increased demands concerning the facilities needed for the horses, the riders and their crew and for the people who attend Landsmót have led to increased investment at certain competition sites. These sites therefore need more events to be financially viable. Many views existed on this matter, according to the interviews and the focus groups. For some it was important to have the events in more rural settings, but for others it was necessary to be close to the capital of Iceland due to the infrastructure that is available and which then supports the event (see Chapter 6, this volume).

In relation to the analysis of the external environment of Landsmót, the study made use of PESTEL analysis (Lynch, 2003). The main results were that Landsmót did not score high on the political agenda despite the economic impact of the event and its strong social influence. Technologically, Landsmót needed to upgrade and it would benefit from new information and communication infrastructure investments. Also, the environment needed consideration, as did the event's legal framework. The stakeholder analysis (Freeman, 1984) provided a good overview of the many stakeholders identified, including visitors (the paying customers), business-to-business service providers, public institutions, associations, media, the riders and owners of registered horses, employees and volunteers and the owners of the event. Issues regarding customers have been discussed in relation to the results of the study based on the content dimension above, but these results are also relevant in reflections based on the context dimension. Regarding the issue of competition, the study made use of the model of the five forces of competition (Porter, 1980). As Landsmót

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is in fact unique in its nature, it has a special status but there are many other events that have been developed for horse-related competition and entertainment in Iceland and so there is indeed competition to address. There are also many suppliers that are involved in the events and they have considerable force to compete for their share in the value created. The bargaining power of the visitors as customers is seen as limited, but attracting these visitors is very important for the financial viability of Landsmót for both the local hosts and the Landsmót Ltd company that takes care of the coordination of the events. The force of competition regarding the threat of substitutes reveals that there can be other events that are attractive to the audience of Landsmót, which is to be noted. Overall, Landsmót is an event of a special nature but it has to take notice of the fact that its loyal customer base is maybe too limited, so it is necessary to reach out and attract other people to join the event. Landsmót does attract international visitors, but the World Championships of the Icelandic Horse – an event held outside Iceland that also occurs biennially but not in the same years as Landsmót – could have a diminishing effect on the willingness of international visitors to make regular visits to Iceland for Landsmót.

Regarding the study of the internal environment of Landsmót, the issue of collaboration was considered. The main results were that in 2008 the organizers of Landsmót, i.e. Landsmót Ltd, announced an open meeting to discuss the experience of the event that year. Also, there were meetings led by Hjörný Snorradóttir in the autumn of 2008 that were held in cooperation with the organizers of Landsmót in 2008 and used for data collection, as discussed in the methods section above. Regarding the internal context, the study focused on the resources that were seen as important to Landsmót and results highlighted the natural resources that were considered most critical – the Icelandic horse, Iceland as a country and the locations where the event was held. When it comes to Landsmót and necessary human resources, the study revealed that the critical knowledge for organizing the event appeared to be found in a limited group of 15–20 people who, often on a voluntary basis, made it possible for the event to go ahead. As mentioned earlier, Landsmót is always dealing with constraints when it comes to financial resources.

Finally, a reflection on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) was offered. One of the biggest challenges was criticism of the size of the event. The Landsmót programme was seen as too long and the number of horses competing considered to be too many. The quality of the various Landsmót sites in both the south and the north of the country and of the related facilities at the sites were called into question. That included concerns regarding the supporting services for both competing participants and spectators, which needed to be improved.

The key results of the study can be boiled down to three issues. First, it was considered vital for the quality of Landsmót to improve the conditions for the competing horses when they are on site, especially between the competition events. Ideally it should be possible to house the horses in quality stables. Second, the importance of access to warm water was emphasized, which would make it possible to clean the horses easily. The third main critical issue was the supply and quality of the accommodation, within a 20 km radius from the competition arena, for both competitors and spectators.

4.5 Key Lessons from Landsmót 1998–2008

The results of this study of Landsmót 1998–2008 reveal that the time taken for the preparation of each Landsmót was generally too short. There was also a lack of continuity in

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the management of Landsmót. Each event had been defined as a separate project, but not as an event in a chain of projects. If there was more continuity in the activities, it could be possible to start the preparation sooner, as well as marketing and sales. It would probably make it easier to reach the target groups and thus increase the popularity of the event. Better preparation could also contribute to making the operation of the event more efficient, e.g. the possibility of making more timely deals.

Last-minute arrangements have proved to be more costly. Historically, the weather conditions have been one of the most difficult problems in relation to the event. It was also striking that very little effort had been made to ensure the transfer of learning and knowledge between different versions of the event. In the period studied, only in three of the six events were 'summary reports' available for the Landsmót events held.

Another lesson learnt was that there were no clear guidelines regarding the choice of location for an upcoming Landsmót. Also, there was very little explicit information on how to engage the stakeholders in the local area in question. The study revealed that it could be helpful to make a more timely choice of the site for Landsmót, an issue discussed further in Chapter 15, this volume, in relation to Landsmót 2016. The reasons are both practical and political. A more timely decision enables better preparation and makes it easier to rebuild and upgrade the facilities of the competition area. A more timely decision also gives more opportunity to resolve any tensions between stakeholders from different regions and places in Iceland that are interested in hosting Landsmót. In addition, more time makes it easier to develop cooperation among the different actors that participate in the event.

The third main lesson is directly related to the first research question, concerning the size of Landsmót. As mentioned, Landsmót has become bigger and the programme has become more extensive. At the same time the resources and the needs of the participants – both competitors and the audience – have changed. The study revealed that very little had been done to try to understand and learn about these needs (Snorradóttir, 2010). The data gathered revealed that the technical development had been more driven by the needs of the audience than those of the competitors. There is evidence about improved information to the audience, better options regarding seats and services, and regarding food and shops. In contrast, those who had horses registered for competition largely had to take care of themselves and their horses.

4.6 Lessons on the Needs and Wishes of Competitors and the Audience

The study confirmed that there are very many things that have to be considered by those responsible for Landsmót and that there are many different needs that have to be fulfilled to ensure a successful event. The results of the study highlighted that the programme had to offer a variety of ambitious quality options regarding the content of the event and, as many of the options were interrelated, they had to be carefully coordinated. The technology that is used to support communication and broadcasting of the competition has to be first class.

International spectators did mention some specific needs, for example regarding information on horses and the progress of the competition. The challenge of sticking to the published timetable of events had to be resolved. The study revealed that there was also a need to have some slack (breaks) in the programme, to make it possible for people to

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attend different elements without losing too much of the most interesting content. The study also highlighted that Landsmót attracted families and therefore the design of the event should take this into account, instead of putting an emphasis on Landsmót as a general outdoor festival with high-profile musical events.

In the cases of Landsmót events held in rural areas, it was necessary to upgrade and arrange the camping area according to the needs of different groups. It seemed very important that the professional participants who were competing in the various parts of the programme had a well arranged and exclusive camping site where noise and any sort of interruptions were minimized. In the camping area the needs for personal care were of utmost importance, regarding hot and cold water, showers and sanitation. It was also very important to find a location for the camping site that was well placed in case of bad weather conditions. It was important to minimize the effects of wind and the provision of access to electricity was becoming a necessity. Camping was not only in tents but also camping vehicles that came in different sizes. The site also had to be conveniently accessible by cars. The camping area needed to be demarcated by a fence and guarded by security. Other options for accommodation were also important, in towns and villages as well as at farms in the area. As mentioned, it is important to take into consideration the options that are available within a 20 km radius from the site of Landsmót.

The competitors (the professional riders) strongly emphasized the need for inhouse facilities for the horses. Every horse in the competition should have a spot in a proper stable. This would minimize risk for the horses and reduce considerably the need for horse transport during the event. The main benefits would be: (i) to increase the possibility that the horses could perform at their peak level; (ii) to ensure that all horses and competitors had equally good conditions at the competition site; and (iii) to release a big pressure and strain on both people and horses when it came to the problems of transporting the horses in trailers to and from the arena on the competition days. Finally, it was also mentioned that it could be an asset in itself to have all the horses on site, if it would be possible to allow the attending visitors to meet the professional riders and take a look at the horses. This could enhance the quality of interactions and promote businesses. Such backstage issues are further discussed in Chapter 11, this volume.

Competitors also highlighted the need for convenient access to the competition arena. At least two drive-through gates should be open. Ensuring high quality of the competition tracks in the competition arena was also of the utmost importance. The participants mentioned that the condition of the tracks in the warm-up area should be the same as in the competition arena. They also mentioned the need to have explicit standards regarding the quality of the competition tracks, especially regarding the level of hardness and moisture in the top layer of the riding tracks. It was also important to have guidelines regarding the deadline for when the tracks should be ready for the competition.

One of the main conclusions of the study on Landsmót 1998–2008 was that an ideal site for Landsmót needs to have the facilities and the capacity to receive the number of guests – around 10,000 – who would be interested in attending the championship. It was also important that the site should meet the needs, demands and wishes of the different stakeholders. It was necessary that all competition tracks required for the different competitions should meet the size and shape standards of competition arenas as issued by the Icelandic Equestrian Association and FEIF.

A further lesson learnt is that the ideal Landsmót site should be a place that is constantly upgraded and that could be used frequently for other types of horse shows and

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competition during the year. The site must also be easily accessible, both for professionals competing and the visiting audience, with good options for accommodation. It is very important that there is good cooperation and support from the local municipalities and the national government regarding the needed investment and the operation of the site. It is important to take into account that the main stakeholders are not in agreement when it comes to the location of the ideal site and how many sites would be preferable. Some of the stakeholders prefer that the Landsmót site should be in rural areas, while others are more interested in sites closer to urban areas where there is access to horse-related facilities and services (see also Chapter 6, this volume). The major conflicts have been on these issues. The research conducted revealed that if the development of the Landsmót site is to be towards the ideal type illustrated above, which would meet the demands put forward regarding horse-related facilities and nearby accommodation, it could be difficult for the sites out in the rural areas to be able to meet these demands.

At the time of the study, no single location in Iceland out of the places where Landsmót had previously been held could meet all the demands that the stakeholders mentioned. When looking at the horse-related facilities and services, as well as the question of accommodation, it was Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland, that best met those demands. However, the stakeholder analysis conducted pointed to Hella in south Iceland, a rather small village area but a frequently used location for Landsmót, as the location that most of the stakeholders would agree on. In north Iceland the site Melgerðismelar would be the one most likely to meet the demands, due to its proximity to Akureyri, the biggest urban area outside the capital region.

Some of the stakeholders mentioned that they had good memories from Landsmót events in Vindheimamelar, a rural location, but for the future the concern was that it would be hard to see this site developing properly. Instead a nearby location could be built in Sauðárkrókur or at Hólar, the site of the 2016 event (see Chapter 6, this volume). It is thus concluded that the members of the local horse clubs in Iceland should prioritize tradition in relation to Landsmót, and so the event has been held in turn in the south and in the north of Iceland.

4.7 Challenges Regarding the Strategic Development of Landsmót

The results of the research presented in this chapter suggest that there have been shortcomings in the formal learning and transfer of knowledge between the Landsmót events. Evidence of an explicit strategy is limited. It seems fair to say that the strategy of Landsmót has been unclear. There is lack of consensus on where to locate the event and lack of common understanding of how to develop it. In fact, the format and the role of Landsmót, in the period studied, seemed not to have changed that much from its inception, despite quite substantial changes in how horses are kept and trained.

What comes closest to a definition of what Landsmót is about is the following, taken from the rules of the Icelandic Equestrian Association. Landsmót involves competition between superior horses in all classes in gæðingakeppni, in tölt competition and in racing. There is also a show of top breeding horses (Landssamband hestamannafélaga, 2020). Perhaps in part because the role of Landsmót is not stated in a more clearly articulated way, this study has revealed that different stakeholders have their own ideas

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for what could be the ideal form of Landsmót. A distilled view of those ideas can be summarized as follows.

1. Landsmót is a celebration of success regarding the results of breeding and training of the Icelandic horse, as well as a social gathering among the people in Iceland and from abroad who are dedicated to horsemanship and who work with the Icelandic horse.
2. Landsmót is about competition and reveals the position and the ranking of horses, both riding and breeding horses, and the level of progress in professionalism among the riders. This reflects the development of the horses and horsemanship more generally in the country.
3. Landsmót is important for marketing and communication of the qualities of the Icelandic horse, both internally in Iceland and internationally. In addition, there is a tradition in Iceland that it is a family activity to keep and train the Icelandic horse and Landsmót should reflect that important social part of the horsemanship connected with the Icelandic horse.

Regarding strategic management of events like Landsmót, this study has illustrated that events can be a very special form of activity and it can be beneficial to address the questions related to strategy and management of such events from experience-based insight. The approach to strategy taken and the model of the four dimensions of strategic management used in this study make it possible to look to what has happened in the past and in the present from a strategic point of view. The study has provided important insight into Landsmót's base of existence, the main activities, the processes and important phases in the development and management of the event. Also, many of the critical elements, both externally and internally, have been presented for reflection, knowledge development and learning for different stakeholders.

4.8 Implications

This study illustrates that a multidimensional view of strategic management makes it possible to learn in some detail from both the past and the present state of affairs, and at the same time it can enable the key stakeholders to make use of the lessons learnt as discussed above in the strategy work for the future.

- The results from each of the dimensions analysed – existence, content, process, context – can be discussed further regarding what role and actions in the future could or should be prioritized, why and how they could or should be implemented, where, with what and for whom. The conclusions and the summary discussed above could be investigated more closely with the aim to develop guidelines and bring forward learning points for further improvements.
- Events like Landsmót are temporary activities and the study confirms that there is a risk of a lack of continuity in the series of events over time. Therefore, a learning- and experience-based approach is very important. A strategic management approach to events that is based on the experiences of the past and present as well as being open for the views and wishes of the many stakeholders of the event could be useful to ensure the strategic management of the critical factors that lead to a successful event.
- This study further implies that theories of events and events management can help in the preparation and more detailed planning of the event. Similarly, a focus on service management theories could prove useful in understanding that an event is often a success based first and foremost on the perception of the audience and the participants.

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- Seeing Landsmót as a special kind of activity and a service event highlights the many immaterial aspects of the event. Success is based on how satisfied all the stakeholders are and the key to managing this can be found in establishing and nurturing relations and in understanding expectations, while building up the ability of future Landsmót events to meet those expectations. For this important task a strategic management model that stresses a contextual and a processual approach can be useful.

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5 Events Management and Organization: the Execution of Landsmót, Reykjavík 2018

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Managing Director of Landsmót 2016 and 2018

Abstract

Planning a large sport event that includes animals is a complicated task and very challenging for an event manager. This short chapter is written by the Managing Director of Landsmót (the National Championship of the Icelandic horse) in Hólar in 2016 and Reykjavík in 2018. The chapter focuses predominantly on the second of these events and addresses some of the main issues that faced the team that made this event happen. It highlights the importance of teamwork and having skilled staff with broad knowledge who are ready to work on plans and structure, but also ready to solve issues quickly during the event.

Key words

events management; sports events; planning; experience

5.1 Introduction

To organize and execute a large event is a fun and varied task. Certain things are clear before the beginning of the journey – main goals, dates and the structure of the event – but many questions are still without answers. This section describes the journey involved with planning Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse, in Reykjavík in 2018. The author of this chapter held the position of Managing Director of the event and also managed the previous Landsmót, held at Hólar in North Iceland in 2016. This chapter is not directly part of the empirical research upon which this book is based, but rather presents the reflections of the Managing Director about the organization and management of the event. Specifically, this offers some insight into running the type of event that is discussed throughout this book, a large equestrian event.

Special attention will be paid to the role of management and policy in organizing events of this magnitude. The author is educated to Master's level in tourism and events management and teaches at the Tourism Department at Hólar University, as well as being an experienced event manager.

Landsmót 2016 in Hólar was run by a company owned by the the Icelandic Equestrian Association (IEA) called Landsmót Ltd, in close collaboration with the horse club Skagfirðingur in Skagafjörður, and the local municipality of Skagafjörður. From an events management perspective, that event was characterized by the fact that the decision to locate the event in Hólar was made only just over a year beforehand. On top of this short period for planning, there was a lot of construction work needed at the event site – construction

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that put a great deal of pressure on preparation for the event. As discussed throughout this book, the 2016 event was successful in many ways, but external factors such as weather resulted in lower attendance than desired, resulting in some financial losses (see Chapters 6, 7, 12 and 13, this volume).

Immediately after the event in Hólar, the representatives of the next Landsmót, to be held in Reykjavík in 2018, contacted the author and offered him the position of Managing Director there. There was no question of not accepting the invitation, as the job is an interesting challenge for an event manager and it offered good experience to prepare this kind of event both in the countryside and in the city. The job began in January 2017, part-time work for the first few months but full-time employment from 1 August 2017. The Managing Director's preparation time was therefore slightly longer than before the 2016 event.

Landsmót is the largest horse event in Iceland, held every two years. The event lasts for 6–8 days and spectators/guests range from 8000 to 10,000 in number. Landsmót is also one of the largest sporting events in Iceland. The competition is in equestrian sport and gæðingakeppni (Icelandic oval track competition) and it also includes shows and judgements on breeding horses (see Chapter 3, this volume). The event is therefore a forum for anyone interested in or working with something related to the Icelandic horse. The equestrian clubs in the country are the backbone of the event, but the breeders' representatives and the Farmers Association of Iceland are also strongly connected (see Chapter 2B, this volume).

5.2 Management of Landsmót

The horse clubs in Iceland are amateur clubs, though many have staff members, at least a director. An important task for Landsmót's Managing Director and other managers is to coordinate the work of staff of the horse clubs, volunteers, contractors and experts in various areas of the event. One of the first tasks of the Managing Director is therefore to gain an overview of the diverse tasks around which an event such as Landsmót is composed and appoint those who will oversee the relevant activities. This is influenced in part by who is in what role at the different clubs. For example, a strong group from the horse club Fákur, who hosted the event in Reykjavík, took on the job of announcing and commentating for the whole event, a task which was outsourced to a paid professional at many previous events. On the other hand, there were other aspects that volunteers took on in Hólar that had to be paid for in Reykjavík.

Several factors need to be considered when choosing key employees. The individual in question must be outstanding in their profession. They need to have top communication skills, since many people work closely with each other for a long time both before and during the event. Those in question must devote themselves to the project and realize what they are undertaking. Above all, they must think in terms of solutions and with great adaptability. In the case of both major events which the author managed, recruiting these key employees was a success and that was a big factor in making these events successful. These key people took care of tasks such as competition management, technical control, judicial oversight, stable management, horse health management, campsite management, caretaking, traffic planning and so on. Together, these groups, each at their own event, oversaw all key issues and organized them in consultation with the Managing Director, the Board and, in some cases, support committees.

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Landsmót was divided into a number of smaller projects. A committee and project manager oversaw these projects, working with the Managing Director and the Board to organize individual parts of the event. In this way, a large group of interested parties were involved with the project and varied views were heard in the preparatory work. To include even more points of view in informing the event preparations, briefings were convened during the event build-up, where the general horse enthusiast could come, get information and present their views.

There was also wide consultation with outside stakeholders in support services such as the police, health authorities, bus company, city authorities and more, which meant a very large number of people were involved in one way or another in organizing the event.

5.3 Organization of the Event

As mentioned before, the horse clubs in the country host Landsmót. The Board of Directors is appointed over each individual iteration of the event and the Board appoints a Managing Director.

The Board and Managing Director emphasize the quality of the event and the quality of the experience as paramount. The key to achieving these goals is to provide good service to visitors, such as a broad selection of food for sale, a sufficient number of clean toilets and sanitation, security, safe traffic and good flow of information, both about the competition and the services available. In addition, emphasis was placed on the service level and positive attitude of the staff and efforts were made to instil a positive, problem-solving spirit. Of course, heavy emphasis was placed on the safety and wellbeing of the horses, as well as the needs of riders, ensuring that they were given appropriate facilities and a good working environment.

Once appropriate people had been found to fill the key jobs, preparation for the event could begin in full. Landsmót has been held for decades and its form is well defined, though there is some variation between different iterations of the event. Work began on preparing facilities for competition and services for guests, and budgeting work was among the first projects to be launched. This dictates the price of a ticket and determines how much capital can be spent on individual aspects of the event. Advertising and sponsorship efforts started early and these activities play a significant role in the event.

Some innovations were trialled at Landsmót in Reykjavík. The most important was probably to start the event on a Sunday, as past events started on a Monday or even later in the week. It was decided to brand Sunday, 1 July, as the Family Day of the Icelandic horse. Entrance to the event site was free that day, competitions started for children and teens, fun events were set up for families and restaurants and shops opened their facilities. This opening day was a success; it attracted many people, received a great deal of media attention and created a pleasant and positive mood.

5.4 Marketing of the Event

The marketing began early in the organization process of the event. Marketing Landsmót is a rather complicated project. The whole horse world in Iceland knows about the event, as it is held every two years. That does not mean, however, that all horse-riding enthusiasts will come to every Landsmót. There are several reasons for this. Tickets are not free, travel

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and subsistence are expensive, the event is held in the middle of summer when farmers are gathering hay and many other events are competing for people's attention. Horse riding is an expensive hobby and it is only really possible for those who are relatively well off and/or dedicated equestrians to attend all the Landsmót events and the World Championships of the Icelandic horse, which take place outside Iceland. When marketing Landsmót, the definition of the target audience was, in some ways, rather simple (see Chapter 6, this volume). Landsmót's guests are people interested in horse riding in Iceland and abroad, as there are communities of people who own or are interested in the Icelandic horse internationally. These communities are well defined and can be accessed through clubs and associations, and through the horse media, including social media. A marketing plan was created early in the planning process. The largest sponsors of previous events and companies related to the equestrian market were approached, and agreements reached as the event drew near. Contracts often included buying advertising and shopping space, and many also bought tickets for staff and partners.

5.5 Planning the Event Site

To be able to run a large horse-related event, such as Landsmót, certain infrastructure needs to be available, including an oval track for gæðingakeppni and sport competition, a breeding assessment track and of course an audience area for watching the competition (see Chapter 3, this volume). Spectators need space to enjoy the event and planning was put in place to accommodate 10,000–12,000 guests.

The organization of the event site is a big project at a large event like Landsmót. The first task is to manage the movement of guests into and around the site, including the parking area, footpaths and entrance to the competition area. Entrance to the site in Reykjavík is from a busy arterial road and it is therefore important that traffic around it is well organized. The planning work for this was done in cooperation with the police department of the capital area. Many parking spaces were organized at the entrance and special access designated for services, market tents and riders. A short distance from the main entrance were the campsites, both with and without electricity (access to electricity could be reserved before the event). A fenced area was created around the main competition ground and along that fence were several gates that were all guarded. The competition tracks must be first-class, as well as the facilities for the spectators, and easy access is needed between these areas.

In Reykjavík there is an approximately 10-minute walk between the main arena where the sport competitions take place and the track where breeding shows are conducted. This called for careful consideration of where most of the services for guests should be positioned: restaurants, toilets, etc. The organization of these services was complex and caused some negative feedback, as discussed below. Guests were able to purchase refreshments in the main meeting area and it was essential that enough toilet facilities were available for everyone at the event. During the event, visitors can purchase horse-related merchandise, which is sold in booths in a special shopping area, which is usually in a large tent. After the day's competition is over, there is also a tradition for the event guests to come together and have fun, especially on Friday and Saturday nights. This entertainment aspect requires facilities where thousands of people can gather together.

The last two Landsmót events have been held at the same time as an international football tournament where the Icelandic national team has played. Naturally, this participation has attracted much attention and interest, which in turn has called for facilities to be provided

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at Landsmót to watch broadcasts from these major football tournaments on big screens. This shows that Landsmót's event site, where guests range from 8000 to 12,000 over eight days, is very complex in composition. In Reykjavík, where many event visitors live close to the competition site and many guests stay with families or friends in the capital area, camping visitors are naturally fewer than at events held in the countryside. At those events, as in Hólar in 2016, the event area becomes like a village where people stay for a week. In Reykjavík, the event site emptied at night, but the campgrounds outside the fence in Reykjavík still hosted hundreds of guests.

5.6 Technical Planning

Landsmót is a very complex event when it comes to technical matters. All programmes in both arenas (sport competition and breeding shows) are recorded and streamed live online, where people can buy access, and they are also shown directly on large screens on site. The demands of guests and other enthusiasts regarding information, live broadcasts and scores that can be viewed in real time on smart devices have increased the level of complexity in technical matters. Images on screen in the main arena, sound to the audience, music and commentating – the list goes on. Monitors with live streams from both the breeding track and the competition track were positioned in the dining area and internet connection requirements for events management, judges and media are increasing from one event to the next. Sites that host Landsmót must therefore have the highest quality technical infrastructure, fibre-optic and very powerful electricity connections. In general, the preparation of technical matters for the event was a success, thanks to experienced individuals taking care of those matters. The only downside in relation to this issue is the very high cost of electrical wiring and electricity consumption.

5.7 Risk Assessment and Safety Issues

Bringing together a total of 10,000 visitors and a thousand horses on one site for a week is a risky task. Facilities and services need to be adapted to accommodate these human and equine guests. A normal riding hall is transformed into a restaurant, then into a dance hall and then back into a restaurant. Tracks are transformed into pedestrian paths and access roads designed for limited traffic have to handle hundreds of cars a day, and so on. One thing that cannot be compromised on is security. Detailed safety plans were prepared, based on the risk assessment conducted. Important considerations include the access of ambulances and fire brigades, fire protection in the area and on-site medical care, as well as law enforcement. Specialists were found to organize the aforementioned factors, experienced people from the capital's firefighters, emergency responders and rescue personnel, as well as frequent meetings with the city's police. These issues were quite complex in Reykjavík and cost a lot of time and money, but cooperation with key stakeholders such as the police and fire brigade went well.

5.8 Things That Went Well

In many respects, the complex task of planning the event went well. The organization of the competition was successful, the morale of the staff was very good and the experience

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of the professionals who had been involved with Landsmót 2016 was a great asset. Any tasks or problems that arose were sorted quickly and the result was generally a very good spirit among competitors, staff and visitors. The layout of the event site was mostly successful, and the schedule for the entertainment programme went well. A new plan for the opening ceremony was successful.

Visitor services were generally good, although toilet facilities could have been improved. The event staff, catering staff, tent vendors, guards and others who worked the frontline with guests were exemplary. A varied supply of food and restaurants and a very good range of merchandise in the market tents contributed to the good atmosphere.

Security was generally good, traffic to and from the event site flowed effectively, fire protection was well organized and good medical care was available. No major mishaps or tragedies occurred and no police matters emerged. The entertainment sections of the programme went very well.

Technological aspects of the event went well overall. The internet connection was good, as well as other technical equipment, and the group that took care of the technology performed extremely well, as most of them were experienced in the implementation of Landsmót. The production of television material for streaming and broadcasting was better and more professional than ever. Efforts to promote the event in advance were successful, particularly through social media and coverage in traditional media.

5.9 Not Everything Ran Smoothly

The weather in Reykjavík in the summer of 2018 was record breaking and not because of how good it was! It rained a lot in the months before the event, so there was almost continuous discussion of bad weather in the capital area in the run-up – 'the summer that never came'. Many Icelanders chose to travel to sunnier regions during this period and weather conditions in Europe at the same time were extremely good. It is impossible to prove the effect of the weather on the attendance at Landsmót in Reykjavík in the summer of 2018, but it is safe to say that this influence was more negative than positive. The weather during the event was not good either: it was mostly cold and rainy, with some better days in between. The weather, however, had no effect on the schedule of the event, only on the experience of the guests. An exception to this was the layout of campsites; the heavy rain in the lead-up to the event made the proposed campgrounds too wet to be used.

The fact that the breeding track was some distance from the main arena created some challenges and some discontent. The biggest challenge was that all services provided for guests – restaurants, shops, toilets, etc. – were set up at the main arena and therefore 'additional solutions' were needed to serve people at the breeding track. It was not possible to offer the same level of service in both areas and this created dissatisfaction for those who stayed mainly at the breeding track.

Competition for attention was very fierce in the build-up to the event, as Iceland was the first participant in one of the world's largest sporting events, the FIFA men's football World Cup. It cannot be said with certainty that this clash with the World Cup in Russia diminished attendance at the event, but it is likely that this had a negative impact.

The cost of security at the event was far too high and the whole organization of the security too complex and costly. Toilet facilities were inadequate. Facilities provided beside the spectator areas were underused and the facilities for the campground were too far

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away. In retrospect, there should have been a greater supply of toilets at the main riding hall, which served as a centrepiece and service centre for all guests.

Volunteering expectations at the event proved unrealistic. Planning for clearing away after the event was lacking and for this the blame lies with the Managing Director. Much better delegation was required, but it was very difficult to get volunteers to work in the post-event context as their motivation decreased once the excitement of the event was over.

5.10 Final Reflections

In this chapter the planning and implementation of Landsmót in Reykjavík in 2018 has been reviewed briefly. As mentioned here, this is a complicated event to deal with, but at the same time a very exciting and challenging project. Equestrian sports are among Iceland's most popular sports, and a lifestyle of thousands of people abroad who love the Icelandic horse.

The organization of any event is always similar, whatever the focus. Security, finance, promotion, guest services and so on are the main issues, whether it is a conference, music event, sports event, or anything else. The number of guests at Landsmót and its length make it a large event and this brings various complexities, such as the technical requirements. But Landsmót's biggest complexity over and above other sporting events is of course all about the main stars themselves, the horses. Not only do riders need services and facilities for themselves and the horses, but the welfare of the animals themselves is a key issue (see Chapter 9B, this volume). Things like veterinary inspections of all horses prior to competition, the inspection of all the horses' tack and equipment, stabling for the horses and the transport of them to and from the venue, are big and complex challenges, not forgetting the judging of the competitions themselves, which of course accompanies all sporting events.

Landsmót in Reykjavík 2018 was mostly successful and, overall, the job of the event manager was very satisfying. A good spirit was maintained in the group that worked at the event, which created positive memories for the many people connected to it. Many members of staff had also worked at Landsmót 2016 in Hólar and some on earlier iterations of the event. This connection to previous events, together with the experience of other horse events run by Fákur horse club, created a hard-working and fun team that put a lot of effort into creating a successful event.

When it comes to income and expenses for the event, it returned an operating profit. That profit will be passed on to the Fákur horse club for their operations. This is a better financial result than has been achieved in many years for Landsmót.

Most importantly, despite difficult weather and other unfavourable external factors, Landsmót Reykjavík in the summer of 2018 managed to create pleasant memories among the guests. People came with dreams and expectations of success on the competition track; some achieved their goals, for others it did not go so well. Spectators saw the best that the Icelandic horse has to offer and went home happy, possibly as an owner of a new horse. The staff achieved the goal of managing a large event where service was of high quality, guest safety came first, and participant experience was positive and in line with expectations. And, whatever the event is, that is probably the most important thing of all.

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6 Segmentation, Marketing, Venue Selection and Competitiveness of Events

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Abstract

Competitiveness of events is not a widely researched topic. As with destinations, countries, industries and businesses, competitiveness is highly relevant to events and their development. A number of factors affect the competitiveness of events, including segmentation, targeting, marketing, information flow and venue selection. This chapter focuses on identifying the target groups of the national championship of the Icelandic horse – Landsmót – and how the competitiveness of the event can be enhanced. The research included data from an on-site survey among visitors at Landsmót 2016 and online surveys among visitors following the 2014, 2016 and 2018 events. A total of 2729 responses was used for analysis. Findings indicated that, despite common interest in the Icelandic horse, the visitors to Landsmót have different expectations and needs. Accessible information, good facilities and a carefully planned programme are of importance for the competitiveness of the event. Taking care of repeat visitors and attracting new visitors are both important for the event. Finally, it is concluded that selection of two main venues, one in the rural north and another in the urban south, is most likely to meet the requirements of the current target market and to maximize the competitiveness of the event in the long run.

Key words

events competitiveness; horse events; equestrianism; value; Icelandic horse

6.1 Introduction

The importance of considering and analysing horse-based events specifically is of interest, not least because of the multispecies nature of such events. As humans and horses meet, the needs of all stakeholders (including humans and horses) have to be considered (see Chapter 11, this volume). Equestrianism is a lifestyle and a passion of its practitioners, which makes horse enthusiasts a rather accessible and loyal target group (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Anderson-Cederholm, 2015; Sigurðardóttir, 2015, 2016; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016) as the group has joint interests and uses common media and other joint venues for communication.

Horse enthusiasts, particularly those who are interested in Icelandic horses, have been seen as the main target group of Landsmót (Snorradóttir, 2010; Sigurðardóttir and Péturs-dóttir, 2017). Earlier research on Landsmót has indicated that domestic and international visitors can be defined as two different target groups with different needs and interests. The interests of international visitors at Landsmót have gained attention in earlier research (Snorradóttir, 2010; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016).

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Marketing, and market segments in particular, is a widely researched topic within the fields of both products and services. These marketing concepts are also relevant for events. According to Gechev (2012, p. 113):

> … on the one hand, events are subject to market forces much like any other product or service. Consequently, they obey basic market laws and principles, as well as the major requirements and mechanism of marketing itself. On the other hand, they possess a number of peculiar characteristics, differentiating them from traditional goods and services. This implies the need for adapting existing marketing mechanisms specifically for events.

'The management and marketing of events has been acknowledged as an area of research of extreme importance to academic researchers and event practitioners' (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele, 2011, p. 426). There are several basic issues to consider when planning an event, not least regarding marketing and the structure of the event. This chapter deals with the importance of marketing, segmentation, the importance of how the event can create value for visitors, and how this is related to venue selection and competitiveness of the event. The importance of analysing these issues to create a successful event was pointed out by Bowdin *et al.* (2011).

The main research questions of this chapter are:

- What is the current target group of Landsmót?
- How can the competitiveness of Landsmót be enhanced by increased knowledge of its target groups, marketing and venue selection?

This chapter firstly introduces the theoretical background of the research, including the competitiveness of events, marketing, event segmentation and target groups, and venue selection. The methods of data collection and analysis are introduced. Quantitative surveys among guests of Landsmót were used for data gathering both during an event (in 2016) and following three events (in 2014, 2016 and 2018). Findings from those surveys are introduced and followed up by a discussion and implications of the topic.

6.2 Competitiveness of Events

In this research, target groups, marketing and venue selection of events are considered as affecting factors for the competitiveness of horse events such as Landsmót. Competitiveness is a widely used concept that is based largely on research in the goods-producing sector. As with other service sectors, limited focus has been placed on the term competitiveness in tourism and events management research (Cvelbar *et al.*, 2016). However, there seems to be nothing that intrinsically makes it less applicable to services than manufacturing industries (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999). A definition of a term like competitiveness will never be true or false in an absolute sense, but it can be judged whether it is appropriate for a specific research or policy question (Ketels, 2006). This is further addressed in later sections of this chapter.

In relation to events, the competitiveness concept has mainly been analysed from the perspective of communities and how events (particularly mega sport events) affect the competitiveness of destinations and host communities (Hall, 2006; Hallmann *et al.*, 2012; Kruger and Heath, 2012). Only a few papers were found dealing particularly with the competitiveness of the events themselves and what can be done to increase the competitiveness of particular events. However, 'competition has increased dramatically' in the field

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of events in the past decade (Matthews, 2016, p. x). Therefore, increased competitiveness of events is of importance for event organizers, at least in cases when financial sustainability of events is based on selling a particular number of tickets or is in other ways dependent on participation of a number of visitors. Event and festival organizers normally claim that running events/festivals is financially risky (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018) and a lack of perceived return on investment is often the case (Matthews, 2016). Enhancing the competitiveness of events is therefore important, for example to minimize financial risk.

Ketels (2006) described Michael Porter's framework on competitiveness as one of the most prominent concepts of competitiveness. Porter's theories have been widely used for analysis of competitiveness at national, industry and business levels (Porter, 2008). According to Newall (1992, p. 94), competitiveness 'is about producing more and better quality goods and services that are marketed successfully to consumers at home and abroad'. Karaev *et al.* (2007) stated that competitiveness means the ability of individual firms, or whole sectors, regions and even countries, successfully to assert themselves in the domestic and global market. Hoff *et al.* (1997) stated that competitiveness means that customers will prefer those goods or services rather than goods or services from other suppliers and production and delivery of these goods or services uses processes that ensure profitability, quality and efficient use of scarce resources.

Stress is put on providing a high standard of living for present and coming generations in a sustainable way. This approach emerges in, for example, analysing competitiveness of tourism destinations (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Enright and Newton, 2004; Valdes, Cruz and Velasco, 2010). Competitiveness is commonly looked at from three different levels: country, industry and firm level (Ambastha and Momaya, 2004; Karaev *et al.*, 2007). However, there are strong connections between the competitiveness of a country and its industries, businesses and events (Koc, 2009). Variable factors affect competitiveness at all levels. Those factors include inner and outer components. Factors such as productivity, markets, quality and responsiveness have been mentioned as affecting competitiveness (Hoff, *et al.*, 1997; Greenwood and Dwyer, 2015).

6.3 Marketing of Events

Various issues can be raised regarding marketing of events. Events have been identified as important drivers for increased publicity of host destinations and communities and as drivers of increased competitiveness of destinations. For example, mega-events (as well as special events) have played a key role in regional tourism marketing in recent years (Hall, 2006). The interest of cities and other destinations in hosting mega-events has been highly related to the extensive publicity and marketing opportunities that have been involved, not least through modern (social) media (Horne, 2017). Another important marketing issue is the marketing of the event itself and how marketing can increase the competitiveness and economic sustainability of events, creating value for visitors. It has been argued that cultural events/festivals should not solely focus on target markets and visitors' needs. However, according to Bowdin *et al.* (2011, p. 368), festivals and event managers

> … can benefit from understanding marketing techniques and having some experience in applying those techniques to satisfy the identified needs of target markets. Failure to understand the role of marketing, including its societal perspective, can lead to dissatisfied consumers and a weak relationship with stakeholders who can strongly influence the events' long-term survival.

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Marketing of events can be approached from three different perspectives. The first, the exchange perspective, argues that the event organizer creates visitors' experience. In this case the role of the visitor in creating experience is more passive than active. The marketing process includes, for example, identifying and segmenting the market, profiling the attendees, locating marketing resources and determining the success in creating value for both visitors and the event organizers (Hirst and Tressider, 2014). The second perspective argues that the visitor creates their experience and the event marketing is a facilitator of services and interactions. This includes increased focus on the visitor and their goals, consumption, time frame and situation. It focuses on the resources and practices of the visitors, including time, money and knowledge, as well as use of social media platforms. Increased focus is set on the whole process of participating in the event, including 'selection, acquisition, consumption and withdrawal from an event' (Hirst and Tressider, 2014, p. 194). The third perspective is based on the other two but it focuses on the notions of meaning and values as it 'mediates, produces and distributes socio-cultural meaning and values and this understanding is important for event creators in fully interpreting the marketing challenge they have' (Hirst and Tressider, 2014, p. 197).

6.4 Event Segmentation and Target Groups

There is not one correct way to segment a market for events. Different approaches have been used. Demographic and behavioural characteristics such as age, income, place of origin and/or residence, expenditure and so forth have been used to identify market segments. The motivation of visitors to attend events has also been a base for segmentation (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele, 2011; Shone and Parry, 2019).

Segmentation of events has been a subject of interest for academics and practitioners for years. However, consistency has been limited in terms of methods, data analysis techniques and segmentation variables (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele, 2011). Needs of each target group must match the event experience as well as possible. The chosen market segments should be measurable, substantial enough to target, accessible and actionable based on the event's resources (Bowdin *et al*., 2011). The importance of market segmentation of events has been discussed regarding music festivals. 'Segmenting visitors and identifying their specific needs and behaviours enable music festival organisers to develop strategic and efficient marketing strategies and, ultimately, ensure their long-term economic viability in an increasingly competitive marketplace' (Kruger and Saayman, 2017, p. 204).

The role of lifestyle in market segmentation has been pointed out with regards to variable sport events as 'lifestyle can furthermore exert an influence on travel patterns, spending and participation frequency with all these constructs being directly related to one another' (Myburgh *et al*., 2019, p. 97). This is interesting regarding the case of horse events, as horsemanship is widely defined as a lifestyle and equestrian sports as lifestyle sports (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Anderson-Cederholm, 2015; Sigurðardóttir, 2015, 2016; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016).

In equestrian tourism, different target groups have been identified. An Icelandic study concluded that target groups for short riding tours (horse rental) were different from those for long riding tours (up to 14 days). Also, international visitors were a target market for long rides whereas domestic riders were usually not (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015a).

Segmentation and definition of target groups is a way to enhance the competitiveness of events, as segmentation 'enables organizers to maximize return on investment by targeting

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the most profitable attendees' (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele, 2011, p. 426). In addition, awareness of target groups and segmentation in the marketing of events makes it more manageable to meet the expectations of the visitors (see further Chapter 7, this volume). In the case of events that have been successfully held for a long time, like Landsmót, it is therefore important to thoroughly analyse the composition of the visitor group.

6.5 Venue Selection

When choosing a venue for an event, variable factors have to be considered, including the functionality of the venue and the sustainability of the venue for the event's purposes. Other issues such as cost, transportation and infrastructure also have to be considered. 'An overriding consideration in the choice of an event venue is the fit with audience needs' (Van der Wagen and White, 2010, p. 45).

Positioning of products, services and events is an important marketing issue. Positioning of events can be done through the existing reputation or image of the event and by focusing on location and facilities (Bowdin *et al*., 2011). Different push-and-pull factors affect target markets, marketing, segmentation and venue selection of events. But particular venues can attract and work as pull factors for different groups of visitors. This also relates to comparison with other events with regard to venues and timing of the event. Those issues are of importance for events like Landsmót, which has been held regularly since 1950.

Landsmót has been held in several places around Iceland, mostly in the south and north of the country (see Chapter 3, this volume) which are the areas with the highest number of horses per person (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b). The location of Landsmót has been the subject of a long-standing debate among the stakeholders of the event (see Chapter 4, this volume). In research from 2010 it was suggested that the location of the event affects the decision of domestic visitors to attend the event, but the cost of attending the event is also of importance regarding decision making. The location of the event did not seem to be an extensive affecting factor on the decision making of international visitors, as seeing quality Icelandic horses, visiting the country of origin of the Icelandic horse and the cost of attending affected a higher percentage of participants than the location of the event (Snorradóttir, 2010). In Snorradóttir's (2010) research, pros and cons of different locations were reviewed as well as what services and facilities have to be available at a 'good' venue. In the research presented here, the focus is on segmentation and how different event venues/locations, for example in rural versus urban areas, are likely to create value for the visitors and contribute to the competitive advantages of the event.

A comparison between visitor groups at the rural events in Hella, south Iceland, in 2014 and Hólar in north Iceland, 2016, and those at the more urban event in the capital city Reykjavík in 2018 is of interest in this regard.

6.6 Research Methods

This study is quantitative and was conducted through surveys. Data collection was conducted in four phases, with two different methods: (i) survey data were collected with an online survey among Landsmót ticket buyers following the 2014, 2016 and 2018 events; and (ii) survey data were collected on site during the 2016 Landsmót.

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Both the online surveys and the on-site survey included a large number of questions. The total number of questions in the online survey was 61, with 19 (including several sub-questions) in the on-site survey. A few open-ended questions were also included in both surveys, giving the respondents an opportunity to express their opinion in a more flexible way than in the other questions. This analysis only included some of the survey items.

For the surveys conducted following the events, email addresses were collected through the online ticket sale system of Landsmót through which the majority of the guests bought their entrance tickets. In the case of Landsmót 2014, email addresses were also collected at the entrance gate as it was also possible to buy tickets at the gate at all of the events. Because of changes in the sale system it was not possible to collect email addresses at the gate in 2016 and 2018. In all three cases, the surveys were sent via email a few months after the event. The 2014 survey was conducted by Anna Lilja Pétursdóttir as a Master's project (Pétursdóttir, 2018) under the supervision of the author of this chapter.

The on-site survey at Landsmót 2016 was developed and conducted in collaboration with Tobias Heldt and Guðrún Helgadóttir, members of the Landsmót research team. The survey was conducted in the catering area during Landsmót (30 June to 2 July). The original idea was to collect data in more locations at the venue but, due to rain during the event, it was more efficient to conduct the survey indoors, particularly in the catering area because visitors spent quite some time in that building and were usually not busy watching events, although the outdoor programme could be watched on a screen in the building.

When analysing and using this data, it must be borne in mind that the demographics described in this research are descriptive for the group of respondents but different factors such as willingness of particular groups of guests to participate can affect inclusion in the surveys, so caution should be exercised with generalizing to the cohort (all visitors of Landsmót) based on these findings. However, the findings provide considerable information about the visitors to Landsmót.

6.7 Findings

For repeated horse events, such as Landsmót, it is important to know the profile of visitors and for the event managers to assess whether they have attracted the intended target groups.

This research is based on survey data from a total of 2729 visitors to Landsmót. A total of 656 questionnaires (24%) were returned in English (*n* online = 509; *n* on-site = 147) and 2073 (76%) in Icelandic (*n* online = 1809; *n* on-site = 254). The low ratio of the profile of international respondents to the online survey can partly be explained by the fact that, at least in 2016, a lower percentage of foreign visitors (64%) than domestic ones (79%), had bought their tickets online but the online survey was only conducted among visitors who had bought their entrance tickets online before the event. It must be noted that buying tickets at the gate was also possible.

Domestic respondents to the online survey ranged from 72.7% in 2018 to 83.5% in 2016. Most of the respondents from other countries were from Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Norway (Table 6.1).

The gender composition of respondents to the on-site and online surveys shows that international respondents are more commonly female than male and that a higher number of domestic respondents are male than female (Table 6.2). This provides an idea about the

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Table 6.1. Nationality of respondents.

Nationality	2014	2016	2018
Austria	1.4%	0.7%	1.0%
Denmark	2.3%	4.0%	3.2%
Germany	4.2%	6.0%	6.7%
Iceland	83.5%	78.6%	72.7%
Netherlands	0.6%	1.6%	1.0%
Norway	2.0%	1.6%	2.8%
Sweden	3.2%	3.5%	7.0%
UK	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%
USA	0.4%	1.1%	1.6%
Other	1.7%	2.3%	3.6%

Table 6.2. Gender composition among on-site and online respondents.

Surveys	Language	Female	Male
On-site 2016	Icelandic	33%	77%
Online 2014; 2016; 2018	Icelandic	59%	41%
On-site 2016	English	73%	27%
Online 2014; 2016; 2018	English	72%	28%

gender balance among visitors at Landsmót, but it is important to keep in mind that those figures might not perfectly reflect the actual sex ratio of the visitor groups.

In the online survey, domestic respondents were slightly younger than international respondents. The average age of respondents to the on-site survey from Landsmót 2016 was 50 years. Recruitment at the event was also of interest. The majority of domestic visitors had attended the event many times before, as they had on average been 7.6 times. Many commented that they had been to every or almost every Landsmót for decades. Among international visitors, respondents had, on average, been to Landsmót 2.5 times. Only 6% of domestic respondents were at Landsmót for the first time but 48% of international respondents were there for the first time.

6.7.1 Attractions and travel behaviour

According to the findings from the on-site survey at Landsmót 2016, the main reason for foreign respondents to travel to Iceland was to attend Landsmót. Riding was in second place, experiencing nature in third place and visiting friends and relatives was in fourth place. When asked why respondents attended the event, a difference was found between the domestic and international target groups in that, for domestic visitors, meeting friends was more important (58%) than for foreign visitors (34%), which might reflect the high return rate of domestic visitors. Music and partying were important attractions for 26% of domestic respondents, but only for 7% of foreign respondents. A total of 79% of domestic respondents claimed to be horse breeders while 31% of foreign respondents bred horses. However, for both target groups (international and domestic) interest in horses was the main reason for attending the event for about 80% of respondents.

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A majority of the 2016 domestic visitors (65%) were travelling with family, but only 43% of international visitors were travelling with their family. A majority (55%) of international visitors were travelling with friends but only 11% of domestic visitors came to the event with their friends. A minority, or 17% of domestic visitors and 11% of international visitors, were travelling alone.

About 60% of domestic respondents had their lodging in Hólar, 34% in the nearby Skagafjörður region and only 6% stayed further away from the venue. Foreign visitors seemed to be more likely to have their lodging away from the venue, as 30% of respondents stayed at Hólar, 49% in Skagafjörður region and 18% stayed further away. Variable kinds of accommodation were used by both domestic and international visitors. About 55% of domestic visitors stayed in tents or caravans but only 26% of international visitors did so. That partly explains why a higher number of domestic visitors than international stayed in Hólar. In relation to questions on accommodation, foreign visitors mentioned in open questions that they found it complicated to figure out how and where to book accommodation without having to stay far away from the venue. It was further suggested that event organizers should make it possible to book accommodation at the same time and through the same booking system as the tickets for the event.

The average length of stay of respondents to the 2016 on-site survey was 4.9 days. International visitors stayed for 4 days on average but domestic visitors for 5.5 days. When comparing data from the 2014, 2016 and 2018 online surveys, the length of stay of both international and domestic visitors was fairly stable between events held in different years. The average length of stay at those three events was 4.62 days for international visitors and 5.41 for domestic visitors.

Domestic visitors seemed to stay quite a lot longer on average at the event than international visitors. This is possibly because some of them were competing or following competitors in preliminaries and breeding shows or were just keen to see the whole show. For international visitors, other attractions such as riding, experiencing nature and visiting friends seemed to take quite some time during their stay in Iceland. The average stay of international respondents in Iceland was 14.9 days, suggesting they were using their travel to experience more than just the event.

6.7.2 Marketing, word of mouth and flow of information

Marketing is about visibility and awareness. Effective marketing attracts visitors to horse events and affects the image of the event. According to the findings from the online survey (2014, 2016 and 2018), the marketing of Landsmót has been more visible to international respondents than to domestic ones. The strength of marketing of Landsmót was rated by international visitors at 3.61 out of 5, but by domestic visitors only 3.02 out of 5 possible points on a 1–5 Likert scale. According to the respondents, the marketing was most powerful in 2018 but had least power or visibility in 2016.

When comparing the visibility of marketing of Landsmót in different kinds of media, online marketing was more visible to both international and domestic visitors than marketing in printed material and on radio. According to online data, almost no difference can be noted in online marketing visibility between domestic and international respondents, so the online marketing of Landsmót seemed to reach both target groups equally. Domestic respondents had more often noticed Landsmót marketing on radio and printed media

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compared to international visitors. This can both reflect the emphasis of Landsmót marketing and the respondents' use of different kinds of media.

Word-of-mouth marketing seems to be of importance for Landsmót. In open-ended questions many respondents mentioned that they heard about the event from their friends or relatives. This was mentioned particularly often by international visitors. Lack of information on the event among horse societies, other than those focused around the Icelandic horse, was mentioned by a 2018 respondent: 'Not much is known about this event in the UK – perhaps an advert in the British Horse Society magazine would be useful.' Visitors, particularly international ones who did not understand Icelandic, felt that they needed more information about the event and the competition to enjoy the programme, particularly in cases when they did not know much about competition strategies and when the language of presentation was mostly Icelandic. Further lack of information for international visitors was noted. For example, it was suggested that the organizers should provide, before the event, more information on facilities, possible weather conditions, what to bring to the venue and what products and services would be available at the event. Simple things were mentioned as information that would have been useful for foreign spectators to have beforehand, such as the fact that during competitions the spectators sit on the grass and therefore visitors might want to bring suitable chairs or blankets to sit on.

Related to word of mouth, questions on positive and negative discussion before and after the three events were included in the online surveys. In 2014 (Hella), 30% somewhat or very much agreed that they had heard negative discussion before the event. In 2016 (Hólar) the proportion was 38% but in 2018 (Reykjavík) it was only 17%. Following the 2014 event, 45% of respondents had heard negative discussion about the event but in the cases of the 2016 and 2018 events the proportions were only 13% and 14%, respectively. This suggests that the satisfaction of visitors at the 2016 (Hólar) and 2018 (Reykjavík) events was high but this is further discussed in Chapter 7, this volume.

6.7.3 Location and venues

As mentioned earlier, this research compares three different venues of Landsmót: Hella in rural south Iceland, Hólar in rural north Iceland and Víðidalur in Reykjavík, the capital city of Iceland, based on responses of visitors to those events in 2014, 2016 and 2018. As the event is an outdoor event, the weather was quite commonly mentioned, not least because during all those three events, the weather was rather cold and rainy. As this affecting factor was quite similar at all three events, weather is not addressed much further here in the findings. However, it was clear that the weather did affect the experience of the visitors, but they seemed aware that event organizers could not do much about the weather situation other than making sure that good facilities were available.

Respondents to the 2016 on-site survey were asked if the location of the event in Hólar had affected their decision to attend the event. Not at all, said 51% of the respondents; 29% said they had attended the event because it was held in this particular location; 11% would rather have the event closer to the capital city Reykjavík; and 5.7% had considered not attending because of the location of the event.

In all three locations, about 50% of respondents to the online survey agreed or very much agreed that the location of the event had affected their decision to attend the event. However, the survey did not provide information on what were the main attractions in each location. At the three events, physical facilities of the venues were rated.

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When asked whether the venue was well suited to host the event, nearly 57% agreed or very much agreed that the venue in Hella was well suited for hosting the event. A total of 90% of respondents agreed that the Hólar venue was well suited for hosting the event and nearly 87% agreed that the Reykjavík venue was well suited for the event. International visitors were slightly more satisfied with the venues at those three events than Icelandic respondents.

In Hella, nearly 65% agreed that facilities for spectators fulfilled their expectations. Both in Hólar and Reykjavík, 83% found the facilities for spectators satisfactory. Sanitary facilities were rated satisfactory by nearly 48% of respondents in Hella but 73% in Hólar and 70% in Reykjavík. Comments from open-ended questions indicated high satisfaction with the cleanliness of sanitary facilities at Hólar. Quite a few mentioned that, despite being regular visitors at Landsmót, they had never experienced such a high level of cleanliness of sanitary facilities. However, it was suggested that more toilets with running water should be provided.

Camping areas are always part of the Landsmót venue. An extensive difference in the experience of visitors was reported regarding camping facilities in the three different venues. In Hella, only 26% claimed that the camping facilities met their expectations. In Hólar, 77% were satisfied with the camping facilities and nearly 34% were satisfied with the camping facilities in Reykjavík. Muddy camping areas and trouble with electricity were mentioned among negative factors regarding camping facilities in Hella and Reykjavík. When asked about riding arenas and facilities for riders/competitors, 38% agreed that the facilities were good in Hella, but 80% in Hólar and Reykjavík agreed with this statement.

In open-ended questions in both on-site and online surveys, all respondents had an opportunity to make comments regarding the locations and venues of the 2014 (Hella), 2016 (Hólar) and 2018 (Reykjavík) events. Variable points of view were discussed. Some international respondents did suggest that 'you should be closer to Reykjavík if you want to develop tourism!' Others were not so keen to locate the event in the south part of the country: 'Very sad that the next 3 Landsmót are in the south. The atmosphere and surroundings are so much better in the north.'

Domestic visitors also disagreed on venue selection, particularly whether the event should be held in rural or urban areas and if it should be held in the north of the country or in the south. On the one hand, horse welfare issues were raised in this discussion: 'Landsmót should be held where most of the horses are located (in the south) because it is more horse friendly to drive with as few horses as possible.' On the other hand, the importance of human travel in relation to the event was mentioned: 'As a spectator, I love to have the event located in the countryside instead of Reykjavík. […] Icelandic spectators want to travel when attending Landsmót.' Another domestic respondent emphasized nature experience during the event: 'I heard that the next Landsmót will take place in Reykjavík. To me it is not a good location. Feels like you should enjoy nature out in the countryside, camping. It is not good to be able to pop to the mall during the breaks.'

When considering all the comments on the venues, alternating the event between north and south Iceland seems to be most commonly suggested. As an option in this sense, most respondents suggest hosting the event every fourth year in the capital city Reykjavík (Fákur or Sprettur venues) and in the years between in Hólar, north Iceland. This is further supported by findings on visitor satisfaction at events held in Hella, Hólar

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and Reykjavík (see Chapter 7, this volume). It is suggested that if only two venues are selected to host the events regularly, it will be more manageable to develop quality arenas and other high-quality facilities for the event.

6.8 Discussion

Segmentation and competitiveness are important for events like Landsmót. Visitors do have different ideas, expectations and interests related to the event and therefore it is a challenge to develop Landsmót and other horse events in the way that suits all its target audience. Information on the interests and expectations of visitors and what services, facilities and venues are most likely to meet their expectations is of importance to strengthen the competitiveness of the event itself, to attract visitors to future events and to create value for its visitors.

Attraction of different target audiences was addressed by Helgadóttir and Dashper (2016), where they suggested that event managers should be careful about extending the target groups, for example towards general tourists in Iceland who do not have knowledge of the competition at Landsmót and the Icelandic horse community. This research further indicated that more detailed information on the event, its focus and facilities is important, particularly for international visitors, even if they are familiar with equestrianism and the Icelandic horse community. This is not least important for newcomers at the event.

It is important for the event to attract new visitors, both from domestic and international markets. This research suggests that an extensive group of domestic visitors is very loyal to the event and attends no matter where it takes place. However, location does affect particular groups of domestic visitors who report on considerable struggles and different opinions of where to locate the event. Attracting new domestic visitors should be particularly considered, as only 6% of domestic respondents were visiting the event for the first time but 48% of international visitors were visiting for the first time, so recruitment within that target group seems to be a lot higher than within the domestic visitor group. However, the importance of the very loyal domestic visitor group should not be underestimated.

To strengthen the competitiveness of Landsmót it is suggested that increased information, particularly for international visitors, is important. The needs, expectations and experiences of visitors are further analysed in Chapter 7, this volume.

Marketing is highly related to segmentation of an event's community but in recent years social media has increasingly become important for marketing, publicity and image making of events (Horne, 2017; see also Chapter 10, this volume). Online marketing seems to be the strongest method of marketing for Landsmót. However, other media such as radio and printed horse-related magazines are also important to reach the specific domestic market of horse enthusiasts. The lifestyle element is strong in horse-related activities such as equestrian tourism and events (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Anderson-Cederholm, 2015) and horse-related target groups are rather easy to reach because of their joint interest in the horse. The lifestyle element is useful for segmentation and targeting of Landsmót as well as for marketing of the event.

When considering the economic effects of events, spending and length of stay are of importance. As is widely known, visitors who stay longer are more likely to spend more than the ones who only stay for a short period of time. Therefore, variable ways to encourage visitors to stay longer at event destinations have been suggested. One way is to

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extend the length of the event itself and a second one is to extend the stay before and/or after the event, for example by offering pre- and post-event opportunities for visitors to engage in and enjoy (O'Brien and Chalip, 2008). It has been suggested, for example by competitors, that Landsmót itself is rather long and in 2016 a decision was made to try shortening the competition part of the event by one day. International visitors were critical that this was not advertised with long enough notice. On average, domestic visitors to Landsmót stay longer than international visitors. But international visitors do commonly extend their stay, as their average length of stay in Iceland was 14.9 days. In that sense, Landsmót seems to attract a number of international visitors to Iceland who stay for a long period of time in the destination, often to enjoy riding and Icelandic nature and to visit friends.

Landsmót attracts Icelandic families and international visitors travelling with their friends. Interestingly, there seems to be a gender difference between domestic and international visitors, as the majority of domestic respondents were male, but the majority of international respondents were female. This may reflect the difference apparent between genders in Icelandic equestrianism versus many other countries; in Iceland, equestrianism is as much (or more) a male sport as a female sport, which is the opposite to many other countries.

As mentioned earlier, competitiveness of events has not been widely researched in events management research. Given increasing competition in the field of events (Matthews, 2016), analysing competitiveness factors seems to be of increasing importance. It is suggested here that segmentation, location and venues, facilities, information flow, marketing and the programme of the event are among important competitiveness factors.

This research concludes that competitiveness of events is an important subject for consideration of event managers, not least in horse-based events and sports. Findings indicate that variable factors affect the competitiveness of events. In the case of Landsmót, location and venue selection are important not only to domestic visitors but also to international ones as both target groups make arguments about the pros and cons of hosting the event in rural areas versus in urban areas.

The loyal visitors attend all Landsmóts, regardless of where they are held. But a significant proportion of the visitors have a preference for either rural or urban locations, so it would meet the wishes of part of the target group to host the event more often in the urban area than currently practised. It would, however, alienate part of the target group to exclusively host the event in an urban setting. The results on visitor satisfaction with the three venues point to Hólar as a rural setting and Reykjavík as an urban setting, but further coverage of visitor satisfaction at those three events is available in Chapter 7, this volume.

6.9 Implications

- The current target groups of Landsmót have different expectations and needs that have to be considered when preparing and running the event.
- Segmentation, locations and venues, facilities, information flow, marketing and programmes of the event are among important competitiveness factors.
- Alternating between one rural and one urban venue would enhance the competitiveness of the event.

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7 The Visitor Experience at a Horse Event

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Abstract

The demand side of horse (sport) events, that is visitor expectations, experiences and satisfaction, has not been the subject of much research. This chapter focuses on visitor experience and satisfaction at Landsmót (the National Championship of the Icelandic horse), held in Iceland in Hella (2014), Hólar (2016) and Reykjavík (2018). An online survey was conducted among visitors following those three events where a total of 2318 visitors responded. Findings indicated the importance of intangible services at the venue and service-mindedness of staff. High demand for horse-related products and equipment was reported at the venues during the events, as well as demand for clothes and other products related to weather conditions during the events. Visitors desired greater variety of meals and access to a grocery store at the venues. There was a considerable difference in visitor satisfaction between the three events investigated. The 2016 event in Hólar ranked the highest in all factors evaluated, except those related to the shopping area where visitors wanted more variety of products. The score of the 2016 event for overall visitor satisfaction was 4.39 (out of 5). The 2018 event in Reykjavík scored 4.21 whereas the 2014 event in Hella ranked 3.64.

Key words

expectations; satisfaction; Icelandic horse; equestrianism; sport events; target groups

7.1 Introduction

Today, a variety of horse-based recreational activities, events and other entertainment is available in Iceland (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015b). Equestrian tourism has grown since around 1970 when the first equestrian tourism businesses were established (Sigurðardóttir, 2016). Equestrian tourism is now an important part of the tourism industry in Iceland, being especially strong in the rural parts of the country (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Sigurðardóttir, 2018; Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2018). This demonstrates that there is a demand for experiences related to the Icelandic horse, including equestrian events such as Landsmót (the National Championship of the Icelandic horse).

Visitors have expectations when attending an event. They have an idea about what kind of an event they are attending and what is going to be their role at the event. The experience of the visitors has to meet with the expectations created before the event. Visitors have expectations regarding issues such as the programme, facilities and the services offered. Expectations are created by variable factors such as marketing, word of mouth and image (Zeithaml *et al*., 2013). Evaluation of experiences is a personal process (McLaughlin and Coffey, 1990). Visitors at events evaluate their experience based on their own personal backgrounds and feelings. The evaluation of what is cold, tiresome, beautiful, fun or

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amazing is based on a personal interpretation of the situation. Both tangible factors, such as toilet facilities, camping sites and audience areas, and intangible factors, such as service quality and staff attitude, affect guests' experience and satisfaction with events (Theodorakis *et al*., 2015), but satisfaction is based on how well visitors' experiences meet the expectations created before the event (Zeithaml *et al*., 2013).

As for other events, visitor expectations, experiences and satisfaction are of great importance for horse-based events. Despite existing knowledge on affecting factors, it is important for organizers of repeated horse-based events to consider and analyse visitor experiences and satisfaction, which is the subject of this chapter, based on research with visitors to Landsmót. An online survey was conducted following the three events that took place in 2014, 2016 and 2018. When comparing the findings from those three events, it must be borne in mind that this is the same kind of event, taking place every second year but in different locations in Iceland. The 2014 event took place in Hella in the south and the 2016 event took place in Hólar in the north (see Chapter 3, this volume). Both venues are situated in rural areas. The 2018 event took place in the capital city Reykjavík in south-western Iceland. Different facilities and venues at the three events might have affected the satisfaction of visitors. Issues regarding locations and venues are further addressed in Chapters 4 and 6, this volume.

It is the hope of the authors that findings from this study will be a valuable resource for future planning of the event in terms of visitor satisfaction. This research contributes to research on the demand side of the worldwide horse industry, where limited research currently exists (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015a).

7.2 Visitor Expectations, Experiences and Satisfaction

Theories on customer expectations, experiences and satisfaction have been developing within the tourism industry for years. Events and festivals can benefit from making use of those long-developed theories to further develop visitor satisfaction at events. Therefore, this section looks into tourism theories related to visitor satisfaction.

According to Zeithaml *et al*. (1996), expectations are the ideas that customers have regarding how service providers fulfil the desires and wishes that customers hold. It is important to bear in mind that expectations are not one individual act or thing, but a collection of many different things based on the feelings of each person (Guðlaugsson, 2006). Customer satisfaction is based on how well the service lives up to visitor expectations. Variables such as gender, age and income also have an influence on guest expectations (Webster, 1989). Oliver (1999) claimed that customer satisfaction is a measurement of if and how well guest expectations had been met. It has also been stated that if a customer senses that the quality of a service is similar or greater than expected, it will yield happier customers (Espejel *et al*., 2008). Therefore, service quality is a concept that needs to be considered when looking at expectations and experiences of visitors at events.

Visitor experience highly affects intention to do further business with the service provider or to attend similar events in the future, but a memorable experience for one person does not have to be a memorable experience for another person (Grönroos, 1984; Normann, 1991). Experience is a key concept in tourism development and studies (Oh *et al*., 2007). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), the product itself is not enough; more is needed for the customer to have a satisfying experience. Pine and Gilmore (1999) presented the experience economy as a new paradigm to enhance business performance.

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In recent years, customer expectations have developed and an increasing number of tourists are seeking special kinds of experiences (Oh *et al*., 2007). Tourists carry with them their norms, perceptions, standards and expectations, based on their personal experiences and backgrounds (Sharpley, 2018).

It is suggested that increased participation of customers in the service process (co-production) is likely to increase customer satisfaction and the efficiency of service providers (Hsieh *et al*., 2004; Sigurðardóttir, 2011). In many cases, customers prefer to take part in the service process in one way or another, as participation increases the value of the experience for customers (Brown, 1999). In recent decades those ideas have been further developed and concepts such as 'co-creation' or 'value co-creation' have emerged as 'the experiential nature of tourism and hospitality calls for value co-creation' (Assiouras *et al*., 2019, p. 1). The concept of co-creation refers to a joint effort to create a memorable experience in tourism, events, leisure and sport activities.

7.3 The Demand Side of Horse (Sport) Events

One of the main reasons for travelling to a destination hosting a sporting event is the event itself (Turco, 1998). Research into the intent to return to an event and the loyalty of sport tourists can help event organizers to recognize factors that may contribute to the experiences of visitors. The determinants of behavioural intentions can therefore give valuable information for event organizers and lead to a more successful event (Petrick and Backman, 2002; Shonk and Chelladurai, 2008; Hutchinson *et al*., 2009).

Sport events have been categorized as live performances, absorbed by viewers on-site or via media. Madrigal (1995) stated that a viewer's pre-game expectations could contribute to post-game effect, which in turn could predict how satisfied the guest was with having attended the event. The quality of the guest's experiences can be predicted, by using certain event experience design models (Berridge, 2007). This applies to a planned event. Getz (2007) stated that a planned event is the 'intent to create, or at least shape, the individual and collective experience of the audience or participants' (p. 9) and that 'people create their own experiences within event settings' (p. 23).

Only a few studies are available on the demand side of equestrian events, that is the expectations, experiences and satisfaction of visitors. In the study of Daniels and Norman (2005, p. 201), the 'fan motivations, sport identification and expenditures of tourists' attending the 31st Annual Colonial Cup Races in South Carolina, USA, were researched by analysing responses from 222 guests. The main findings suggested that 'equestrian tourists were most likely to be motivated by entertainment and group affiliation needs and least likely to be motivated by escape and self-esteem needs' (Daniels and Norman, 2005, p. 201). Many of the respondents did not stay in the area overnight and the majority of them spent no or only small amounts of money during the stay. It is concluded that encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more is important for the event and the local area (Daniels and Norman, 2005).

The relationship between image and intention to visit horse-racing events in South Korea was investigated through an online survey answered by 242 respondents (Jeong *et al*., 2009). Its findings emphasized the importance of a positive image. They indicated that people with an image of the races related to wholesomeness and excitement expressed higher intention to visit such events than others. The importance of well-established infrastructure and positive marketing was emphasized. The findings implied that potential visitors seek a sound

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leisure space for their family or friends to enjoy horse racing and at the same time they seek to experience vitality through betting (Jeong *et al.*, 2009).

The demand side of equestrian events in Iceland has been the subject of some research. In research on the horse gatherings/round-ups in north Iceland, a survey was conducted among visitors to three gatherings in 2008 and 2009. The round-ups take place outdoors, as does Landsmót, but these events are held in September to October, when the weather is often colder than when Landsmót takes place. The horse round-ups have been researched in recent years from the events management perspective (Helgadóttir *et al.*, 2010; Helgadóttir, 2015, 2019). Visitors at the horse round-ups in general reported high satisfaction with the events, as 95% of the responding visitors were satisfied with their visit. Interestingly, weather conditions did not have significant effects on customer satisfaction at those events (Helgadóttir *et al.*, 2010).

Given the high number of equestrian events held every year, and the limited available research on visitor expectations, experiences and satisfaction at such events, this research contributes to increased knowledge on the demand side of such events (see also Chapter 6, this volume).

7.4 Research Methods

The purpose of the research was to gain information about visitor experiences and satisfaction regarding planning and execution of Landsmót. A quantitative online survey was conducted following three events, in 2014, 2016 and 2018. A questionnaire was sent via email to the visitors.

A questionnaire was chosen because it is a method where researchers can collect measurable data that can later be processed according to the purpose of the research. The questionnaire was originally developed in 2014 in Icelandic and English as a Master's study (Pétursdóttir, 2018). An adjusted questionnaire was used following the 2016 and 2018 events to gather more data to be able to compare visitor experiences and satisfaction at the three Landsmót events.

Questionnaires offer the possibility of gathering large amounts of data in a short period of time (Karlsson, 2001), which was one of the reasons why this method was chosen. Another reason was the accessibility that the researchers had, through the list of emails that were collected through online ticket sales for Landsmót. When buying a ticket online, guests were asked to supply their email address for the ticket delivery and that was how most of the mailing list came to be.

The population for Landsmót 2014 research was divided into two groups: (i) guests who had bought tickets for the event online; and (ii) guests who participated in a lottery in the market tent during the event. Those who bought tickets online in Icelandic krona were sent a questionnaire in Icelandic, but those who paid for their tickets in euros got the English questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part discussed the guests' experiences and the perceived service quality of the event. The second part was about the background of the visitors. In total there were 61 questions in the questionnaire. Additionally, respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any particular issues addressed in the survey through open-ended questions.

In the questionnaire, statements were made and the participant was asked to take a stand regarding each statement. The participant was to choose only one option per statement. A 5-point Likert scale was used as a measuring tool, in which 5 meant that

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the participant very much agreed with the statement but 1 meant the participant very much disagreed.

A total of 2318 respondents participated in the surveys following the three events. About 78% of the respondents had Icelandic nationality, 5.6% were Germans, 4.5% from Sweden, 3.2% from Denmark and 2.1% from Norway. The rest represented other nationalities.

About 62% of the respondents were female and 67% of all respondents were older than 40. As the survey was mostly conducted among ticket buyers, it is suggested not to generalize about the visitor group of the event from those figures, as women have been shown to be more likely to respond to surveys than men (Kwak and Radler, 2002) and also might be more likely to be the ones to buy the tickets on behalf of their families (and so to leave their email addresses), as women are often responsible for family leisure. It might also be that older members of a family buy entrance tickets for themselves and at the same time for younger members of the family, which diminishes the likelihood of young visitors being included in the sample.

7.5 Findings

The main focus here is on intangible service factors, but some of these are related to tangible facilities at the events. The intangible service factors are mostly based on human services, but both paid staff and volunteers at the event were providing services. A more detailed coverage of the volunteers' part at the event is available in Chapter 8, this volume. It must also be noted that some of the service providers were staff of the event itself but others, such as in catering services and the shopping area, were hired by particular businesses that offered goods and services at the event.

Here we focus on comparing customer experiences and satisfaction at the three Landsmót events that took place in 2014 (Hella), 2016 (Hólar) and 2018 (Reykjavík). Related to this analysis, further information on marketing, segmentation and competitiveness of those three events are addressed in Chapter 6, this volume.

7.5.1 Services and practicalities at events

When planning and implementing an event, there are a number of factors to look into to ensure that visitor satisfaction is maximized. Only some of those factors are addressed here. In this regard, staff performance and personal services are of importance as well as factors related to security, traffic, car parks and sale of tickets. In Table 7.1, factors related to services provided by staff and practicalities related to the service process are addressed. When looking into those factors, services in general rank higher in Hólar 2016 and Reykjavík 2018 than in Hella 2014. In all those factors, the 2016 event in Hólar has the highest ranking, closely followed by the 2018 event in Reykjavík.

At all three events, accessibility of service staff ranks lower than other service factors listed in Table 7.1. This indicates that visibility and accessibility of those members of staff should be considered at future events. Also, increased information could be provided on how to find assistance and services. For example, the importance of numbering the rows at the car park was suggested in open-ended replies, so as to make it easier to find cars again.

Catering services and a market area are important elements at Landsmót. Those services are provided by external businesses that have made service agreements with Landsmót

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Table 7.1. Visitor satisfaction with services and practicalities at Landsmót (ranking on a 5-point Likert scale).

Service factors	Hella 2014	Hólar 2016	Reykjavík 2018
Service interface of staff	3.87	4.38	4.33
Capability of staff to provide needed information	3.52	4.17	4.11
Accessibility of service staff	3.13	3.85	3.67
Online ticket purchasing	4	4.39	4.28
Security	3.53	4.15	3.99
On-site traffic management	3.35	4.11	3.9
Planning of car parking	3.43	4.08	3.79
Average ranking	**3.58**	**4.18**	**3.99**

Table 7.2. Visitor satisfaction with catering services and market area at Landsmót (ranking on a 5-point Likert scale).

Service factors	Hella 2014	Hólar 2016	Reykjavík 2018
Quality of supplied food	3.15	3.76	3.77
Service in catering area	3.24	3.8	3.79
Pricing in catering area	2.81	3.2	3.15
Planning of catering services	3.16	3.83	3.82
Supply of goods in shopping area	3.39	3.34	3.66
Service in shopping area	3.55	3.72	3.81
Planning within shopping area	3.42	3.58	3.71
Pricing in shopping area	3.9	3.17	3.17
Average ranking	**3.33**	**3.55**	**3.61**

about providing particular goods and services during the event. In regard to those services, the 2018 event in Reykjavík ranks the highest (3.61 on average), whereas Hella was ranked the lowest (3.33). In regard to catering services alone, the 2016 event in Hólar ranks slightly higher than Reykjavík (Table 7.2).

Comments in open-ended replies mentioned that visitors wanted more variety of refreshments and food, more supply of 'healthy food', food for vegetarians and access to a grocery store at the venue. International visitors also mentioned that they would have been keen to be able to buy more traditional Icelandic food. Visitors to Hólar 2016 claimed that they were disappointed with the supply of riding wear and horse gear in the shopping area. This was mostly relevant for the international visitors but was also mentioned by domestic visitors, indicating that both international and domestic visitors were keen to use the opportunity at Landsmót to buy horse-related products and equipment. In doing so they would increase spending at the venue (see further coverage on spending and economic impacts in Chapter 12, this volume).

7.5.2 Overall visitor satisfaction

Visitor satisfaction with service factors related to, for example, planning and punctuality of the programme, commentary presentation of the competition, evening programmes,

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Table 7.3. Visitor satisfaction with planning and implementation of Landsmót (ranking on a 5-point Likert scale).

Service factors	Hella 2014	Hólar 2016	Reykjavík 2018
Timings of the programme	3.92	4.22	4.1
Planning of the programme	3.59	4.14	4.02
Oral presentation during competition	4.13	4.33	4.29
The evening programme	3.38	3.95	3.79
Playground and recreation for kids	2.84	3.37	3.33
Management of the event	3.45	4.11	3.99
Overall planning of the event	3.61	4.31	4.21
Overall execution of the event	3.8	4.36	4.24
Ratio of prices versus services	2.93	3.73	3.6
Overall visitor satisfaction	3.64	4.39	4.21
Average ranking	**3.53**	**4.09**	**3.98**

recreation for children, planning and management of the event and satisfaction with the value visitors got for their money spent on entrance tickets was also analysed (Table 7.3). Those factors were in general highly ranked, but the experience of the evening programme and recreation for children could be improved. It was suggested that the formal speeches at the evening programme should be made shorter, particularly if weather conditions are cold and/or wet (see also Chapter 11, this volume).

It was further suggested to offer some services or recreational activities for visitors who attended the event who are not very interested in horses, for example when travelling with others who are horse enthusiasts. Those suggestions included guided hiking tours when the event took place in rural settings.

Management and planning of the event was ranked high for Hólar 2016 and Reykjavík 2018, but not as high in Hella 2014. For example, the ratio of prices of entrance tickets versus experienced services only ranked 2.93 out of 5 in Hella but 3.73 in Hólar and 3.6 in Reykjavík. Some respondents found the ticket price high compared with the services provided, but it was also mentioned several times that individual respondents did not find the ticket price too high, so there seems to be a difference within the visitor group in how they evaluate the value received for their payment for entrance tickets. This is an area that warrants further research.

Even though particular factors related to planning and implementation of the event could be improved, according to the respondents to the survey, total satisfaction of visitors at all three events was rather high. Visitors to Hólar 2016 reported the highest satisfaction with their overall experience of the event (4.39 out of 5), Reykjavík 2018 ranked 4.21 and Hella 2014 ranked 3.64. In open-ended comments, the word 'fantastic' was often used to describe the experience of the 2016 event in Hólar.

7.6 Discussion

The different challenges of planning and implementing a multispecies event have been addressed in other chapters in this volume (for example Chapter 11, this volume), where not only the needs of human visitors and staff have to be taken care of, but also the needs of the horses. Given the fact that Landsmót is a week-long outdoor event, the weather can

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highly influence the experience of visitors to such events. This is briefly addressed in Chapter 6, this volume. Given the many uncertain factors involved when planning such an event, it is important that visitors are aware of what to expect. The importance of marketing communication and providing information beforehand has been suggested as being vital to manage the expectations of visitors (Chapter 6, this volume), as visitor satisfaction is highly related to how well the experience fits with the expectations of visitors (Zeithaml *et al*., 2013).

Intangible services, such as employee manners and willingness to serve visitors, have been shown to affect total satisfaction of visitors highly in equestrian tourism in Iceland (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015a). Therefore, it can be concluded that such factors are also important to visitors to horse-based events such as Landsmót. The same goes for planning and facilities at the events such as those regarding the programme, security, traffic, car parks and ticket purchases. This study indicated high satisfaction with the process of buying entrance tickets online, which suggests that the system used is functioning well.

This survey indicated extensive demand for horse-related products and equipment at the event venues. It is suggested that during this week-long event visitors like to use the time and the opportunity to do some shopping. They like to buy horse-related products without leaving the event venue. It is also indicated that goods related to weather conditions at the event are under high demand, such as raincoats and warm clothes when the weather is cold and/or rainy and things like sunglasses and sunscreen if the sun is shining. This puts a lot of pressure on the businesses selling products at the venue not only to be prepared to sell horse-related products but also to have a flexible supply based on weather conditions, to fully meet the requirements of visitors.

Demand for variable options was identified regarding catering services and supply of food at the event, particularly based on open-ended responses of visitors where they described their preferences regarding food and drinks, such as their desire for healthier food, vegetarian choices and local food. Given recent trends in human diet, such as veganism (Zamir, 2004) and the comments of the visitors to recent Landsmót events, it is worth considering what kinds of meals should be offered at Landsmót to maximize the satisfaction of visitors. It is suggested that the supply of meals at the event should be reviewed to try to ensure that it meets the desires of most of the visitor group, but further research is needed on the subject to be able to state what food should be served at such events. Some respondents commented that the price of food and refreshments was so high that they did not purchase any food at the event venue and preferred to be able to shop in a grocery store on-site.

The commentary during the competitions and shows at Landsmót has been addressed in earlier research in terms of language (Snorradóttir, 2010; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). Icelandic is the most used language at the event, but other languages are used in some cases. This can be a challenge for international visitors but it has also been suggested that using the Icelandic language at an event of the Icelandic horse can also be a part of the attraction and of being part of the Icelandic horse community (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016; Heldt Cassel, 2018). Findings from this study reported high satisfaction at all three events regarding the commentary at the event. However, in the open comments, the language issue was raised as being a challenge for international visitors. As this research mainly focused on visitor experiences and satisfaction at Landsmót, it is important to keep in mind that satisfaction is highly related to the expectations of visitors (Zeitham *et al*., 2013), which can to some extent be managed by marketing communication and by providing information to visitors before the event. As many of the visitors buy their entrance tickets

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months before the event, there might be an opportunity to reach those visitors and to provide them with extra information about the event and what to expect, before they arrive. This is particularly important for international visitors, who are more likely to be first-time visitors than the loyal group of domestic visitors who regularly attend the event (Chapter 6, this volume). This would likely increase visitor satisfaction, as the event might better meet the expectations of those visitors. This further emphasizes that there are different target groups attending Landsmót and that the different expectations of those visitor groups (such as international and domestic) should be considered when designing the services provided at the event (see also Chapter 6, this volume).

The co-creation of experience at horse-based events should not be underestimated (Assiouras *et al*., 2019), because, despite the fact that most visitors are first and foremost spectators, the social parts of the events are important. For example, during evening programmes, night dances and when people are meeting old friends or making new friends during their stay at the event, visitors co-create experiences. Being at the same location for up to a week with about 8000–10,000 other horse enthusiasts and 800–1000 horses can be seen as part of the experience.

Overall, visitor satisfaction differed between the three events under investigation. The high visitor satisfaction at the events in 2016 and 2018 indicates that the organizing team of Landsmót have been developing the event's planning and execution in a positive way. The high satisfaction among visitors at those two events is in line with the estimation of customer experience and satisfaction with particular factors evaluated in the research: in all evaluated factors except those related to the shopping area, the Hólar 2016 event ranked the highest. Reykjavík 2018 also ranked high, but Hella 2014 in general ranked the lowest of these three events regarding visitor experience and satisfaction. This is also in line with the conclusions made in Chapter 6, this volume, where it is suggested that the two locations of Reykjavík (as an urban setting) and Hólar (as a rural setting) are most likely to maximize the competitiveness of Landsmót as an event.

7.7 Implications

- Overall visitor satisfaction at Landsmót is high, but differs considerably between Landsmót events.
- There is a demand for different horse-related products at the event, as well as for refreshments and food and goods related to weather conditions at the venue.
- As Landsmót has several distinct visitor groups (see also Chapter 6, this volume) it is important to consider how to monitor, manage and meet their differing expectations.
- The various target groups have different needs regarding facilities, services and programme that should be considered when planning the event.

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8 Volunteering at Landsmót: Gaining Knowledge and Experience

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Abstract

Landsmót (the National Championship of the Icelandic horse), the main equestrian event in Iceland, provides an opportunity to present Icelandic nature and culture in many ways, through horses, clothing, equipment and food. Landsmót is a biennial sports event which has become a meeting place for local and national participants (audience and volunteers) and also international audiences and volunteer tourists. It provides access to what is commonly termed 'the world of the Icelandic horse'. The findings in this chapter are based on interviews with volunteers and fieldwork at the Landsmót event at Hólar, Iceland, in 2016. There were two types of volunteers at the event: volunteer tourists who signed up due to their interest in the core activity; and members of local non-profit associations that took on tasks for the event as a fundraising activity. The findings suggest that these two groups require different volunteer management approaches and that a clearer strategy for managing international volunteer tourists is needed to meet their needs and expectations of the event community and to facilitate their co-creation of memorable experiences.

Key words

event community; volunteer tourists; local volunteers; volunteer management

8.1 Introduction

Volunteers are, for many events, the main workforce. In the case of sports events, the volunteers' experiences become valued as expertise created out of a special interest, anchored in the event's core activity (Jæger and Olsen, 2005). Thus, their expertise and engagement become vital to the event community and the development of the event over time. This chapter aims to identify the volunteers' experiences, and the event contexts that create these experiences. Two categories of volunteers are identified: the guest volunteers, who are tourists volunteering at Landsmót; and host volunteers, who are local people (Holmes *et al.*, 2010).

This chapter discusses the experiences of volunteers at Landsmót 2016 held in Hólar, in northern Iceland. Landsmót is the National Championship of equestrianism in Iceland. It is both a major equestrian sport event and a festival celebrating the Icelandic horse. It is biennial, held in the alternate year to the World Championships of the Icelandic horse, which is always hosted outside Iceland. As the importation of horses is forbidden, no horses can enter Iceland to compete at Landsmót and horses that have previously been exported cannot return. Iceland has only one breed of horse and is verified as the country of origin of this breed, which has now spread to at least 21 countries (see Chapters 2A and 3, this volume).

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At the event, the audiences can watch a top sport competition and breeding shows, including the best riders and horses in Iceland. The event also includes educational activities, entertainment and a marketplace, all dedicated to the core attraction – horses. Further, there are stables and veterinary facilities on site, and the venue also includes a food court, campsite, sanitary facilities and parking. As with other major sports events, Landsmót relies on volunteers to support this wide range of facilities and activities.

8.2 The 2016 Landsmót

For Landsmót 2016 the venue was Hólar, a place of particular importance for equestrianism in Iceland. In 1882 an agricultural college was founded there, but the history of Hólar as a place of learning starts with a Catholic seminary in 1106 (Hólar University n.d.(a)). The agricultural college was the precursor to Hólar University, which now operates on the campus. Hólar University has a horse breeding farm and a Bachelor's degree in equine studies that prepares students for work in various aspects of the equine sector, such as horse breeding, training, riding instruction and competitive equestrian sport (Hólar University, n.d.(b)). The equine studies programme has, over the couple of decades in which it has developed, educated a high proportion of the top riders in the country (see Chapter 2B, this volume). Hólar is also the home of the Icelandic Horse History Center, a small museum with a permanent exhibition on the development of the breeding of the horse, its role in Icelandic society and temporary exhibitions by contemporary photographers (Icelandic Horse History Center, n.d.).

At the 2016 event the educational activities on offer were diverse, ranging from lectures to demonstrations, where experts presented research on various topics related to the Icelandic horse such as horse health and welfare, training, horse behaviour, choice of saddlery and shoeing. Professional riders and students from the Hólar University's Bachelor programme in equine studies demonstrated the different gaits, explaining how one should think and ride, and what could be improved, to get the 'perfect' gait. There was also visitor access to the stables where members of the audience could meet the mares, stallions and other competing horses. Information was provided about contemporary education relating to horses and riding, through Hólar University, and by using the university facilities and infrastructure for the event.

Volunteers were a part of this learning environment, gaining knowledge and a variety of experiences. The volunteers at the 2016 event were both domestic and international volunteer tourists, as well as local people. They had different backgrounds and motivations for volunteering at Landsmót. Regarding motivation, there were two main categories. On the one hand, many of those who volunteered were motivated by their interest in the horse and the core activities of the event, and they signed up with the Landsmót 2016 management directly. On the other hand, many volunteers were members of local charitable grassroots organizations that Landsmót had contracted to carry out various tasks. These organizations received payment for the work done by their members, so although the individual workers/volunteers received no personal compensation, the event offered a useful fundraising opportunity for the organization which they were representing. Volunteers in this latter category were in effect volunteering to raise funds for their organization, such as the Women's Society of Hólar and the Grettir Search and Rescue Squad (see Chapter 5, this volume).

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8.3 Events and Tourism

The tourism and event sectors are closely related. Events are seen as tourism magnets and the visitors to events need the services of the tourism industry: transport, accommodation, food and entertainment (Gössling *et al*., 2018). However, the target market for events is not confined to tourists in the conventional definition of an overnight visitor, but may also extend to the local population.

Events meet many important human social and psychological needs like relaxation, novelty seeking, socializing and hedonism. They also strengthen social cohesion through interactions between the target groups such as local people and visiting tourists, generating a spirit of goodwill and happiness (Helgadóttir, 2018; Shone and Parry, 2019). The flip side of this cohesion can be that some groups are on the inside while others fall outside the definition of an event community, which has the potential to lead to issues of exclusion (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). The role of Landsmót in community building around the Icelandic horse and associated equestrianism is discussed in Chapter 2 of this volume.

Motivation or pull factors for attending events are diverse and include the specific experiences and benefits that people expect to have, as either participants, volunteers or spectators, to name three categories of potential event tourists (Petterson and Getz, 2012). Other motivation factors are to have fun, make new friends, acquire new knowledge and help others (Jæger and Mathisen, 2017), as well as the recognition of the meanings and purpose of the event (Clayton, 2016). Gössling *et al*. (2018, p. 1596) argued that basic human emotions (including feelings of loneliness) have become a key selling point, where tourism becomes a mechanism for connectedness 'in a world that appears to be increasingly characterized by individualization and loss of meaning'. Tourism is also increasingly characterized by relational spaces with, for example, new types of tourism accommodation such as Airbnb, and new spaces where people can meet, as in events (Richards, 2014).

8.4 Volunteering at Events

While events are often about socializing, volunteering can offer more transformative experiences built on values gained through interaction and learning by working at events. The volunteer role may include activities we do not experience in our daily life and even when volunteers carry out familiar tasks the context is different, making the experience special (Jæger and Mathisen, 2017).

Volunteering at events can offer experiences gained through togetherness and fellowship, through sharing the same interests, work tasks and challenges. This may offer international volunteers access to new meanings, new relations and a sense of togetherness with locals through 'going local' in a volunteer tourism role. Being a volunteer makes it possible, at least temporarily, to become an active part of a community, which sometimes corresponds with what is regarded as 'local' (Jæger, 2019). For volunteer tourists the events can offer an opportunity to co-create relational space with local volunteers. These are in-between spaces, neither just tourist nor just local (Richards, 2014). These are often experiences created outside the normal range of choices available to an individual, beyond everyday experiences (Getz, 2008).

In a sense, event volunteers may be 'prosumers', as they are consumers who are co-constitutive in the tourism product (Toffler *et al*., 1981; Hjalager *et al*., 2008). The volunteers

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at events invest their time and labour for free, and in return create memorable experiences for themselves, and others involved in the event. Event volunteer tourists are actively working together with local volunteers and event managers, staging their own memorable experiences through mutually exchangeable commodities, tangible goods and intangible services (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). These prosumers are important for events held regularly, as key members building an event community and as volunteers who continuously engage with the event before, during and after the event has finished. Dedicated prosumers may not only volunteer during an event; some also contribute throughout the year, working with tasks relevant to next year's event. One example is from the Roskilde festival where the volunteers as music enthusiasts 'bring information about new bands and new styles from their festival experiences worldwide. This is of major importance for a continual renewal of the festival programme' (Hjalager *et al*., 2008, p. 45). However, many volunteers at music festivals may not necessarily be repeat volunteers – it is more that they contribute to a broader festival community and so can encourage future volunteers.

During an event, experiences are created in a special place and time period, often with a feeling of a 'time out of time', separate from ordinary daily life (Falassi, 1987; Getz, 2012). This special 'event time' is of importance for volunteer experiences in many ways – participating in new activities, within a limited time frame, together with other people in the event community. The nature of event volunteer activities might, for many of the people involved, be experienced as a 'slow time' (Jæger and Olsen, 2005). In 'liminal' experiences, such as sports events and festivals, people may feel themselves to be much more authentic and more freely self-expressed than in everyday life, because they are engaging in non-ordinary activities, free from the constraints of daily life (Wang, 1999). In an article on social capital related to a small-scale running event, Larsen and Bærenholdt (2019) developed the metaphor 'running together'. This metaphor indicated how social capital was created through people who are 'running together' in multiple tasks and ways, including the mobile volunteers, organizers, runners, supporters and spectators.

8.5 Volunteer Management

In tandem with the development of events management, volunteering is becoming more professional. Volunteering is no longer limited to simple hands-on tasks at the event, but can include high-profile task areas such as 'communicating with the media and visitors; accompanying the invited guests; helping in the direct organization of events, lectures, concerts, and master classes; and promoting organization profiles in social networks' (Gordin and Borovskaia, 2017, p. 43). While events are important for the volunteers and volunteering has an important societal role, volunteering is also vital for many types of events such as sport events (Jæger and Mathisen, 2017; Gellweiler *et al*., 2019).

To better understand volunteering and the balance that event managers need to strike between meeting the volunteers' need for fun and need to be useful, the concept of a leisure continuum is useful. Stebbins (1992) suggested a continuum rather than a dichotomous relationship between serious and casual leisure through connoisseurship, membership of and professionalization within the leisure activity. Recreation specialization or serious leisure involves the investment of time and other resources and a learning process from novice to expert (Stebbins, 1992; Tsaur and Liang, 2008). The main motivation for volunteer tourists is co-creation of memorable experiences (Wollebæk *et al*., 2014). What can be regarded as individual, hedonic premises that first led to volunteering at events for

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fun may later act as a starting point for a relationship with an event, which makes the volunteer return in later years for more altruistic reasons (Haanpää, 2017).

This applies to event volunteers, who offer enthusiasm, a good relationship and empathy with the public, while being a cheaper labour force. For event managers it is important to ensure that reliability of service does not clash with volunteer expectations, which include: 'flexibility of engagement, the quality of personal relationships, recognition for their contribution, and a clear communication of what they are expected to do' (Nichols and Ojala, 2009, p. 369).

The values created in events are individual and personal, but other values can be proposed as the volunteer becomes more engaged with the event community. By being aware of what values the volunteers cherish, event managers can facilitate such value creation for volunteers (Zátori, 2016). This is supported by Allen and Bartle (2014), who pointed out that volunteers who reported greater engagement whilst volunteering were both intrinsically motivated and felt they received managerial support.

The literature thus suggests that events management needs to take into account the varying levels of engagement and expertise associated with serious leisure pursuit as motivation for volunteering. This applies not only to experienced versus novice volunteers but also to what they are serious about: they may value the core attraction of the event or it may be that volunteering is a leisure pursuit of value in itself. In any event, engagement, community and learning are part of the value creation process in the volunteer experience.

8.6 Methodology and Methods

This study combined interviews, field conversations and participant observation. To gain better understanding of the diversity of volunteers' experiences, field conversations were helpful since lived experiences are often individual and momentary; and it is in field conversations that the researcher often finds answers to questions that have not been posed explicitly (Aase and Fossåskaret, 2007). The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed. In addition, other information was gathered through field notes and film/photos. When investigating volunteer experiences produced during an event, which focuses on lived experiences, it has been noted that they can often only be considered through research after they have occurred (Van Manen, 1997). The design of this study meant that informants were able to reflect on both their former volunteer experiences and their current experiences at Landsmót.

Many of the foreign volunteers had Icelandic horses back home and were working or studying in fields related to horses or other animals, which was among their main reasons for volunteering at Landsmót. However, although they had a common interest in the Icelandic horse, they often had different motivations for why they applied to be a volunteer, as discussed further below. Many of the foreign volunteers wanted to experience Iceland as 'ordinary' tourists after finishing their role as volunteers at Landsmót. The local Icelandic volunteers were mostly working on behalf of non-profit organizations to which they belong.

For this chapter the data consisted of semi-structured interviews, field observations, photos and video recordings and casual conversations in the field. Nine volunteers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule (Table 8.1). Two informants were men and seven were women. Six of the volunteers were in their twenties, with the other three being in their thirties, forties and fifties, respectively. The informants were from different

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Table 8.1. Nationality, age and experience of volunteers interviewed.

Informants	Nationality	Age	Volunteer experience
1. Anna	Foreign	37	Second time volunteer
2. Martha	Foreign	20	Second time volunteer
3. Karen	Foreign	22	Second time volunteer
4. Maria	Foreign	21	Second time volunteer
5. Gudrun	Icelandic	59	First time volunteer
6. Jòn	Icelandic	44	Several times volunteer
7. Ruth	Foreign	29	First time volunteer
8. Rakel	Foreign	25	First time volunteer
9. Einar	Icelandic	20s	Third time volunteer

countries in mainland Europe; three of them were from Iceland. Seven of the volunteers had been volunteers at Landsmót before, while two were participating for the first time.

To ensure the ethical principle that no personal information can be traced to individuals, the volunteers interviewed have been given fictitious names and their nationality is not specified other than Icelandic or not Icelandic. The age and experience of the volunteer is specified, as this is suggested in the literature as of importance.

8.7 Findings

8.7.1 Motivations to volunteer at Landsmót 2016

Most of the volunteers interviewed volunteered because they had a passion for the event and what it stands for – in this case equestrianism and horses. This is the type of volunteer at events that the events management literature focuses on (Clayton, 2016; Haanpää, 2017) and many of the volunteers interviewed fitted this type.

> *I have my own Icelandic horse, so I like to follow the competition and meet friends. I am also a trailer driver for the Landsmót and like to contribute.* [Jón]

> *I like the Icelandic horse with its gaits, physique, nice and little, robust, the colours. It can go for four or five hours riding, which is very nice – it is natural.* [Karen]

However, at this event there were also volunteers who were not attracted to the event content itself but volunteered as active members of charitable organizations that were hired by the Landsmót events management team to carry out specific tasks. Clearly, their motivation was different.

> *I don't like horses, but I am working as a volunteer to earn money for [a local organization].* [Einar]

> *I am a member of [a local organization] that works to do good for the local society, and to earn money we took the job to clean the toilets during Landsmót. I work 4 × 6 hours cleaning the toilets.* [Gudrun]

Research shows that volunteering at events is also about helping others (Jæger and Mathisen, 2017), which was the main motivation for these volunteers at Landsmót. Volunteering for a local charitable or non-profit organization is part of their lifestyle:

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I think it is important to participate in volunteer work that has impact for the local society, at the same time, as it is good to do something together. [Jón]

A common motivation to be a volunteer at events and festivals is to have fun and make new friends (Jæger and Mathisen, 2017). These are also often the reasons why volunteers return to the same events again, as informant Ruth told us:

I was at Landsmót in Hella two years ago and I liked it. The people are very nice, and I wanted that experience again. I love Iceland, but it is very cold and wet. I don't know, but I think I will come back next year. [Ruth]

8.7.2 Volunteer tourism

The international volunteers who used their holidays to work for free at Landsmót reflect a trend in tourism for creating in-between spaces, neither purely tourism nor local spaces (Richards, 2014). Anna dwelt on this and how Landsmót allowed for more-than tourism experiences:

I do not like tourism in general. You get just a piece of it as a tourist, I don't like it. I want to focus on one place, and to get in touch with people and to get to know the place takes time. I like to learn about it much deeper, what is going on there. People are dealing with you in a different way as a volunteer, than when you are a tourist. First time that I volunteered at Landsmót was also nice, because we were invited home. I don't think there are so many tourists here, just those that are into the Icelandic horses. [Anna]

It is a chance to enjoy volunteering, visiting friends and relatives and conventional tourism activities during the same international trip:

It is a mix of being a tourist, meet some new friends. Not seeing all the waterfalls, but meeting people is important. [Anna]

After Landsmót I will go to a farm for a few days, the one that I have been at earlier. I will come back next year, and then I will look around in the north. [Karen]

I was riding at a farm last time I was here, and I hope to do it this time also. [Ruth]

These international volunteers mentioned some hurdles or challenges that they faced in their attempts to experience Iceland and Icelandic culture – firstly the language barrier:

The country is beautiful, but the language is tough. However, everyone speaks English, and they are willing to speak English. [Karen]

While events are often about socializing and tourism may fulfil the need for community as suggested by Gössling *et al*. (2018), the main attraction is nature or its cultural interpretation as landscape.

But I think the people are very nice and smart and lucky and friendly. And the landscape is beautiful. [Ruth]

The biggest challenge in 2016 for the volunteer tourists may have been the price level of tourism services in Iceland:

Everything is expensive if you are a tourist in Iceland. [Maria]

I do not want to ride together with many people, and I think it is very expensive, the riding tour. Life here for Europeans is very, very expensive. I have a feeling of being in Monaco. [Ruth]

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Being a volunteer may have made the trip to Iceland and participation at Landsmót less expensive by free access to the event, the camping, swimming pool, free internet and some meals.

8.7.3 Volunteer experiences

It is easy to assume that events and festivals are all about social, human interactions but there are non-human elements that also affect the quality of the experience:

> *The experience so far is very cool, but I am so cold. Two weeks in a tent, and all my clothes are wet. I don't have a room to dry them. I have not asked anyone, but I will do it. It is very cold at night.* [Ruth]

> *I am fascinated by the tough weather conditions, the foggy, rainy, and snowy special weather conditions. It is like another planet.* [Anna]

Interestingly the same weather conditions were experienced differently by these two volunteers. This is the nature of experience: it is personal and subjective. These comments also remind us that, while event managers can plan for much of the experience, there are external conditions that cannot be controlled, such as the weather. These examples of the subjective experience also suggest that in volunteer management it is important to listen and learn from the volunteers.

The values created in events depend on the quality or nature of the interaction between participants, which enables what Richards (2014) called an 'active exchange'. Even if it is not extensive it can be meaningful and take the volunteer closer to the in-group, becoming more of an insider at the event through contact with key stakeholders (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016).

> *To put on the bands on the riders was very nice. You speak with the riders, and say good luck.* [Ruth]

Here, the volunteer referred to the job of putting a band on the arm of the rider for audience identification during competition, a task that involves close interaction with top competitors.

The international volunteers were in for a surprise at Landsmót 2016, as equestrianism was not the only sport that was in focus at the event. The event took place at the same time as the UEFA European Football Championships, where the Icelandic men's team was competing for the first time. In the lounge that had been created as a space for guests to relax and socialize, the football games were shown. When Iceland played and won a match in the quarter-finals there was a huge crowd, and this added to the overall atmosphere of Landsmót 2016.

> *I am fascinated about the football sharing at the venue, and the Icelandic fans.* [Anna]

> *Such a small country and first time taking part in the finals at European Football Championships. It is so unique, and all the people were so happy in Reykjavik. Next weekend they are playing in my country, but then I think I will be from Iceland!* [Rakel]

Here the volunteers were referring to the fans of the Icelandic team who distinguished themselves with the Viking cheer at the European Football Championships. The Viking cheer was not only practised by the crowd of equestrian sports lovers watching football in the lounge but also at the final evening equestrian competition at Landsmót 2016, adding to the exciting atmosphere.

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8.7.4 Volunteer knowledge

Volunteer tourists often seek to learn about something they are passionate about or that will make them better professionals. Events management teams can propose activities that facilitate interactions where the volunteers gain knowledge, skills and friendship (Jæger and Mathisen, 2017). Learning about the Icelandic horse and associated equestrian practices was at the core of volunteering for some of the informants:

> *The Icelandic horses here are very different from the [Icelandic] horses back home. A middle horse here would be a great horse back home.* [Karen]

Being able to make such a value judgement about horse quality is moving along the continuum from casual to serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992). Several of the volunteers had ambitions to become professionals in the equine sector.

> *I will go for my internship in Akureyri, and write my Master Thesis on an illness that is just going on with Icelandic horses.* [Karen]

> *When I look at the riders, I see what I can do better and what I have to work with myself. I am competing back in France, but there are not many competitions. I could compete in Germany, but that is very expensive.* [Ruth]

> *I don't know if I will come back as a volunteer at Landsmót, and not as a tourist, but maybe as a student at Hólar.* [Karen]

The fun of being together with other people with similar interests, and working with common tasks, creates new knowledge, close relationships and belonging (Jæger and Olsen, 2016). Last but not least it is about learning about the horse culture or the world of the Icelandic horse (Helgadóttir, 2006).

> *I see pretty, pretty horses. I get to know new culture, new people and new languages.* [Martha]

> *Being in touch with the people at Landsmót, learning the language and getting access to the Icelandic horses. I hope to find a farm and ride like last time.* [Anna]

These volunteers clearly experienced and learned more about the horses and equestrian sports that they were passionate about, as well as belonging to the event community that is so important to the Icelandic equestrian culture.

8.7.5 Volunteer management

The experienced volunteer is an asset for event managers and so is the volunteer with specific expertise (Jæger and Olsen, 2005; Jæger and Mathisen, 2017; Gellweiler *et al*., 2019).

> *I have been on an internship in Iceland earlier and wanted to come back, and was a volunteer at Landsmót two years ago. I used to be a volunteer in the Championship in the Netherlands every year.* [Karen]

The events management team can propose certain activities that can be used as a platform for co-creation in line with the values of the volunteers, especially because the volunteers solve tasks together, which creates feelings of community (Jæger and Mathisen, 2017). Larsen and Bærenholdt's (2019) 'running together' metaphor indicates

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how social capital is created through people who are working together on multiple tasks and in different ways.

> *The tasks are varied, and that is nice. Not just picking the garbage but to open the ring is really important.* [Karen]

'Opening the ring' refers here to being the gatekeeper at the competition track, a task that is visible to all spectators and is important in ensuring the safety of horses and riders.

As previously discussed, volunteering is a form of serious leisure, where volunteers have experiences and expertise that they bring to the event (Stebbins, 1992). Further, as mentioned above, contemporary volunteering is becoming more and more professional, where volunteers undertake high-level specialized tasks (Gordin and Borovskaia, 2017). Feeling that their expertise and experience are not appreciated or made use of by the events management can be frustrating, as for Anna:

> *We were supposed to work with the vet team, but they did not need any help after all.* [Anna]

Here it should be noted that, due to strict quarantine regulations for the equine sector in Iceland, there may be a healthy scepticism by owners and riders about allowing volunteer tourists near the competing horses. As the horse population in Iceland is not immune to many common diseases in horses elsewhere, epidemics can become serious enough to halt all equestrian sport activity in the country. This was the reason for cancelling Landsmót in 2011 (Björnsdóttir *et al*., 2017).

However, many of the comments suggested that the quote above is indicative of something else:

> *There was no planned meeting when we arrived, which would be more efficient because then everyone would know what to do. When we came here, they said we have to figure out something to do. And then we were asked to pick up trash, and that is fine, because we are used to doing that in the Championship. We are used to that everything is organized before the event starts, but that is maybe a [my country] thing.* [Karen]

This suggests that the volunteer tourists were somewhat at a loss as to what to do and did not feel that their time and efforts were well managed. Nevertheless, this particular informant had volunteered before and felt that this time there were improvements over their previous experience and another informant was quite happy with the situation:

> *It is better preparation this time than earlier. Then we did not have the ID cards, so we didn't have anything to prove that we were volunteers.* [Karen]

> *Everything we need is here, food, pool and internet.* [Anna]

While Landsmót is a national championship, it is the sister event and at the same level as the World Championships of the Icelandic horse (see Chapter 2A, this volume) so attention needs to be paid to the management of and facilities for international volunteers:

> *It is very different from volunteering in [my country]. There we have a tent just for the volunteers, where you get food and drinks, three meals a day. We had just one meal per shift, so you still have to bring your own food.* [Karen]

That said, it is also a consideration to what extent the management wants the event to be international and to what extent it needs its 'Icelandicness' (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016) or a time-out-of-time in the event as liminal space (Falassi, 1987; Getz, 2012). It is

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worth noting that the local volunteers from grassroots associations had no commentary on the events management, whereas for the volunteer tourists this was a theme.

> *The organization is a bit chaotic, but it works out. However, here it was more like – the Icelandic have a motto that it will all work out, and it is true, it does. The scary thing is that this is expected. I like Iceland, it is not stressful. If you cannot do everything today, you do it tomorrow – except for the garbage.* [Karen]

Here Karen reflected that it may be part of Icelandic culture to work more chaotically than she was comfortable with. The contrast with the well-organized systems she had experienced back home seems, however, surprising to her.

These comments suggest potential differences in the practice of volunteering in Iceland compared with the home countries of the foreign volunteers. Managing international volunteers at Landsmót is not only about the facilities and tasks they are given, but also introducing them to the culture of the event. Further, the volunteer management needs to take into account the differences between the local volunteers who are already organized in charitable societies and the international volunteers who arrive as individuals.

8.8 Discussion

The theoretical background on volunteer tourism and volunteering at events focuses on the 'conventional' volunteers, rather than the volunteers who do not have a particular affinity with the event but with the grassroots association they belong to. Looking at our fieldnotes and in dialogue with the rest of the research team, we see that this latter group had a clearer role and contributed more effectively to the running of the event than the volunteer tourists. When reading between the lines in the interviews to see what is not there, the theme of volunteer management is not a big issue for the local grassroots organization volunteers, while the international volunteer tourists dwell on it. The metaphor 'running together' as a team with cooperation and involving participation across multiple tasks might be useful in future events.

If Landsmót wants to recruit and retain international volunteers, attention needs to be paid to their expectations of and need for structure, facilities and management. While recruiting international volunteers would at first glance seem a good thing to do, the Landsmót management needs to consider whether it is more efficient for the event to focus on the grassroot associations as partners that bring and manage their own volunteers. Choosing this option would, however, narrow the window of opportunity for learning and developing from casual to serious leisure within the international community of Icelandic equestrianism.

8.9 Conclusion

Wollebæk *et al*. (2014) warned that lack of volunteer management can result in difficulties in volunteer recruitment. This is also supported by Allen and Bartle (2014), who pointed out that volunteers who reported greater engagement whilst volunteering were both intrinsically motivated and felt they received managerial support. For Landsmót as an event this is something to consider, as the findings suggest that a part of the volunteer corps struggled to engage fully in the event community, as they were motivated to do.

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In line with the findings of Helgadóttir and Dashper (2016) it was found that there are barriers for the international volunteers for full integration into the event. Helgadóttir and Dashper (2016) pointed to the need for a language policy and this research points to a need for a clearer policy on whether international volunteers should be recruited and, if so, how to manage them to full engagement.

This study supports much previous research on volunteering at events (Jæger and Olsen, 2016; Jæger and Mathisen, 2017) as part of a serious leisure endeavour (Stebbins, 1992). This study raises questions about a less explored group of volunteers at events, that is the volunteers who are there on behalf of their commitment to a charitable organization rather than their passion for the event focus. This issue merits further attention in the sports events management literature. Volunteer management should ensure that the event gets the expertise needed, while the volunteers get the experiences desired.

8.10 Implications

- In research it is important to focus on different types of volunteers with different motivations, different affiliations with the event, and therefore different expectations, all of which have implications for volunteer management.
- Landsmót needs a policy on recruitment, management of and facilities for volunteers, both national and international.
- Volunteer management at Landsmót needs to address both the volunteers who sign up individually and the volunteers who work on behalf of charitable organizations.

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9A Horse Welfare at Events

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Abstract

Animals, including horses, are commonly involved in sports and events. Issues of animal/horse welfare at such events are increasingly discussed and disputed. This short Chapter 9A addresses some relevant issues regarding animal involvement in events, particularly welfare issues. The importance of research on the subject is raised. The chapter is followed in Chapter 9B by discussion of some of the specific welfare issues related to Icelandic competition horses, based on research at Landsmót (the National Championship of the Icelandic horse).

Key words

animal welfare; horse welfare; events; sports; ethics

9A.1 Animal Welfare

Awareness of animal welfare and ethical issues involving animals in sport, leisure and tourism is increasing. This includes horses in tourism, events and sport activities (Fiedler and McGreevy, 2016). 'Humans invest considerable finances and time in equine leisure and tourism pursuits securing horse welfare, yet despite this it remains under-researched' (Danby, 2018, p. 147). Fiedler and McGreevy (2016, p. 3) claimed that 'there still remain considerable gaps between equine welfare science and the mainstream horse use'. In the past couple of years, the extent of publications on animal welfare in leisure and tourism has increased. For example, in a recently published book 15 authors contributed chapters on the issues of rights, welfare and wellbeing of domestic animals in leisure (Young and Carr, 2018).

Despite the fact that welfare of animals has gained increasing attention in recent years (Collins *et al*., 2008), defining the concept of animal welfare is not as simple as one might think, as welfare considerations are complex and multifaceted (Paterson, 2014). The use of animals is in general accepted by societies as long as the use does not constitute harm to the animals (Collins *et al*., 2008). However, defining harm to animals is complicated and raises questions on what harm might be and how much harm is too much. It has been claimed that in some cases animals were seen as automated objects but nowadays it is widely accepted that animals have feelings (Young and Carr, 2018). It has been pointed out that not only the benefits to humans of interactions with animals should be noted, but also the benefits to animals from those interactions (Danby, 2018). Not only is the wellbeing of animals within human leisure being investigated but also 'the question of the leisure needs of animals' (Young and Carr, 2018, p. 7).

Consideration of animal welfare in relation to sport, leisure and tourism includes legal issues (Paterson, 2014), animal facilities (McCausland, 2014), animal emotions (McGrath and Philips, 2014), wellbeing and rights (Young and Carr, 2018) but first and foremost veterinary issues, which are addressed in Chapter 9B.

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9A.2 Horse Welfare at Events and in Sport

An increased level of public scrutiny has been identified in relation to the use of animals such as horses for sport and leisure purposes. Increasingly, social media platforms are used to draw the attention of the public to issues such as animal cruelty (Fiedler and McGreevy, 2016). Fiedler and McGreevy (2016, p. 1), concluded that 'the challenge lies with event organisers to reconcile the expectations of the public, the need to meet legal requirements to reduce or eliminate risks'.

Welfare issues have been raised in relation to horse events, particularly in competitions and sports. Research on the subject has dealt with issues such as stress level of horses (and riders) and various stressors during competition, where stress is not always harmful but can sometimes have negative effects on health, welfare and performance (Peeters *et al*., 2012). Research has also addressed stress in long-distance road transport of sport horses being transported regularly for competition (Schmidt *et al*., 2010) and injuries during training and competitions (Singer *et al*., 2008), lameness (Fiedler and McGreevy, 2016) and other health issues.

In most horse competitions, rules apply regarding equipment, facilities, shoeing of horses and other horse welfare issues. This is also the case at Landsmót. In all competitions and breeding shows at Landsmót, rules apply regarding welfare issues such as wounds (e.g. bit-related lesions), lameness and other health issues, weight of horse boots and shoes and types of saddlery. Rules also apply in relation to provision of relaxation time for horses within competitions (such as in Gæðingakeppni). Rules for different forms of competition and breeding shows are further described and explained in Chapter 3, this volume.

According to Icelandic national legislation about animal welfare (Icelandic Parliament, 2013), the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority (MAST) supervises the welfare of competition horses at Landsmót. Chapter 9B is based on data from the official welfare assessment during four events of Landsmót, 2012–2018, managed by Dr Sigríður Björnsdóttir, who is the author of Chapter 9B and a veterinarian with extensive experience of researching and working with horse welfare issues.

9A.3 Implications

- Animal welfare is a subject of increased attention around the world.
- Horse welfare at events and in leisure and sports is an issue which all stakeholders, including horse owners, trainers, competitors and horse event managers, have to consider and deal with.
- Increased research on horse welfare at events, and in sports and leisure, is important to create a strong foundation for decisions on horse welfare issues.

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9B Welfare Assessment of Icelandic Competition Horses

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Abstract

Veterinary examination of Icelandic competition horses, according to a specially designed protocol 'fit for competition', is performed prior to every entrance to the track during Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse. This has provided valuable data for welfare assessment that have been used for improvement of general rules for the benefit of competition horses. It further prevents suffering on an individual level as horses expressing pain during the examination are found not to be fit for competition and are not allowed to start or continue competition during the event. The frequency of bit-related lesions can be regarded as a welfare indicator for Icelandic competition horses, reflecting the pressure placed on the mouth of the horse.

Key words

Icelandic horse; bit-related lesions; welfare indicator

9B.1 Background

Animal welfare is of concern in all equine sports. The international governing organization, Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI), regards the welfare of the horse to be of vital importance and has addressed the main points for all disciplines in the FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse (FEI, 2013).

The gaited competitions established for the Icelandic horse represent a specific equestrian discipline which is regulated by the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations (FEIF) and the Icelandic Equestrian Association as described in Chapter 2, this volume. The discipline is unique in requiring presentation of up to five different gaits at various speeds, ranging from very slow to very fast and combining technical capability and power. The four-beat lateral gait tölt is most characteristic for the breed and central in all competitions, except pace tests/races (see Chapter 3, this volume). Tölt is preferably presented in a frame with an elevated head and neck position and a vertical head flexion. Although self-carriage (when the horse maintains the frame and gait without direct aids from the rider) is the highest goal, contact with the mouth of the horse is allowed on a stretched rein.

Welfare assessment for this discipline is under continuous development, applying a scientific approach and aiming to fulfil the FEI Code of Conduct. According to the national legislation on animal welfare, only healthy horses in good physical condition can be used for competition and shows (Ministry of Justice, 2014). A specific veterinary protocol 'Fit for competition' was designed and applied prior to all preliminary events, semi-finals and finals at four events of Landsmót in the years 2012–2018. Horses were examined at the

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competition area 1–24 hours before competing. The protocol included assessment of the general health status of the horse, palpation of the limbs, lameness examination in walk and trot and visual examination and palpation of the frontal part of the mouth, which is the area affected by the bit (Björnsdóttir *et al*., 2014).

The gaited competitions required, for the most successful horses, up to three entrances on to the track over the seven days of the event. Repeated examination of horses qualifying for semi-finals and finals gave the opportunity to follow the development of the health status of the competition horses during the event, where every examination reflected the previous entrance. Teams of four to eight veterinarians with special training performed the examinations under supervision of the author of this chapter, to ensure consistency in grading within and between events.

9B.1.1 General health status

Normal body condition and general impression indicating good health are required for competition horses.

As the most severe equine infectious diseases (equine influenza, equine herpes virus type 1, equine arteritis virus, equine infectious anaemia and strangles) have never been observed in Iceland (Bjornsdottir *et al*., 2017), vaccinations are not required and control of vaccinations is therefore not performed. A contingency plan for infectious diseases is, however, in place at such a big event. The presence of guests from all over the world is regarded as increasing the risk of introducing infectious agents to the native equine population.

9B.1.2 Legs

The veterinary examination starts with careful palpation of the legs and hooves (although hooves and shoeing are subjected to another specific check, carried out at all competitions of the Icelandic horse). Visual evaluation of lameness is performed in walk and trot, according to standard practice: the veterinarian looks for asymmetries in the motion pattern of the horse that could be a result of uneven loading of the limbs due to pain. Visible lameness and pain reaction to palpation of bearing structures exclude horses from further participation in the event.

9B.1.3 Mouth

The frontal part of the mouth is expected to be most prone to bit-related injuries. Inspection and palpation of the mucosa and underlying tissues in that area is therefore an important part of the veterinary examination. The horses are presented in a halter, allowing the vet to take the tongue to one side of the mouth while examining the contralateral side and vice versa. The location of any lesions is recorded and classified as occurring in the corner of the mouth, the mucosa of the cheek, in the bar region (the mucosa covering the mandibular interdental space, the underlying connective tissue and bone) or on the tongue. The lesions are graded as mild (thickening of the mucosa, superficial pressure lesions or small ulcers, up to 1 cm in diameter, without detectable soreness or inflammation) or severe (ulcers in the mucosa more extensive than 1 cm in diameter, inflammation and/or

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soreness of the mucosa and/or prominent thickening of the bars). In the case of lesions in more than one location, the most severe one counts in the classification. Expression of pain during palpation, full thickness lesions of the affected mucosa and evidence of periostitis on the bars exclude horses from further participation in the event.

9B.2 Results and discussion

Data from the Gæðingakeppni, including A-class (5-gaited competition), B-class (4-gaited competition) and young riders (4-gaited competition) at Landsmót 2012–2018, are presented here. Approximately 100 horses started in the preliminary rounds in each class, 30 qualified for the semi-finals, where 14 managed to progress to the finals. In total, 430–450 examinations were therefore performed for those classes at each Landsmót.

All horses examined looked healthy and in normal body condition.

Subjective lameness evaluation of the 5-gaited Icelandic horse is challenging due to the diversity in footfall patterns and the fast stride frequency. Although low-grade lameness may go unnoticed, the examination has prevented a few horses with mild lameness (on average three horses out of 300) from entering the track, saving them from suffering.

Examination of the frontal part of the oral cavity has provided important information about the pressure put on the mouth during competition. Pressure lesions in different locations of the bit area are regarded to be a useful indicator for the welfare of Icelandic competition horses and are therefore discussed in more detail.

High prevalence of bit-related lesions reported from Landsmót 2012 (60% of the horses presented with pressure lesions after preliminary rounds) has drawn attention to the welfare of the Icelandic competition horses, as explained in Bjornsdóttir *et al.* (2014):

> The severity of the lesions was found to vary as well as their location. The mild ones were most often located on the inside of the commissures of the lips and in the adjacent mucosa (buccal) while lesions in the bar region were most often regarded as severe. Only lesions at the bars appeared to increase in frequency from first examination (prior to preliminary rounds) to the last (prior to finals), representing strong effect of the competition itself, while the frequency of findings in the buccal region remained unchanged between the two examinations. Analysis of potential risk factors revealed the use of a snaffle bit (any type) to be correlated to buccal lesions while the use of curb bit with a port, commonly used at Landsmót 2012, was identified as a decisive risk factor for lesions at the bars. It was suggested that the port played a major role in the development of lesions in the bar region although the leverage effect of shanks and curb was likely to increase the effect of the port.

The bar region is the most sensitive part of the horse's mouth and the lesions observed in that location were regarded as most severe. Therefore, prevention of those lesions was given the highest priority. Prior to Landsmót 2014, the Icelandic Equestrian Association decided to put curb bits with a port on the list of prohibited equipment in national competitions (Icelandic Equestrian Association, n.d.). This decision received official confirmation later that year in a new regulation about the welfare of horses in Iceland (Ministry of Justice, 2014: Reglugerð um velferð hrossa nr. 910/2014). Figure 9.1 demonstrates the development of the frequency of pressure lesions after the preliminary rounds (prior to the semi-finals) in Landsmót 2012–2018. The ban on curb bits with a port is regarded as the main reason for improved oral health in the consequent events, Landsmót 2014–2018. Most importantly, a consistent reduction in the frequency of severe lesions on the bars, from 15% to 4%, has been observed. Surprisingly, the same tendency was also found for buccal pressure lesions, especially in 2014, which have been

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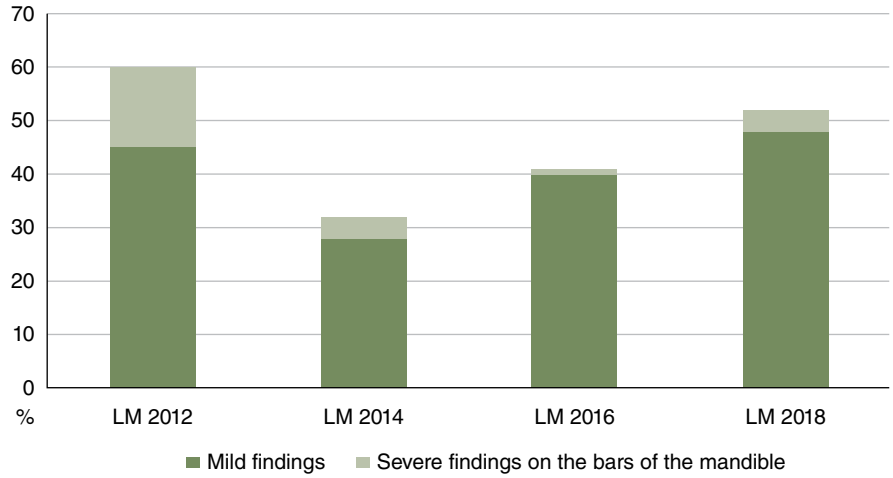


Fig. 9.1. Development of the frequency (%) of bit-related lesions in Icelandic competition horses (gæðingakeppni) between four consecutive events: Landsmót 2012 (LM2012), Landsmót 2014 (LM2014), Landsmót 2016 (LM2016) and Landsmót 2018 (LM2018). Findings from veterinary examination of the frontal part of the mouth were performed prior to the semi-finals (1–2 days after preliminary rounds).

related to the use of snaffle bits. That effect must be explained by increased awareness by the riders at that time, demonstrating that it is possible to reduce rein tension in the discipline. Attention has, however, declined and the applied rein tension in competition has apparently increased again.

Further development of the welfare assessment is warranted, including signs of conflict behaviour and pain face correlated to rider intervention. Measurable variables of lameness, direct pressure from equipment and airway obstruction related to head flexion may also be applied in the near future.

9B.3 Implications

- Repeated veterinary examination prior to every entrance to the track has provided valuable data for welfare assessment that have been used for improvement of general rules in the discipline, for the wider benefit of competition horses. It further prevents suffering on an individual basis as horses expressing pain during the examination are found not to be fit for competition and are not allowed to start or continue competition during the event.
- Bit-related pressure lesions are commonly found in Icelandic competition horses and regarded to be of concern for animal welfare.
- The frequency of bit-related lesions can be regarded as a welfare indicator for Icelandic competition horses, reflecting pressure put on the mouth of the horse.
    - Changes in the frequency of bit-related lesions reported between the four events of Landsmót during the period 2012–2018 were considered to have two main reasons:
    - Reduction in the frequency of severe lesions on the bars (pale grey in Fig. 9.1) was related to the ban of curb bit with a port.

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- Changes in the frequency of buccal pressure lesions (dark grey in Fig. 9.1) were considered to reflect rein pressure.
- Although prevention of the most severe lesions did show improvement, the results from Landsmót 2018 still indicate too high pressure in the mouth of Icelandic competition horses.

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10 Identity Construction in Relation to Niche Events: Images of Landsmót in Social Media

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Abstract

In this chapter the concept of identity is discussed in relation to niche events as expressed through images produced and circulated in social media. Since niche events focus on special interests and activities for a limited number of people and attract participants from afar who share this interest, these types of events also influence the identities of the places that are represented in relation to them. By circulating images online – the people, attractions, landscapes and cultural practices of places connected to specific hashtags on social media – places are co-constructed and materialized in the minds of visitors, businesses and other stakeholders in an ongoing flow of communication. The study shows that social media posts related to Landsmót (the National Championship of the Icelandic horse) represent both the event and Iceland as a destination by stressing national pride and an Icelandic identity strongly connected to the rural landscape, to outdoor activities, to harsh nature and to skilled, strong and independent men and women who create their identities in relation to their horses.

Key words

identity construction; social media; destination branding; niche events

10.1 Introduction

Events are closely related to the identities of people and places in different ways. By participating in a special event, such as a niche event, particular interests belonging to social groups and the expression of lifestyles may be enhanced and manifested. Niche events also influence place identity through strengthening the feeling of belonging, both for the producers of the event and for the host community (Quinn, 2005; Jaeger and Mykletun, 2013).

As reputations of places and place brands are often quite stable over time and difficult to change through top-down policy or official strategies, events that engage and promote collaboration and identification with the place may enhance re-imaging and revalorization of places. Events may be arenas that connect people in new ways, may promote self-realization and at the same time contribute to the development and evolution of local cultures (Jaeger and Mykletun, 2013). Previous research has found that events have importance in developing senses of belonging and the strengthening of common identities in communities, but also that they may function as tools for cultural reconstruction and contestation (McCabe, 2006).

In the context of destination branding and marketing, specific images and narratives of places are constructed to evoke feelings of attraction and excitement (Morgan *et al.*,

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2001). One way in which the images and narratives of a specific place, such as a country or nation, are expressed and reproduced is through the arrangement of events and festivals, such as sport events (Ramshaw, 2007). In the case of national festivals focused on sport and heritage, such as the niche event, Landsmót, images of the country and of features that represent the 'typical' Iceland, in terms of landscape and weather, are expressed through different media and at the site of the event itself.

In this chapter, the construction of identity of people and places in relation to niche events will be discussed. Identities of individuals, groups and places are constructed in many different ways and at different arenas, not least through different media and visual representations. In different forums and channels of image production, event organizers, tourism marketing organizations, businesses, participants and visitors co-create content that forms images of the event in relation to people and places. The concept of identity in relation to niche events will be discussed as it is expressed through images produced and circulated on social media. Since niche events focus on special interests and activities for a limited number of people and attract participants from afar who share this interest, these types of events also influence the identities of the places associated with them. Events always take place somewhere and the special event of a riding competition like Landsmót is strongly related both to representations of specific places, such as the local village or area, but also to a large extent to Iceland as a nation (Heldt Cassel, 2018).

The growth and spread of social media have greatly impacted on tourism practices and it has an important part to play in place-branding through the construction of meaning attached to places through social media posts (Andéhn *et al*., 2014). By representing the people, attractions, landscapes and cultural practices of places through images connected to specific hashtags on social media, places are co-constructed and materialized in the minds of visitors, businesses and other stakeholders in an ongoing flow of communication. Meaning can be detected and deconstructed through the qualitative analysis of different photographs, texts and expressions by using semiotic methods. Some of the identity constructions that were found in the analysis of Landsmót 2016 and the images of Landsmót in general will be presented in this chapter, based on a study of images available on the social media platform Instagram during February to May 2019.

10.2 Identity as Constructed and Performed

Starting from a social constructionist position in social science (Frazer, 2005), the concept of identity is understood as a process that is evolving over time and dependent on social and cultural contexts, and thereby not as anything stable, fixed or as an 'essence' of cultures, individuals or places. Identity is about the definitions and labels given and ascribed to people and to individuals which make them stand out as different from others, e.g. as female or male, as belonging to different social classes, or as belonging to different occupational groups or people with particular lifestyles. Identity is constructed through practices of representation and portraying people and place, where us–them and we–others are depicted and described as separate, but also through performance practices, where people define and express themselves through specific ways of being, dressing and interacting with others (Hall, 2000).

In the field of cultural geography places are conceptualized as social constructs through human interaction where different forms of communication and performance shape the ways in which we understand and experience places (Coleman and Crang,

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2002). Place identities are then not given or stable, but in constant reproduction, related to how society, economy and culture are developing over time, and not least how places are talked about, portrayed and given meaning in specific social and cultural contexts, such as tourism.

Identity is a complex concept that has individual as well as collective dimensions and is both ascribed to people by discourses in society, but also reinforced or challenged through individual agency and performances (Butler, 1990; Hall, 2000). It is thereby personal, social and collective and also closely related to language and how we talk about and describe people and places.

The social dimension of identity is strong and by using concepts that classify identities of individuals according to different 'habitus', a form of social class relevant in certain social contexts, it is possible to understand how power structures and status are constructed through different forms of capital that the individual acquires over time (Bourdieu, 1984). This way of understanding how people get ascribed and are ascribing themselves with different identities has to do with status and how social and individual characteristics are valued. What is considered high status in one context is not high status in others. Identities of social groups are then connected to identities of individuals, both as a process where identities are ascribed by others and where identity is defined by the individual by stating belonging or difference in social contexts.

10.3 Place and Destination Branding: Creating Images

Images provide resources to shape and enhance our understanding of the world as well as of the identities of people and places (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2005). By representing places in specific ways, places are given meaning at the same time. This could be intentional in an economic–political sense, such as in place and destination branding or strategic marketing efforts, or more related to individual narratives and experiences of social groups or communities.

A place brand may be conceptualized as a mixture of different elements that create a whole, through notions of location and geographical borders, landscape features, social relationships and the relationships between people and places. Place brands are mainly driven by people's identity, so creating brands is a matter of determining this identity, but from a strategic point of departure, by stakeholders that have something to gain from a particular construction of identity (Campelo *et al.*, 2011). For example, a nation's brand image, defined as the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about a country, plays a significant role in the tourist's choice of destination. Different policies and practices of place-branding are also used to differentiate one destination from another (Nelson, 2005).

Connecting values and meaning to places through narratives and branding is an act of power in which naming places is an important part of the process (Hall-Lew and Lew, 2014). Tourism may be seen as a contextual framework that makes places through processes of commoditization and commercialization where places are constructed as unique, different and possible to consume (Urry, 1990; Meethan, 2001). Specific, genuine or perceived authentic features of localities are strategically produced in the context of tourism and can be seen as practices of place-*making* where places and destinations are constructed and given meaning (Hultman and Hall, 2012). How and in what contexts places are constructed and given meaning through visual communication is of importance for how the places are represented and experienced.

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10.4 Identities of Place and People in Tourism and Events

In tourism, places are portrayed, marketed and consumed as products that are attractive because they are different in some sense. The difference between home and away, between work and leisure time and between the same/us and the other/them is a construction of relations that drives tourism and the quest for experiences that are exotic and out of the ordinary (Meethan, 2001). These processes are played out and particularly visible at events and festivals, where the principles of identity construction in tourism are framed and condensed in time and space. Events influence the development of tourism places and also contribute to the creation of meaning in relation to places, through interaction between host and guests and the performances of identities. An event may be conceptualized as a performative field where tourism places are co-created, made meaningful in a particular context and connected to identities through practices of performance (Giovanardi *et al*., 2014).

Tourism has been described as a process that creates and reinforces differences between people and places to make them attractive and construct them in opposition to each other (Coleman and Crang, 2002). Processes of 'othering' are about defining where you belong through contrasting this place and yourself with other, different places and people (Rose, 2001). This process of 'othering' creates binary norms that also include uneven power relations between the two, such as the geographical concepts of centre–periphery, or as masculine and feminine identity constructions.

Masculine and feminine identities are constructed and reproduced to oppose one another in relation to hegemonic identities in different social settings (Connell, 1987). How to be a 'real' man or a 'real' woman are thus social constructs that depend on places, cultural settings and historical periods. There is a strong relation between the construction of masculine and feminine identities and geographical places/regions as well as occupations, physical appearance and activities coded as either feminine or masculine. This means that norms and ideas of how men and women are and what features and characteristics that are seen as typically female or male (how femininity and masculinity are performed) are constructed in relation to different activities, such as through tourism and events, as well as the places and specific event venues.

10.5 Identity Construction at Sports Events

Niche events, such as specific sports or cultural events, may function as arenas and as encounters where hosts and guests interact and share knowledge through the common interest, and where the separation between the visitor and the experience provider is blurred. Events have been discussed as providing opportunities to offer social bonding and creating a sense of belonging, when different groups of people come together in a context of time and space separated from the everyday and the ordinary (Hannam and Halewood, 2006; Ziakas and Costa, 2010). An event or festival does, however, create not only a sense of belonging for those who are 'insiders' and identify with the cultural expressions or activities of the event, but at the same time also provides sites of exclusion for those who do not identify with or belong to the event (Clarke and Jepson, 2011).

Sports events are closely connected to the creation of separations between 'us' and 'them' where teams, clubs, cities or national identification become intertwined with senses

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of belonging and community and, as is visible not least in football culture, antagonistic feelings between both competitors and spectators. However, sports events may not only separate and create difference, but also function as a way of uniting and promoting engagement in divided societies, where crowds unify and create meaningful relationships with each other (Filo *et al*., 2009). Places may also become implicated in processes of image formation and storytelling that create and enhance feelings of belonging and a celebration of the local; at the same time, they may restore and recreate self-esteem, revalorizing local culture and place attachment (Jaeger and Mykletun, 2013).

Sports and cultural events may enhance and play with identities, such as the co-construction of gender identities and national identities, as a part of the event or festival itself (Merkel, 2015). The degree to which a specific national event is rooted in place is not only about the importance of the location of the venue, but from a wider perspective also a matter of how the nation is symbolized through specific places and symbolic constructions of the nation in the places where the events and festivals take place. Public rituals, such as those performed at events and festivals, are important in the discursive production of belonging and 'we-ness', and the construction of difference between insiders and outsiders of national communities (Zuev and Virchow, 2014). Images and narratives of a specific place or country are expressed and reproduced through performances at events and festivals.

Sporting events highlight the identity of the nation, region or team through the achievements of the competitors or athletes (Ramshaw, 2007). In the case of national events focused on sport, national identity is constructed and expressed through images of landscapes, flags and particular iconic national symbols. Some of the most significant practices to express and perform national identity are the waving of flags and singing together (Zuev and Virchow, 2014). The role of flags in ceremonies and at events was studied by Elgenius (2011), who highlighted the connection between the use of national flags at ceremonies and the symbolic justification of social order and the current regime, as well as the imagination of 'sameness' between those who identify with the flag. Flags also contribute to the branding of nations through the celebration of national identity at public holidays, at ceremonies and at niche events.

The significance of horse riding for the manifestation of national identity was studied by Cusack and Digance (2009), who found that the Australian equestrian event, the Melbourne Cup, could be understood as a secular form of pilgrimage, where the everyday and the profane were separated from the spectacular. A liminal and transformative process took place where the event became the arena for transgression of identity boundaries and a medium for experiences of the sacred in some form of quasi-religious state. In this process, the horse racing event became the encounter through which Australian identity was performed and connected to core national values.

Individual identities, such as gender identities, are strongly related to sports events and sport performance. Historically, sport and physical leisure activities were not deemed appropriate for women, yet nowadays girls and women participate and are active in all sports with growing acceptance and also in growing numbers internationally. However, as in society at large, the physical presence of women and the female body in sport has been the subject of widespread surveillance and to be fit, slim and feminine are still important components of the norms that surround women in sports (Pfister, 2010). As a consequence, women in sport often try to express their feminine identities through physical appearance, by paying specific attention to looks and clothing. In the case of equestrian sport, which is closely related to rural spaces and traditions such as agriculture and the military, women perform a particular form of femininity that slightly transforms the

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traditional features of femininity (Dashper, 2016). The role of looks is still important, but additionally, physical strength and capabilities related to the management of stables and land adds to and somewhat challenges traditional norms. However, within the world of equestrian sport a clear connection between gender identities and rural identities is visible, which influences the types of appearance and equipment that function as social identification (Dashper, 2016). Clothes and special equipment function as markers of belonging and identification with social groups and status, creating sub-worlds, as noted by Dashper and St John (2016) in the context of equestrian competitions.

10.6 Analysing Images on Websites and Social Media

The growth and spread of social media have greatly impacted on tourism practices and increased the possibilities for influencing the behaviour and choices of potential tourists (Sotiriadis, 2017). An important part of place-branding practices nowadays is the construction of meaning attached to places through social media posts (Andéhn *et al*., 2014). By representing the people, attractions, landscapes and cultural practices of places through images connected to specific hashtags on social media, places are co-constructed and materialized in the minds of visitors, businesses, and other stakeholders in an ongoing flow of communication. The virtual world gets more and more intertwined with everyday realities of people through interaction and communication online via different platforms.

Co-construction and expressions of identity as part of events are reinforced not least through the impact of images posted, circulated and reviewed by many different actors, with different intentions. The posting of images via social media may be a way of communicating individual identity and belonging to specific groups or associations with individuals with special interests and values. The choice of photographs for websites and brochures by tourism marketing organizations, event organizers or tourism businesses are made to attract and create demand and interest from potential visitors and customers. The identity narratives that the festival constructs may be unpacked and analysed by studying the staging and visualization of the key components and signifiers in online photographs that capture the cultural and social meanings of a special event, put on display by organizers, participants and spectators (Heldt Cassel, 2018). Through the use of social media, visitors are co-constructing and critically evaluating, for themselves and others, images of places and events as they post pictures and tag places and relate them to emotions, experiences and expressions of identity.

The constant flux of receiving and sharing information online and the formation of online communities, particularly through social media, has contributed to developing new spatial cultures and practices in tourism (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014). This is visible not least in relation to the sharing of images from special events, related to experiences and expressions of (collective and individual) identity. Social media has dramatically affected not only the way tourists experience places, but also how they actively construct both the experiences and the places by investing them with personal stories, meanings and values that are shared online (Gymóthy, 2013).

While being based on the apparently simple function of sharing pictures online, Instagram is a social media platform that enables users to manipulate images through visual filters and post-processing, as well as by including text captions and geotags. This makes users able to express and define emotions, reflections and contexts that may not otherwise

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be evident in the pictures (Abbot *et al*., 2013). Moreover, in addition to making their content visible to their circle of followers, users are able to create a hyperlink to groups of posts with similar content that exist outside their circle, by turning single words typed in a post into hashtags, tagging pages and other users, as well as sharing the post on other social media (Fatanti and Suydanya, 2015).

By connecting online photography with a more personalized expression of being in a specific place in a specific way, Instagram is uniquely capable of conveying personalized definitions of space, time, experiences and the way these connect with the user's identity, interpretation and imagination (Pink, 2006; Lo and McKercher, 2015). As shown by Conti and Heldt Cassel (2019), social media posting may also be a way of mediating experiences and values important for self-identification and the relationships between the self and the places portrayed, such as natural landscapes. This means that, through the use of online images and social media posts, experiences are mediated and related to values and to identities – individual, collective and place-specific.

Social media photographs and posts that communicate meaning and identity do not emerge as a separate realm in which separate identities can exist, but rather as a space in which these identities can be performed, played with, reimagined and expressed in a particular way, by those who choose to post them. In this sense, Instagram, as the most widely used image-focused platform, provides an additional means to express the poster's creativity (Conti and Heldt Cassel, 2019). Through social media posts, visitors and producers of events and festivals may co-construct images of people and places that express certain values connected to experiences. Identity construction through the co-creation and expressions of experiences at events and festivals is about value creation and the ways in which individuals relate to the place and the cultural practices central to the event (Heldt Cassel, 2018).

10.7 Landsmót in Social Media

Posts on Instagram under the hashtags #landsmot, #landsmót and #landsmót2016, in the collection of photographic posts that were made during January–March 2019, made up more than 1300 images. The time of data collection is only mentioned in relation to potential future studies that may find other or additional things in the same hashtags, since hashtags on social media are constantly evolving and filled with new content. Most of the posts are photographs taken at the event, but some are also connected to the event via the attachment to a #hashtag selected by the Instagram-poster. When categorizing and analysing the images on Instagram under the above-mentioned hashtags some major themes emerged. In short, the main categories of images consisted of pictures of horses with riders; horses at the competition arena; panoramic views of the event arenas; spectators in crowds, groups and individually; and the event sites and specific related activities, such as accommodation, food and drink. A shortcoming of the analysis is that a selection was made in the hashtag connection and texts related to photographs that were in English only. Quite a few posts had attached text in Icelandic that was not analysed, which limited the analysis of the hashtags and text. However, many of the Icelandic posters used international hashtags, which is a common practice on social media. The subsequent sections present some of the findings from this analysis (for a more detailed analysis, see Heldt Cassel, 2018).

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10.7.1 National symbols and national identity

The way Landsmót is represented through Instagram produces an image of Landsmót as a professional sporting event, connected to competence and expertise, high status and exclusivity, but within a particular Icelandic context. Through the numerous photographic representations of horses in action at the competition, the focus is clearly on the horses and the riding skills as the most obvious and popular content to communicate and circulate.

The horses and riders participating in the competitions are depicted as strong, powerful and professional, with the riders dressed up in typical clothing for competition, often portrayed in action, with close-up photographs with hashtags related to the event and to Icelandic horses in general. Apart from the close-up portraits of riders and horses, a vast selection of images has been posted where the riders are photographed from a distance, which also means that more of the arena and the audience is shown. The act of competing is depicted as prestigious and glorious and the performances of the riders and the way they are controlling their horses are highlighted.

Common hashtags of the images of horses and riders on the competition arena, apart from the above-mentioned hashtags related to Landsmót, are: Icelandic horse, Iceland, horses of Instagram, Horses of Iceland, Hestamanna. The professionalism of the riders is further accentuated through the images of prize ceremonies and the winning riders holding the Icelandic flag during a lap of honour. A substantial number of images contain Icelandic flags, either in rows on poles by the arena or as flags held by competitors and winners. The role of Icelandic national identity is clearly visible in the combination of images and hashtags portraying the horses and their riders and grooms in outdoor settings, in combination with images of stable-workers dressed in overalls and with 'farm-like' equipment, and also images of the surrounding areas of the event venue, where horse trailers and equipment are shown. An aspect of the photographs is the background and the relationship between the rider and the landscape scenery behind: mountains, green meadows and open space, and outdoor conditions such as manes and tails blown by a strong wind. This way of dressing and being around horses and at horse events outdoors in varying weather highlights the specificity of Icelandic horsemanship, which is more related to the rural and to farming, compared with horse events of other types of equestrian sports competitions in other European countries (Heldt Cassel, 2018).

Images of horses and riders, as well as images of spectators and the surrounding areas of the event, are closely connected to the promotion of a national Icelandic identity. The Icelandic identity is expressed not only through flags and other features connected to the performance of the competitors in the arena, but is also visible and expressed in images of spectators and other participants in the ways they are dressed and how the images of people are tagged and commented on in the Instagram posts. An example of this expression of how Iceland and Icelandic attributes are constructed and expressed is an abundance of photographs and images of people dressed in heavy, warm and practical clothes such as rain gear, winter boots, hats, gloves and warm sweaters, not least the distinctive Icelandic wool sweater (Helgadottir, 2011).

10.7.2 The Icelandic horse community

As noted previously (Helgadottir, 2011; Helgadottir and Dashper, 2016), an important feature of the objects and equipment that connects people in the horse community, and delineates them from each other while marking identification within particular types of

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equestrian sports, is the typical clothing. Clothes and gear that go along with the different sub-groups of equestrian sports are slightly different in the sub-disciplines, such as galloping races, dressage, show-jumping or Icelandic horse riding. Icelandic horse people and the visual markers of belonging in this community unite the participants and spectators through their clothing; typical heavy outdoor jodhpur-boots, boot-cut trousers and the Icelandic sweater with its characteristic knitted patterns.

In addition to the clothing of the riders – riding jackets and white trousers as markers of identity in the Icelandic horse community – other common images posted on Instagram are people dressed in outdoor gear. Posts with comments like 'the typical weather' #Iceland, or smiling faces in pouring rain, together with photos showing people slipping in muddy water, give an impression that this is an important aspect of what the event Landsmót is about and this is a common identity of those who belong to the Icelandic horse community. This event is not for weak or unprepared (urban) people with the wrong clothing for unpredictable and harsh outdoor conditions.

10.7.3 The outdoors and the rural

The place-specific components are, to a large extent, represented by images of the landscape scenery where rurality and the natural landscape of Iceland provide the stage for the event. Images posted on Instagram draw on notions of Iceland and the Icelandic horse being closely connected to nature and to outdoor lifestyles. Images of the event highlight that it is aimed at tough and experienced people, for professionals, for Icelanders and horse people who do not hesitate to work hard and to be outdoors in all weathers. Numerous images portray the natural scenery, the landscape of Iceland, and not least northern Iceland and the area around Hólar. The image of Iceland that is produced focuses on nature, the outdoors, on rural life, strength and national pride, symbolized through the horses and the skills of Icelandic horseback riding.

Adding to this symbolism, visitors also show how they team up with this notion of the outdoor community of Icelandic horse people by posting pictures of rows of tents and caravans in rain and heavy wind, embedded in a vast and misty mountainous landscape. They signal the role of nature and outdoor conditions within the common identity of the event and also in a wider sense, as since the event is embedded in both Icelandic and rural identity it is also a notion of what is typically Icelandic. In the images posted, nature, landscape and the harsh weather conditions can be seen as ways of adding to the national symbolism of the event and are key ingredients in the expression of the Icelandic identity as a rural identity. Even in images showing sunny blue skies and green grass, it is evident that the landscape and nature itself are important aspects of the background scene, adding to the overall experience and to the identity of the event itself.

Strongly related to the representation of nature and the rural life in social media posts are the representations of gender identities. The clothing and special gear connected to riding and horses are quite unisex and there is no obvious focus on physical appearance or bodily practices that construct femininities as separate from masculinities in the context of the photographic representations of the event on social media. Riders and trainers are portrayed as professionals, regardless of gender; however, the riders pictured holding the Icelandic flag or as winners in competition are to a large extent male, even though there are also several female riders in these types of photos. The femininities constructed connected to the event of Landsmót are related to the rural, the outdoors and to abilities and

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strength, rather than to traditional feminine identities. This is also connected to how women in equestrian sports are represented in other contexts, as has been noted by Dashper (2016).

10.7.4 Tourism places and visitors

The national identity and symbolism performed at Landsmót is largely related to the Icelandic countryside and rural identities, as well as traditions of farming and horsemanship. The connection in Instagram posts between photographs of natural landscapes that get to represent Iceland and the rural features of the horse-riding event itself constructs Landsmót as an event where Icelandic identity is performed and played out as a way of constructing inclusion/exclusion, but also as a way of branding and communicating the event in a tourism setting.

The Icelandic horse is a major tourism product and an important part of the Icelandic tourism brand. The branding of horse-based tourism in Iceland is mainly focused on the natural landscape and pristine nature in which the riding tours take place, and in such ways the horse-based tourism brand is closely related to the branding of nature tourism and of Icelandic nature and scenery in general (Husmann, 2014). In addition to the images of national identity and the horse event as an expression of what it means to be Icelandic, other images express the experience of the event from the viewpoint of a visitor or a tourist.

Examples of Instagram posts that clearly stressed the experiences of excitement and joy and the feeling of being part of an exclusive group of people who get to attend the Landsmót event were posted by visitors presumably from outside Iceland, who constructed images of exclusiveness and community through posts related to travel and to their travel company. Images of suitcases, hotel rooms and airports are not frequent, but they exist under the studied hashtags. Landsmót is thereby represented via Instagram as a tourist attraction and a tourism place, where experiences are formed and memorized by the posting of photographs of groups of people enjoying the event, but also other activities such as swimming in hot pools or eating, drinking and being with friends. The visitors portrayed through these Instagram posts are predominantly women. Both in images of crowds and of groups of visitors, women are in the majority. The spectators and visitors who are represented through their own social media posts communicate excitement and happiness of having the exclusive opportunity to be at the event, watching and admiring. There is a clear insider/outsider divide represented in the photographs taken by tourists, where the event is seen from the outside, from the spectator's point of view by the arena and from other images, signalling holiday and travel, as opposed to the images representing participation and belonging to the Icelandic horse community. This distinction between the outsiders and insiders and how it affects Landsmót was investigated and highlighted by Helgadottir and Dashper (2016).

Landsmót is a site and scene where an Icelandic identity related to the Icelandic horse is expressed and performed and where inclusion/exclusion related to the community and identity of Icelandic horsemanship takes place. As an event with such a specific and specialized focus – the showing and competing of Icelandic horses – Landsmót functions as a marker of those who belong to the community and thus are 'insiders' of this Icelandic as well as international sub-world (Helgadottir and Dashper, 2016). Apart from visiting the event, the sub-world of the 'Icelandic horse friends' is also characterized by a strong

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interest in Iceland and the traditions and cultural practices surrounding the Icelandic horse community. The social media posts related to Landsmót represent the event and Iceland as a destination by stressing national pride and an Icelandic identity strongly connected to the rural landscape, to outdoor activities, harsh nature and to skilled, strong and independent men and women who create their identities in relation to their horses.

10.8 Concluding Remarks

Constructions of identity of individuals, groups and places take place simultaneously through the online circulation of images taken with the purpose of gaining visibility on social media. The frequent use of hashtags and geotags in social media posts enable individuals to express belonging to certain groups of people or to communities that are attached to places or events, through an uploaded photograph, thus performing this identity in public.

The tool that social media provides people with, in terms of expressing their identity, is not restricted to the virtual world, but the expressions and messages posted online also in many ways affect and co-construct identities in the 'real' or off-line world. The platform of Instagram has been found to facilitate performances of identity that are not otherwise possible or always socially acceptable, such as the posting of highly staged images that are post-processed with filters and other editing tools. The feelings and expressions of identity performed through social media posts are often an exaggerated version of individuals and their identity positions, as the photographs and related comments are created in communication with others, and quite often to gain 'likes' and popularity. There is a clear tension between the use of social media to express identity and to create bonds and belonging on the one hand and on the other to connect this identity to market-driven or commercial branding and commodification of the self.

The staging of photographs for social media is not so different from how photographs in general are usually staged, where objects are isolated from everyday contexts and unwanted things are erased through the angle and position of the photographer. Identity constructions on social media are not really separated from the off-line image productions of the past. These complex intersections between expressive creativity, the creation of community and a simple quest for attention, together with the blurring of boundaries between the online and the off-line world was discussed by Conti and Heldt Cassel (2019) as a form of liminality. The 'real' (off-line) identities are affected by the online identity constructions at the same time as the online content enables users to transcend boundaries and norms in ways that may be liberating and create a feeling of freedom.

Social media offers a space in which tourists and visitors at niche events can play with symbolic tools in order to reflect their own experience and deliver a message to others. This may include a creative and sometimes alternative approach to the self and belonging to specific social groups. The implication of this for event organizers is that, regardless of how they want to present and market the event, the identity of the event and its symbolic connection to places and groups of people take place at least partially online and through social media. This implies that it is more difficult to control the image and the identity constructions that the event evokes and enhances. On the other hand, the online images may also be seen as highly beneficial for the development of the event in terms of outreach and increased interest, particularly for a relatively small and rural niche event such as Landsmót.

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The analysis of the Landsmót event through Instagram posts shows how a national identity of Iceland intersects with rural identities as well as gender identities. The lifestyle and horsemanship performed and expressed through social media produce images of Iceland and the specific event as connected to rurality and farming, as well as overcoming or being part of nature. The experiences of being part of the niche event of Landsmót are expressed through images of horses and riders and the culture of the Icelandic horse, which in turn are closely related to being and living outdoors, in harsh weather conditions, but with the professionalism and skills necessary to cope. The event is portrayed as an arena for national pride, where an Icelandic identity is performed, but also an arena for the performance of the femininities and masculinities of Icelandic equestrian sports. These Icelandic identity constructions expressed through social media images of Landsmót are important attractions and commodities in tourism.

10.9 Implications

- Analysis of social media representations may provide organizers of events with information about their visitors; about what they value and how they present what they see as important and interesting. This information could be useful in marketing or promotion.
- Research into social media representations and the relationship between online and the off-line identity constructions are areas needing further methodological and empirical development in relation to events management.

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11 Multispecies Encounters in Events

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Abstract

Multispecies events, like Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse, pose interesting practical and logistical challenges for event managers who must ensure that safety and nonhuman animal welfare are prioritized alongside other aspects of event design and management. This chapter uses Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical concepts of 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage' to consider the types of interspecies encounters that can occur in different contexts around an event site. Drawing on data from ethnographic observations and interviews with horse breeders and event staff, the chapter discusses some of the issues that can arise in trying to manage those interactions in ways that recognize the different needs of human and nonhuman participants, whilst still delivering a successful and entertaining event.

Key words

events; Goffman; horses; multispecies; nonhuman; stage

11.1 Introduction

Events are, arguably, all about experiences, which should aim to be extraordinary, memorable and beyond the everyday (Beard and Russ, 2017). Event managers have an important role to play in trying to shape and direct those experiences, helping visitors and participants to enjoy 'extraordinary experiences in staged event and festival settings' (Geus *et al*., 2016, p. 275). Getz and Page (2007, p. 20) argued that 'by definition, events are experiential and the experience must be designed', highlighting the importance of planning and management to the creation and production of memorable event experiences. At events like Landsmót, involving multiple species in the same space, these experiences need to be thought of in multispecies terms. A successful equestrian event will be one in which both human and equine needs are taken into account and the experiences of both species are considered, planned for and actively managed (Dashper and Buchmann, 2020). In such settings the remit of the events manager extends beyond human concerns, adding an extra layer of complexity as the manager needs to consider the experiences of both human participants/guests and horse participants/guests, and the interactions between the two. This chapter considers various ways in which humans and nonhumans interact and experience the event space, focusing on the encounters between people and horses at Landsmót, the national horse festival in Iceland.

A growing body of research focuses on trying to understand what makes an event experience memorable and meaningful to participants, and how to try to design and facilitate the 'personality' of the event to maximize social interaction, meaningful encounters and enjoyment (Morgan, 2008). Much of this research focuses on management implications and design and operational issues, or trying to understand what paying guests want from a festival or event experience (Morgan, 2006; Kruger and Saayman, 2012), or on

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trying to capture some of the inner experiences of attendees that make an event memorable or meaningful (Hannam and Halewood, 2006; Shipway *et al*., 2013). This research has yielded many interesting insights, but it is also strongly anthropocentric, focusing solely on human–human encounters and interactions, and human experiences and meanings. Many events are not human-only domains and also involve nonhuman animals in various roles, from co-participants in sport and leisure competitions, to companions to human guests, to workers assisting with security and mobility, to native species sharing the event space, albeit temporarily, with the human event attendees. There is a need, therefore, to move beyond humanist paradigms for understanding event experiences and to acknowledge that, in many cases, events are multispecies spaces and more-than-human actors are involved in shaping event experiences, for good and for bad. This chapter introduces a multispecies lens to consider some of the more-than-human aspects of event experiences. Landsmót, and other equestrian events, clearly involves nonhuman actors (horses) in a variety of roles and so offers a useful example for considering interspecies interactions in event spaces and the implications this may have for designing, implementing and managing events to facilitate memorable and enjoyable experiences.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of event experiences and what a multispecies lens may add to understanding some of the complexities and nuances of those experiences and designing them to benefit human and nonhuman participants. After introducing the research approach adopted at the multispecies equestrian event of Landsmót 2016, the chapter draws on Goffman's (1959) framework of 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage' to consider various ways in which people and horses interact in the event space, helping to co-create memorable event experiences in a multispecies context. The final section considers some of the management implications of involving multiple species in events and some of the logistical, practical and ethical issues that may arise from having large numbers of people and horses in close interaction in a confined event space.

11.2 Multispecies Event Experiences

The literature on event experiences is expanding, as researchers focus on varying issues related to what event experiences are all about, how we can measure the quality of experiences and how we can design and 'choreograph' events to maximize positive experiences for guests and participants (Maklan and Klaus, 2011; Berridge, 2012; Funk, 2017). The concept of 'experience', whilst acknowledged to be important to events management, remains elusive and difficult to define and researchers have grappled with the difficulties of trying to understand, manage and direct something that is both deeply personal and social (Ziakas and Boukas, 2013; Wood and Moss, 2015). Bouchet *et al*. (2011), among others, recognized the importance of segmenting spectators and other event participants in order to try to capture some of the multiplicity and diversity of event experiences, but to date researchers have failed to recognize the important roles that nonhuman animals can have in co-constructing and living event experiences. A multispecies lens enables consideration of more-than-human contributions to events.

Most research in event studies, as in the social sciences more broadly, is based on implicit humanist assumptions in which humans are considered the sole legitimate focus for study, and research questions address issues only from the perspective of human concerns and behaviours. In contrast, multispecies research can be considered broadly posthumanist, seeking to decentre human experience and authority and to recognize explicitly

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that nonhumans have agency, and shape worlds and experiences (Dowling *et al*., 2017). Building on Haraway's (2008, p. 4) observation that 'to be one is always to *become with* many', multispecies perspectives acknowledge that lives and experiences are complex and messy entanglements between a variety of actors – human and nonhuman. As Peggs (2013, p. 603) argued, 'our lives are infused with nonhuman animals and we are embedded in multifaceted worlds', but our research rarely acknowledges this.

We actively involve nonhuman animals in events in a variety of ways. Numerous competitive events involve interspecies interactions, such as dog agility (Gillespie *et al*., 2002; Hultsman, 2012), equestrian sport (Coulter, 2014; Blokhuis and Lundgren, 2017; Dashper, 2017), fishing/angling (Markuksela and Valtonen, 2019) and cat shows (Stone, 2019). As soon as we involve nonhuman animals in our leisure practices in such ways, this raises numerous complex ethical and practical issues, related to, among other things, animal welfare, consent and power in human–animal interactions (Jonsson, 2012; Dashper, 2014; Marinova and Fox, 2019). A multispecies perspective on event experiences will enable researchers to recognize the varied and important roles that nonhuman animals play in shaping and co-constructing events and will encourage consideration of questions of power, agency and responsibility in relation to all event participants – human and nonhuman.

A multispecies lens encourages researchers to recognize and engage with the complex interspecies interactions that constitute many aspects of events and to acknowledge that nonhuman actors can and do play important roles in shaping event experiences. By decentring human experiences, and remaining open to and aware of the multifaceted roles of nonhumans in events spaces, multispecies events research can contribute to enhancing understanding of the richness and variety of event experiences and practices. Multispecies research also raises important methodological questions, which are discussed in the next section.

11.3 Methodology and Methods

Multispecies research involves a commitment to try to decentre humans and include all beings – human and nonhuman – as active participants in research and to try to account for some of the messy complexities of interspecies interactions. In practice, this is difficult to do. The traditions of research and academia are heavily shaped by humanist paradigms, though this is rarely made explicit. Most social science research is based on words – whether written or spoken – foregrounding human modes of communication and expression. This poses challenges for multispecies researchers, who aim to give 'voice' to nonhumans, at least to some extent. How can we 'know' what another species is thinking or feeling when they cannot tell us? Does the inability of nonhuman animals to communicate in ways recognized by social science research methods mean that we should not try to account for their experiences and instead discount the value of their perspectives? In order to try to address some of these issues, the sub-practice of multispecies ethnography has developed as a way to try to begin to overcome some of the limitations of traditional research methods that are so tied to presumptions of human exceptionalism.

Ogden *et al*. (2013, pp. 16–17) described multispecies ethnography as 'a mode of attunement to the power of nonhuman subjects to shape the world and to the ways in which the human becomes through relations with other beings'. Drawing on ethnographic traditions of trying to understand social worlds and practices from the perspectives of participants, multispecies ethnography is an attempt to move beyond exclusively visual and textual representations and to engage differently with animals as sensory participants,

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through smell, taste and feel as much as watching, listening and writing (Pacini-Ketchabaw *et al*., 2016). This may involve drawing on interdisciplinary insights that provide different tools for trying to understand the experiences of nonhuman animals, such as ethology and anthrozoology (Dashper and Buchmann, 2020). This is not without problems, as we remain wedded to human-centric forms of communication, but nonhuman animals do have 'a rich non-linguistic intersubjective exchange with humans' (Madden, 2014, p. 288). Our task, as multispecies ethnographers, is to try to capture some of this non-linguistic communication and transform it into meaningful academic accounts, whilst remaining attuned to issues of power and (mis)representation in our interactions with other species (Taylor and Hamilton, 2014; Dashper, 2017).

The research reported on in this chapter utilized multispecies ethnography to try to understand some of the more-than-human and multispecies aspects of event experiences at Landsmót 2016. Landsmót is a large, multispecies event involving thousands of human participants as competitors, staff, volunteers and spectators, as well as 800 horses. In a confined space, human and equine participants interact over the course of six days. The main public-facing areas of interspecies interaction occur at the two main tracks/arenas: Main Track (where the sport competition and entertainment aspects of the event take place) and Breeding Track (where the breeding mares and stallions are presented and rated). Further interspecies interactions take place away from public view: in the stables, where horses are housed and prepared for their public appearances; in the grazing areas, where horses are provided with 'downtime' to enjoy some grass and relaxation; and in the warm-up and veterinary check areas, where pre-competition activities occur. This multispecies ethnography attempted to understand interspecies encounters in these different spaces and between different types of human event participants (owners/riders/breeders; grooms and horse carers; general event staff; event spectators) and horses.

Drawing on the principles of multispecies ethnography and insights informed by more-than-human theoretical perspectives, the author's research involved close observation of different human and equine actors at different times and sites over the course of the event. Building on previous experience of conducting multispecies ethnography, combined with ethological insights on equine behaviour, the author followed the flow of the event programme and was provided with access to 'backstage' areas by the event organizers (McGreevy and McLean, 2010; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016; Dashper, 2017). Human actors (event staff, riders and breeders, volunteers, audience members) were engaged in on-site interviews (ten) and informal conversation; and horses were closely observed for signs of relaxation, distress, excitement and annoyance, among other responses. Trying to engage multisensory apparatus that encompassed heat, sound and smell as much as visual and verbal cues, aspects of interspecies encounters were noted and recorded in fieldnotes and through photographs. In recording information in this way, and in reconstituting it for dissemination through this chapter, textual human-centric modes of communication are privileged, even within a project trying to move beyond humanist paradigms. Notwithstanding these limitations, the following sections illustrate some of the insights that can be gained from multispecies ethnography and more-than-human approaches to understanding event experiences.

11.4 Findings

Previous studies of event experiences have often taken a temporal approach, following the ebb and flow of the event (Pettersson and Getz, 2009; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016), or

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relied on post-event evaluation (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2010; Bear and Russ, 2017). In the analysis of the findings from the current multispecies ethnography, the author has drawn on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical framework of 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage'. Goffman's framework was developed to be applied to any 'social establishment' which he defined as 'any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place' (Goffman, 1959, p. 231). Consequently, it is useful for applying to the event space as a framework for considering how relationships and interactions are played out in different places, contexts and times around the event site. Winter and Frew (2018) previously applied elements of Goffman's (1959) framework to analysis of thoroughbred racing, although their study did not draw on empirical research. The findings presented below illustrate the applicability of this framework for analysing empirical research on human–animal interactions at a multispecies event.

11.4.1 Front stage multispecies interactions

Goffman (1959) was concerned with 'impression management' and naturally occurring social interaction. He defined the 'front stage' as the region 'where the performance is presented' (Goffman, 1959, p. 231), where 'teams of performers' work together to present a picture to an audience (literal or symbolic). In the context of Landsmót, the 'front stage' is identified as Main Track and Breeding Track, the arenas where competition takes place. The 'team of performers' on this front stage is made up of riders/handlers, horses, judges and commentators, watched by the event audience. This is the public face of Landsmót, where interspecies interactions are on display and presented for sport and entertainment. Horses and humans working together constitute the performances.

The front stage represents the formal performances of the event and is regulated by rules, norms and conventions that have meaning for many, although not necessarily all, of the people in the audience. Landsmót is the national horse festival of Iceland and so represents elite sport competition in the world of Icelandic horses. Consequently, the sport activities that take place on Main Track and the breeding assessments on Breeding Track are controlled by the rules of Icelandic horse sport, regulated by the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations (FEIF). As with most sports events, this limits the creative autonomy of the events management team to change the format of the competitive aspects of the event, which must follow the federation's rules and regulations. This is further complicated by the multispecies aspects of Landsmót:

> *… an event is one thing, a sport event has a kind of, it's a little bit more complicated because of all the action that takes place during the sports, and then you add the horses so that's another layer of complication, you could say.* [Event manager, Landsmót 2016]

The presence of approximately 800 horses, along with human competitors, means that the management team have to be aware of issues to do with health and safety, as well as animal welfare, along with ensuring that they comply with the rules of the sport's federation for elite competition (Dashper and Buchmann, 2020). Icelandic horse sport and breeding competitions follow specific rules, as do all sports competitions, and these rules are relatively complex and difficult to follow for the non-specialist, but clearly widely shared and understood by the majority of event spectators, who appeared knowledgeable about the format and requirements of different aspects of the event. This specialist knowledge confirms the majority of spectators at Landsmót as 'insiders' to the Icelandic horse

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community, understanding the shared meanings of the event without the need for explicit explanation (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016).

At such events, where shared meanings are an integral aspect of the collective experience, it is important that the format of the event follows conventions and regulations. For (human) competitors at elite sports events like Landsmót, the stakes are high as they have worked hard to get to the championships and want to perform well. For all athletes, this makes championship competition potentially stressful as they have to manage numerous variables to try to achieve their optimal performance at the event. In a multispecies context this is further complicated by the presence of two beings, human and horse in this context, both of whom may act differently in the strange and potentially stressful event environment:

> *You have to have a whole picture that is all there, it's like a puzzle, everything has to come together, the temperament of the horse, the heart of the rider and everything. If the rider is full of stress and he's not ready mentally then he can disturb the horse, so it is training of a rider and training of the horse, so together it is one picture that will hopefully bloom at Landsmót, and before to get qualified. So it's a big deal to be here, and everyone has to take that seriously.* [Competitor, Landsmót 2016]

Landsmót represents the pinnacle of the competition year and so the riders will want to perform at their best. Horse riding involves close body-to-body communication between horse and rider. This enables the dyad to perform amazing feats of athleticism required in competition, but also means that there is always the potential for communicating stress and anxiety between horse and rider as well. At a competition many riders find that their horse becomes more stressed than normal, often affecting sporting performance (Dashper, 2017). This is in part because the horse, who cannot know and understand the significance of a particular event, picks up on stress from his or her rider, who is constantly communicating with the horse through their body. All athletes have to manage stress and anxiety at competitions and some harness this adrenaline to improve their performance. For equestrian athletes in multispecies events, there is an added imperative for the human partner to manage their stress so as not to communicate this negatively to the horse.

Horses are flight animals, whose instinct is to flee from unknown and potentially threatening stimuli in their environment if possible. The event site is full of potentially stressful stimuli for the horses:

> *You have a variety of horses and none of them will react the same with the new track and the new environment. They may be stressed because they are in a new environment, so you have to be here a few days before and everything has to combine together so that the horse is, hopefully at the right moment, satisfied with their new environment.* [Competitor]

The event site needs to provide space for horses to rest and relax away from such stimuli, but the human participants (competitors and events management team) need to be aware that horses may still find the environment stressful and need time to adapt to their different surroundings.

Although all of the horses competing at an event like Landsmót will have competed previously, they may still react adversely to certain things in the event site, as the nature of the event means that the environment often changes to fit the programme and with the ebb and flow of human guests:

> *But it's different now because they have put new buildings up and signs and a lot of new things are there. So, we were here on Sunday evening and then everything was more or less here, but now the signs have started to flash!* [Competitor]

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At a multispecies event like Landsmót, all human participants need to be aware of the potential of horses to react differently, possibly unexpectedly, to the environment. The interaction between horses and their riders/handlers can be a source of confidence, based on the strong relationship between the two, but may also exacerbate stress for either human or horse who will pick up on the feelings and reactions of the other partner.

Landsmót is a competitive sport event, but also a national horse festival. Therefore, in addition to the sports competition it has numerous symbolic aspects to the event programme that build on tradition and shared meanings related to Icelandic culture broadly and to Icelandic horse culture more specifically. An important element of this is the opening ceremony, which takes place on the Thursday evening and marks the start of the most important competitive elements of the event. The opening ceremony involves speeches from officials involved in local and national government, representatives of FEIF and Icelandic horse associations, but it also involves a parade of all the horse clubs in Iceland. The opening ceremony is heavily ritualistic, based on Icelandic traditions:

> *It's been done so many times before so people know about it and how it works and stuff, but generally it's participants from the clubs. So it's kind of like in the Olympics when each nation sends its people, you come with a flag from your club.* [Event manager, Landsmót 2016]

Horses and riders representing the different clubs parade around the Main Track in front of a large audience, carrying flags and wearing the colours of their club. They all stop and line up on one side of the track; riders dismount and stand to listen to the speeches and ceremonial aspects. This means that large numbers of horses and riders are standing in close proximity for nearly an hour, waiting while speeches and singing takes place. At Landsmót 2016 a drone kept passing overhead taking pictures and emitting a loud buzzing sound. This situation is potentially high risk, as horses can react badly to standing close by unknown animals, may not want to stand still for that long, or may be 'spooked' by something in the crowd, by the drone, or by the singing. Fieldnotes indicate that, although there was frequent neighing and some shuffling of both horses and riders, both equine and human participants waited patiently throughout the ceremony. Horses and their handler/rider interacted at times, and this indicated close interspecies bonds:

> *A girl kisses her horse on the nose. She is looking around, waving at family, posing for pictures with her friend who has the horse next to her. She is not paying attention to the speeches (which are going on a bit). She and her friend both play with her horse's mane.* [Fieldnote, Opening ceremony, Day 3, Landsmót 2016]

Both horses and humans on the Main Track exhibited patience and resilience, standing still in close proximity in the cool evening. The event manager was aware that this is the part of the ceremony that represented the most risk, as there was potential for horses and humans to become distracted, bored or even annoyed with those around them. Although in 2016 this aspect of the event went smoothly, the event manager (a person without horse experience himself) felt that this aspect of the event could be improved in terms of both wellbeing of horses and riders and entertainment of the audience:

> *The hardest part was not the actual riding but the hardest part was the actual time when they were stopped and had to hold on to the horses and when they were getting back in the saddle and riding away again. That was the part that we were most afraid of, something happening when that was going on, but it went fine. It's always nice to see this when they are riding all together. That went fairly smoothly but for my part the speech part and all that stuff was far too long, and they had to hold on to their horses for far too long!*

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In a multispecies context, event managers need to be aware of the needs of all species, their likely behaviour and potential for things going wrong. In the very public domain of the 'front stage' of the event, it is important that welfare and safety are prioritized, along with entertainment and good competition for the watching audience.

11.4.2 Backstage multispecies interactions

For Goffman (1959, p. 231) the 'backstage' is 'where the performance of a routine is prepared'. Access is often restricted to prevent audience members coming backstage and seeing things not meant for public consumption. In the context of Landsmót 2016, the 'backstage' covered three important areas: stables; grazing; and warm-up. These areas provided spaces in which interspecies interactions took place between horses and their human handlers, who included riders, grooms, owners and supporters. The event manager explained how the event team tried to keep this area separated from the 'front stage' areas of the event:

> *We decided to kind of draw a line and built a fence around the stables, the house where the horses were kept, so they came into the site at one particular point right by the stables where they took the horses off from their trailers, they kept the trailers there and they unloaded and took the horse straight into the house and all this area was fenced, to keep people away from it, and there was supposed to be a guard to keep spectators away. So we wanted to create an environment where the horses were safe and the competitors were safe and they were alone away from the normal spectators.*

The 'backstage' provided space for horses and their human associates to relax away from the stresses and strains of the 'front stage', and to prepare for competition and performance. The atmosphere in these 'backstage' areas, especially the stables and the grazing areas, was calm and relaxed:

> *The stables seem full, but quiet and calm. The horses stand, a couple lie down, eat, rest, a few neighs, but generally a relaxed atmosphere. There is a corral area out the back where several horses are grazing. There are people milling around, leading horses to and from stables, preparing for and returning from classes. The stable area is generally clean and well-managed. A horse is being groomed in its stable as we enter. The horse is not tied up and seems calm and quiet.* [Fieldnote, Day 5, Landsmót 2016]

The stables and grazing areas offered quiet space for horses and human competitors to rest and relax, but were also the spaces where preparation for entering the 'front stage' took place. In the stable block there was a space for washing and grooming horses, who needed to look clean and well for the waiting audience:

> *The grooming area is in the middle of the stable block and it is here that most preparations take place. There is a wash area with a powerful shower where I see one horse having his white knees cleaned as they have gone yellow in the stable. There is one horse being worked over with a hair dryer. It is quite noisy and seems quite powerful and is attached to a long hose. One woman holds the horse (quite loosely) and the other uses the hair dryer, on the mane, over the body. The horse does not seem to mind at all and does not look twice at the hose or the hot air.* [Fieldnote, Day 5, Landsmót 2016]

The atmosphere in these 'backstage' areas was notably different to the 'front stage' of competition and performance. Even when engaged in potentially stressful activities, such

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as being dried by the hair dryer, horses in the 'backstage' were observed to be relaxed and calm, and interacted quietly with their human handlers. It is in these 'backstage' areas that interspecies relationships are most likely to demonstrate moments of closeness and affection. The horses at Landsmót are high performers, representing some of the best of their breed and showcasing their owner's breeding farms for business. However, they are still individual animals, and their breeders recognize them as such, as this breeder explained about her winning stallion:

> *If you have a horse that has won something then it's very special … and this one, he is a character! He gets everything he wants as he needs to be performing well tonight.*

The 'backstage' is an integral area of all events, and in a multispecies context provides important time and space for relaxation away from the stresses of the 'front stage'. It is in these 'backstage' areas, away from public view, that horses and their handlers interact quietly, building on relationships established at home, away from the event.

11.4.3 Offstage multispecies interactions

The concept of 'offstage' in relation to Goffman's (1959) framework refers to spaces and moments where 'performers' (in this case horses or human competitors) interact with some members of the 'audience' (in this case, the event spectators), away from the main 'front stage' performance. At Landsmót 2016 there were some 'offstage' interspecies interactions which were revealing and specific to multispecies contexts.

The event site included a 'Horse Plaza' area, which was a riding arena of the university that had been adapted to provide a social space for event participants (audience, competitors, breeders, event staff, volunteers, etc.) containing a bar, seating areas, a large screen showing activities on the two tracks and business stalls. It provided a space for socializing and conducting business conversations, as Landsmót is an opportunity for horse breeders to meet with clients and do deals. This was usually a human-only zone, with horses present only through pictures and video. However, on one occasion a horse was brought into the Horse Plaza, opening up opportunities for event participants to interact directly with a horse, away from the competition tracks:

> *Then there is a loud neigh. A horse has been put into the pen at the back. He is given a bit of hay but does not seem too interested in it at first. He is having a good look around, there are no other horses in sight. Someone asks to touch him and the handler says, 'Sure, he's easy going.' The handler then disappears and I don't see him again.* [Fieldnote, Day 6, Landsmót 2016]

The arrival of the horse in the Horse Plaza caused much interest from the assembled human guests, and offered one of the few opportunities for event spectators to interact directly with a horse. Although this is a multispecies event, and spectators were in close proximity to horses throughout much of the event, there was always some distance between them. The horses are competition and/or breeding animals, at the event for a purpose and not to be petted by spectators. The arrival of this horse in the Horse Plaza therefore offered a unique opportunity for interspecies interactions:

> *Lots of people now touch and take photos with the horse. He doesn't seem too bothered as people reach out and touch him and pose with him, adults, men, women, children. He does neigh quite a lot at first though – probably takes about 10 minutes to quiet down. He is very alert to his surroundings – ears pricked, looking around, but seems happy enough.* [Fieldnote, Day 6, Landsmót 2016]

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The horse showed signs of being alert and perhaps a little anxious at first, as he was the only horse in the building and was confronted with lots of people reaching out to touch him. However, as the handler noted above, he was 'easy going' and seemed to take this in his stride, eventually settling down to eat his hay, largely ignoring the assembled crowd. For the event spectators this offered an exciting opportunity to touch and interact directly with a horse, and many of them seized on this and engaged with him tactilely and through taking photos. Such 'offstage' interspecies interactions did not constitute a major part of the event, but offered opportunities for direct contact between species, and so were an important aspect of the multispecies experience.

11.5 Discussion

At a multispecies event like Landsmót, the experiences and needs of all species need to be taken into account by the events management team and by researchers trying to understand aspects of the event experience. At Landsmót, horses are important actors in all aspects of the event and so help to actively shape and co-create event experiences. Interactions between humans and horses occur around the event site; and by following Goffman (1959) and considering the event site in terms of 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage', different aspects of those encounters are foregrounded. The issues raised above have implications for events management, for multispecies events research and for questions related to ethics and responsibility in multispecies events, and these are discussed in this section.

Events management is complex and is widely variable, dependent on event type, scale, location, participants and numerous other factors. Multispecies events add a further layer of complexity, as the presence of hundreds of horses alongside hundreds of humans in a confined space poses manifold logistical and practical challenges. At Landsmót 2016, the event site was clearly differentiated into 'front stage' and 'backstage' areas, as indicated above, and this went some way towards managing the interactions between event spectators and horses, as each were allocated separate spaces and direct encounters were kept to a minimum. However, even with careful site design, some areas and practices pose heightened risk of unplanned, possibly even dangerous, interactions between horses and guests. These interactions invariably take place in the 'front stage' of the event (as spectators are prohibited from entering the 'backstage'), so are highly visible and have potential to escalate and cause significant harm to the reputation of the event.

The opening ceremony represented one possible risk moment, as discussed above, but the events management team were aware of this and tried to manage the situation closely to minimize uncertainty. Here, the events management team relied on the knowledge and experience of established 'horse people' – the riders themselves and the riding club leaders who helped to manage the procession of horses and riders. This helped to ensure that those interacting directly with the horses were knowledgeable about horse behaviour, and knew the individual horses they were handling, and this undoubtedly helps to reduce (but does not eliminate) the potential for situations to develop that may put event guests – human and equine – at risk of harm and/or distress.

Other aspects of a multispecies event pose different challenges as it cannot be assumed that all humans present – whether they be spectators, contract staff, or volunteers, for example – have knowledge of horses and are experienced in human–horse interactions, and so may not understand how best to approach horses, or what the potential risks of being

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close to the animals may be. An example of this observed at Landsmót related to the 'crossing area' – this was a section of the Main Track that humans had to cross to get from one part of the event site to the other. This was also a place where horses frequently passed, as it was the way to enter and leave the Main Track. Volunteer stewards tried to manage the crossing and ensure that spectators did not try to cross the track when horses were approaching, but this proved very challenging. Many spectators refused the requests of the stewards to wait, and stepped on to the crossing when horses were approaching, sometimes causing riders and horses to swerve and stop very abruptly. This displayed a lack of understanding on the part of some of the spectators of the need to give the horses space in order to ensure safety. Although it did not result in any adverse outcomes at Landsmót 2016, it points to the need to actively manage and try to control some of the actions of spectators at multispecies events who might have limited knowledge of the nonhuman animals. Event managers thus need to be extra cognisant of the risk of injury to both people and horses that can occur at multispecies events and the need to carefully and robustly manage space and encounters between species to minimize potential for dangerous interactions.

Research into multispecies events will benefit from active awareness of the experiences, reactions and behaviours of nonhuman event participants in order to try to account more fully for the varied and complex nature of multispecies events. The discussion presented above illustrates how important it is to recognize horses as actors in co-constructing the experiences of Landsmót, and the centrality of human–horse interactions in producing the event – whether that be front stage, backstage or offstage. To take the horses seriously as event participants requires a multispecies lens, as argued throughout this chapter. Paying attention only to the experiences of human participants, and relying solely on human reports of the event, will miss out key aspects of the role of the horses and of the interactions between horses and humans. Multispecies ethnography has potential to draw attention to some of the unspoken facets of multispecies events and the sensorial aspects of those experiences. As this book illustrates, a single event is a complex phenomenon that can be understood from multiple perspectives and positions. Multispecies ethnography adds to this richness of understanding by including the nonhuman elements of the event to produce a fuller and more rounded insight into the event experience.

Finally, a multispecies perspective highlights the importance of questioning some of the complex moral and ethical issues that arise when we involve nonhuman animals in our leisure spaces. If we recognize horses as actors at Landsmót, then we ascribe them some agency and some rights and responsibilities. While the question of nonhuman agency is complex and beyond the scope of this chapter, the examples offered above illustrate how individual horses are active players in the event site and have personal reactions and experiences, as do human participants. Consequently, it is important to acknowledge that we have responsibilities towards the nonhuman animals we involve in events. Whether this be to ensure that we provide them with suitable 'backstage' areas where they can relax, or to design 'front stage' performances with animal welfare and well-being in mind, it is vital to recognize that nonhuman animals are not just there for our entertainment and that they have needs that may differ from those of human event participants. Event managers therefore need to consider nonhuman animal welfare and well-being at all stages of event design and implementation; and all event participants, including spectators, need to be encouraged to recognize the valuable contribution that nonhuman animals make to multispecies events and to behave respectfully and fairly to those animals.

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11.6 Conclusions

Multispecies events like Landsmót can be fun and enjoyable for all participants – human and nonhuman – but need careful design and management. Use of the concepts 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage' shows how different spaces around the event site provide different opportunities for interaction. The multispecies aspect of these events poses additional logistical and practical issues for event managers to address, and also challenges event researchers to adapt our methods to account for nonhuman experiences and interspecies encounters. As the examples offered in this chapter illustrate, attention to the multispecies aspects of these events enables deeper and richer understanding of event experiences and highlights the important contributions nonhuman animals often play in co-creating satisfying and memorable event experiences.

11.7 Implications

- Researchers need to consider experiences from the perspective of both human and nonhuman participants at multispecies events in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of event experiences. This may involve a broader range of research methods, deploying interdisciplinary approaches that draw on ethological tools as well as social science methods.
- Thinking about event sites in terms of 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage' can help draw attention to the ways in which different spaces offer opportunities for different kinds of interactions and encounters. This can be used to inform understanding of how event experiences develop at different places around an event site, and to aid development of rich and engaging programmes.
- Event managers need to consider site design and event programmes to manage encounters between human and nonhuman participants and spectators in ways that ensure safety, good welfare and positive interspecies interactions.

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12 Economic Impact Analysis of Events: Landsmót 2016

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Abstract

This chapter aims to explain some of the basic principles and practices of economic impact analysis (EIA) of events, with particular focus on smaller special events, and how results from an EIA are used in practice for decision making at various stakeholder levels. Data collected on site from 404 visitors to the special event Landsmót 2016 – the National Championships of the Icelandic horse – and analysis of the event's economic impact are used as an illustrative case. Starting with a review of the traditional approach to EIA, followed by a thorough description of the case, including details of data collection and descriptive statistics, the chapter ends by putting the results into policy-relevant contexts for different types of stakeholders.

Key words

on-site survey; impact analysis; homecoming event; direct impact

12.1 Introduction

Understanding the demand and the economic impact for an event is crucial knowledge not only for the event managers and the host organization but also for public planners of the region where the event takes place. The economic impact can be measured by various techniques, some more advanced and costly than others. Large-scale events of great importance for the image of a country or a destination might, for example, deserve construction of input–output matrices to show distribution of spending to a wider community. For even bigger events on a global scale, so-called mega events like the Olympic Games or FIFA World Cup, a full cost-and-benefit analysis to capture infrastructure investments in overall impact assessment is advised (Mules and Dwyer, 2005).

The most common approach for smaller events is an economic impact analysis (EIA) that measures direct economic spending of visitors to the event. Properly performed, such a study gives sufficient information to managers and planners of the event's impact regarding key decision variables like overall spending, spending depending on visitor types, local versus tourist spending, etc. The latter is of use for the event's regional economic impact assessment. In this chapter, an economic impact analysis conducted during Landsmót 2016 (the National Horse Championships in Iceland in 2016) is used as an illustrative and contrasting case to discuss why EIAs of events are performed and how they can be done. The chapter aims to explain some of the basic principles and practices of EIA with a special focus on smaller events and how results from an EIA are used in practice for decision making at various stakeholder levels.

The first section below will briefly review some basic research on economic impacts of events with the intention of showing the importance of measuring and illustrating economic impacts for different stakeholder groups. The second section describes the case of

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Landsmót 2016, with a general description of data, including characteristics of the sample and survey instrument, before turning to reporting on study results. The final section discusses the case results in light of some broader issues related to EIA of events, impact assessment and policy relevance.

12.2 Why Undertake Economic Impact Analysis of Special Events?

The question of why there is a request for understanding economic impacts of an event is largely linked to the issue of regional economic development and the focus on place and/or destination marketing by government and destination market organizations (DMOs). An event is an opportunity for attracting visitors to the region. The new expenditure brought in by visitors is an increase in spending not only within the event arena but often also outside the arena in local and regional businesses like restaurants, shopping and accommodation. Depending on the scale and size of the event, the monetary flows related to an event may be the basis for long term investments in infrastructure and necessary facilities for hosting the new visitors.

It should be noted that the success of an event is more than just the direct financial contributions, i.e. *economic impacts*. Several studies report on events having both *social impacts*, like positive civic pride (Wood, 2006) or enhancement of the image of the place (Kim *et al*., 2019), and *environmental impact*, related to physical environment, like infrastructure investments, but also impact on the natural environment, like wear and tear of land and ecological footprints (Collins *et al*., 2009; Lorant, 2009). Impacts that span both economic and social include, for example, the opportunity for business networking and entrepreneurship which gives rise to short-term economic benefits and long-term effects on social capital (Davies, 2011).

The EIA of a horse event like Landsmót is actually to be placed under the category of EIA of a special event. By definition, a special event is a 'one-time or infrequently occurring event of limited duration that provides consumers with leisure and social opportunities beyond their everyday experience' (Jago and Shaw, 1998, p. 29). One could think of Landsmót also as having a status of a hallmark event following the two most prominent defining characteristics outlined by Getz *et al*. (2012, p. 52): (1) 'Hallmark event … attracting tourists, creating or enhancing the positive image that is co-branded with the destination/community'; and (2) 'the Hallmark event as a tourist attraction also becomes an institution and its permanence is taken for granted'. The event and destination image are strongly linked.

Having defined a special event, the concepts of 'economic' and 'impact' also deserve a definition or at least to be put in context. 'Economic' in this respect refers to flows and values related to money, while 'impact' typically is about the force of impression of one thing on another. Put together, economic impact analysis of a special event is about understanding both the monetary economic flows and also other intangible values caused by the occurrence of the special event. This points to the fact that a complete analysis of the impact of a special event recognizes both positive and negative impacts, something that can be achieved using the method of cost–benefit analysis (CBA). A further description on the CBA methodology, and how decision makers can acquire information to judge whether economic benefits are greater than costs and whether hosting the event is the best use of money when alternatives exist, can be found in Dwyer *et al*. (2010). The rest of this chapter focuses on describing how to carry out an EIA of a special event.

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12.3 The Traditional Approach to EIA

Estimation of the new expenditure that is brought into the host region is a key issue in EIA, but there are a number of related issues that need to be considered when performing an EIA. The topic of EIA has been in focus in several theoretical as well as empirical research studies over the years, starting with pioneer work by Burns *et al.* (1986) in their study of the Formula 1 Grand Prix in Adelaide. The main idea with the traditional approach to EIA involves estimating the additional expenditure brought in thanks to the event, and converting it into income and employment to the host region by use of an economic model. According to Dwyer *et al.* (2010), the approach can be summarized using four steps:

1. Determine the boundaries of the host region for the event.
2. Estimate the 'new' expenditure associated with the event.
3. Estimate the economic impact of the new expenditure.
4. Estimate the net benefit to the host region associated with the new expenditure.

The first step involves defining the relevant geographical region for the estimation of impact. An event may take place in a closed arena in a metropolitan city centre, like the 2017 FEI (equestrian) European Championships in Gothenburg; it might be a joint venture between different countries, like the UEFA European Football Championships 2012 in Poland/Ukraine; or a relatively small event at a rural location, like Landsmót 2016 in Hólar in Iceland. In general, there are three main levels of jurisdiction to consider: the local, the regional (state) and the national.

Once the boundaries are set, this is utilized to distinguish between local residents and visitors to the event. The same boundary is also used to determine whether income and spending made by different actors come from within or outside the region.

The second step is dealing with the issue of estimating the new expenditure that is generated in the economy thanks to the event. It refers to all expenditure that would not have happened in the region if the event had not taken place. It is the injection of 'new money' spent by not only visitors but also participants/competitors, team members, media, event organizers, etc. There are several ways of dividing and gathering the relevant information on spending. The most common is to divide spending by group (visitors, participants, sponsors, etc.) but it could be done by industry (transport, shopping, food and beverage and so on), by region (from within, from outside, national or international) and also by timing (before, during and after the event).

The most common way to gather information on spending is by surveys of the relevant spender groups. It is likely that different groups of visitors to the special event have different spending patterns. To properly estimate the total spending of a certain group, one needs to have a grip on issues like population of interest, sampling methods, data collection methods, response rates and measures of validity and reliability of measurement (see e.g. Jago and Dwyer, 2006). In the case section below, a few of these issues will be discussed in more detail, but perhaps the most important thing to highlight when estimating new expenditure is to deduct spending by locals from the estimated total spending by all relevant visitor groups.

The third and fourth steps mentioned in the list above deal with estimating the economic impact of the event and involve modelling the links in the economic system to be able to determine how the newly injected expenditure flows and multiplies itself throughout the economy (at different levels: destination, region and nation). Such economic modelling needs to identify and quantify linkages between different sectors in the local economy and

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how the local economy is linked with other regions as well as with other countries. The new expenditure has *direct*, *indirect* and *induced* effects on the local/destination economy. Properly set up and used, an economic model is able to describe the money flows and how one unit of money (e.g. 1 euro) spent at the event generated income, added value and employment in the economy. As mentioned in the Introduction, the bigger the event, the more need there is for building a proper economic model to trace the economic impact of the event. This chapter will not go deeper into how the third and fourth steps are done in practice; the reader is referred to, for example, Dwyer *et al.* (2010) for a description. The rest of the chapter focuses on the key input to perform a full EIA in practice, namely how to estimate the new expenditure generated by a special event.

12.4 The Case of Landsmót 2016

For Landsmót 2016, a survey was designed and distributed with the purpose of collecting data to serve as a basis for an EIA of the event. Landsmót 2016 took place between 27 June and 3 July in a rural region in North Iceland: Hólar, in Skagafjörður.

The key variables for the Landsmót EIA consist of the total number of visitors divided by visitor type and the average spending of the different types. Following the prescribed methodology to estimate the total of new expenditure thanks to Landsmót 2016, the two mentioned variables should also be multiplied by average length of stay. However, there have been a number of challenges during the study.

If finding out the total number of visitors to the event is fairly easy (using ticket sales), it is more problematic to divide the visitors into visitor types, i.e. to come up with the origin of visitors (tourists, locals and regional visitors). Even more challenging is to collect information regarding spending by visitors. For a valid average spending by visitor type, the sample of respondents that participate in the study needs to be representative for the population of visitors. Hence, the procedures for sampling of respondents for the survey is crucial. In this case study, a two-stage sampling technique as recommended by Sun *et al.* (2010) was applied. The first stage was an entrance survey with a large number of visitors to estimate the general population statistics for Landsmót visitors: average age, gender, length of stay, nationality, lodging type. The second stage was a survey on site within the Landsmót event area to gather statistics on visitor spending patterns.

12.5 Methods of Study

The design and development of the questionnaire was done in cooperation with the local organizing committee for Landsmót and members of the Rural Tourism department of Hólar University. After pre-testing, the length of the questionnaire was reduced to just 18 questions that fitted into two A4 double-sided pages with generous spacing. The first section of the questionnaire covered gender, age and nationality, while a second part included questions related to travel and lodging. This was followed by a third section with the purpose of capturing respondents' spending. Based on best practice and previous experience, a number of predefined spending categories, with a clear division between inside and outside the event area, were included. The final section included questions on visitor satisfaction and likelihood of a revisit to the event. To capture visitors from different regions and countries, the questionnaire was available in Icelandic and English.

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12.5.1 Data collection, sampling and analysis

The data collection and sampling strategy for the study was also planned in cooperation with the organizing committee. As mentioned, the idea was to use a two-stage approach with the entrance gate sampling as the first stage, with the purpose of capturing the key respondent characteristics. The entrance gate was considered the preferable location for representative sampling, people were expected to wait in line to get in and during that time they were expected to answer the short interviewer-assisted survey. However, when trying to implement this strategy in practice, people were not keen on stopping to answer the questions. One reason for this was that the expected long queues by the entrance were not there for a sufficient amount of time, i.e. people wanted to get into the event arena as quickly as possible.

The second stage of sampling took place within the event arena. This was planned so as to capture a representative sample of visitors within the event area. Four predefined zones within the event site were selected as suitable. Furthermore, four days (Wednesday–Saturday) and three periods within each day were part of the sampling frame. Two trained interviewers were then randomly allocated to different zones and time–day periods. Each zone included spots in which visitors were sitting down waiting or watching, such as spectator stands, benches or just plain grass where visitors were seated. To reduce selection bias when approaching potential respondents, the interviewers followed a rule: given your allocated zone, approach the first visitor, then select every third and ask for participation in the self-complete survey. As an incentive to fill in the survey, each respondent got a ticket to enter a lottery for a fascinating book (*Knapamerki*) on Icelandic riding levels.

Data entry of completed surveys was done in Excel by the same staff as participated in data collection. Data were analysed using the statistical program Stata15. Due to the problems mentioned in the first stage of sampling, the analysis in the following results section is based only on data collected in the second, on-site survey stage.

12.6 Results

In total 402 respondents participated in the survey during the event. The average age was 44.19 years and the percentage of women in the sample was 58. When it comes to nationality and country of residence for the respondents it is interesting to note that 58.5% of the respondents were Icelandic citizens, while only 19.6% of the sample stated that they live in Iceland. In that sense Landsmót seems to be a 'homecoming event'. Note that the sampling was done within the main event area, which might lead to underrepresentation of Icelandic residents; for example, riders during the event had a smaller chance of being approached to answer the questionnaire. A few other sample characteristics of importance are average length of stay at Landsmót, which was 5.04 days (standard deviation 2.17) while the average number of overnight stays was 4.52 (2.90). The average party size was 1.95 (2.76).

Before reporting on visitor spending it is also interesting to note that the event achieved a high rating when it came to overall visitor satisfaction, with an average of 5.02 (0.98) on the 7-item scale (0–6).

The question 'How much money did you spend on the following categories on and off site in connection with Landsmót during the last 24 hours (from this hour and backwards)?' was used to capture the spending of visitors. The question takes some effort to

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complete and it is common for impact studies to have a number of respondents refusing to answer this question. Quite a few respondents leave sections blank when not having spent money within that category. Not answering the question does not necessarily mean spending is zero. These so-called item non-responses were excluded when calculating average spending. In total, 293 respondents indicated spending in at least one category. For the calculations of average daily spending, the input of these 293 responses is used.

Table 12.1 presents average spending for the total sample, divided between spending on site during Landsmót and spending outside the Landsmót event arena. [Note that, in this chapter, it is assumed that the Icelandic króna (ISK) converted to euros (€) at the rate of ISK1000 = €7.32 euros. The approximate conversion rate as at November 2020 was ISK1000 = €6.2.]

As we see from Table 12.1, the total estimated average daily (24 h) spend is ISK30,041 (€220), which seems quite a high number, especially the spending on restaurants and cafés at ISK8233 (€60.30). The finding illustrates quite a common problem in data analysis of impact studies: interpretation of numbers. As can be seen from looking at the standard deviations and 'min–max' values, there are some extreme values inflating the averages. This is probably due to some respondents having misinterpreted the question and answering for either more than one individual or for more than 24 hours of spending. Further analysis is needed. However, despite this apparent problem in the data, it is possible to divide the sample into tourists and non-tourists and discuss the average spending by type as a result, since we treat the two categories in the same way.

To be able to estimate the new expenditure brought in thanks to the event, people living within the region need to be separated from those coming from outside. In this study, a division of visitors into locals and tourists was made, and the broader boundary of Iceland was used for the impact calculations. In practice, respondents' answers to the questions 'What's your nationality? and 'In which country do you live?' were used to define a tourist, i.e. a tourist is defined as nationality '*other than Icelandic*' and/or country of residence as '*other than Iceland*'. For the analysis it is interesting to see how many visitors

Table 12.1. Visitors' average daily spend (in Icelandic króna, ISK).

	Average	Std (min–max)
***On site at* Landsmót/Hólar**		
Restaurants and cafés (hot meals and drinks)	8,233.63	12,635.38 (0–125,000)
Groceries and snacks (food, drinks, candy, etc.)	1,553.33	5,298.29 (0–50,000)
Shopping and souvenirs (clothes, etc. not horse equipment)	3,079.87	22,230.78 (0–360,000)
Horse-related equipment	4,078.93	9,822.30 (0–70,000)
Stall for horse(s)	404.32	4,350.02 (0–70,000)
***Outside* Landsmót/Hólar**		
Restaurants and cafés (hot meal and drinks)	2,878.75	7,567.84 (0–50,000)
Groceries and snacks (food, drinks, candy, etc.)	2,560.42	6,316.79 (0–50,000)
Shopping and souvenirs (clothes, etc. not horse equipment)	828.70	5,791.32 (0–50,000)
Horse-related equipment	1,729.78	11,021.72 (0–150,000)
Accommodation for horse(s)	359.58	3,808.64 (0–60,000)
Fuel	4,333.97	8,446.88 (0–54,000)
Total	**30,041.29**	

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Table 12.2. Average daily spend divided by category and by tourist or local/Icelandic resident (in Icelandic króna, ISK).

	Tourist Average (std) (min-max)	Local/Icelandic resident Average (std) (min-max)
***On site at* Landsmót/Hólar**		
Restaurants and cafés (hot meals and drinks)	8,730.66 (16,977.29) (0–125,000)	7,896.27 (8,552.49) (0–70,000)
Groceries and snacks (food, drinks, candy, etc.)	1,633.43 (5,379.07) (0–50,000)	1,498.96 (5,256.12) (0–50,000)
Shopping and souvenirs (clothes, etc. not horse equipment)	3,102.21 (12,677.83) (0–100,000)	3,064.72 (26,880.76) (0–360,000)
Horse-related equipment	6,083.02 (13,100.59) (0–70,000)	2,718.65 (6,441.94) (0–40,000)
Stall for horse(s)	664.12 (6,282.59) (0–70,000)	227.98 (2,243.01) (0–24,000)
Sum on site Landsmót/Hólar	**20,213.43**	**15,406.58**
***Outside* Landsmót/Hólar**		
Restaurants and cafés (hot meal and drinks)	3,397.05 (8,539.02) (0–50,000)	2,526.94 (6,831.65) (0–50,000)
Groceries and snacks (food, drinks, candy, etc.)	2,650.23 (5,803.53) (0–30,000)	2,499.48 (6,656.78) (0–50,000)
Shopping and souvenirs (clothes, etc. not horse equipment)	1,229.01 (6,696.51) (0–50,000)	557.00 (5,086.94) (0–50,000)
Horse-related equipment	3,520.99 (16,772.73) (0–150,000)	513.99 (3,194.81) (0–32,000)
Accommodation for horse(s)	202.29 (2,187.18) (0–25,000)	466.32 (4,597.34) (0–60,000)
Fuel	3,742.05 (8,406.93) (0–54,000)	4,735.75 (8,472.08) (0–50,000)
Total	**34,955.10**	**26,706.06**

met this definition and secondly to see the difference in spending between the categories. Table 12.2 presents average spending by visitor category, tourist and local.

As reported above, 58.5% of the respondents were Icelandic citizens, while only 19.6% of the sample stated that Iceland was their country of residence.

As can be seen from Table 12.2, there is a substantial difference in spending between the two groups. The international tourists spend on average approximately 30% more compared with national visitors. Looking at spending by category it can be seen from the table that spending on *horse-related equipment* and *shopping and souvenirs* are the two categories where spending differs the most between tourists and non-tourists. The pattern goes for both spending within the Landsmót event area and spending outside the area. Note that, according to the event organizers, there were fewer retailers than usual present at Landsmót 2016, something that was noted by overseas visitors and perceived as negative. This might have been one factor impacting negatively on volume of spending by the Icelandic residents; the supply did not meet expectations and they knew they could get products elsewhere.

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An interesting result for the organizers as well as policy planners is to see how the spending within and outside the event arena is distributed. Calculating by using the sum of spending on site, 57% of total spending is estimated to have taken place within the Landsmót/Hólar area. The same pattern holds for local visitors as well as international tourists.

So far in this chapter, results of daily average spending for the most prominent spending categories have been shown. To arrive at a figure for total economic impact of Landsmót 2016 we need to multiply by the total number of visitors or guest nights (8000, according to information from the Landsmót management). However, two major issues/problems are not addressed. The first relates to the issue of possible inflated spending due to misinterpreting the question. A crude assumption that all individuals have misinterpreted the question (divide the spending by average party size, 1.95) gives average spending ISK15,405.80/guest night. The second relates to not having included spending on lodging. Table 12.3 presents results from the survey related to visitors' lodging type. Estimates of costs for lodging in different types of accommodation are taken from expert opinions of brokers of lodging related to the Landsmót organization. Assuming the visitors to Landsmót are divided according to the survey results and total guest nights are 8000, this can further be used to estimate the total lodging costs and added to the final calculations of Landsmót economic impact.

Given the assumptions above, a cautious estimate of the average guest-night spending is ISK123.2 million (€0.9 million). Adding the spending on lodging to the average spending gives a total for the economic impact of Landsmót 2016 of ISK159.7 million (€1.17 million).

The next step is the issue of how much of this total economic impact can be seen as 'new expenditure'. A reminder of the methodology for EIA tells us that spending by locals should be deducted. Table 12.4 summarizes the calculations in which spending by locals is deducted from the total spending by visitors to Landsmót. The table also includes a division of the total spending that took place within the event area and outside the event area.

Table 12.3. Lodging types and average costs (in Icelandic króna, ISK).

	Average cost/ night, ISK	Share in different types	No. of guest nights/type	Total cost
Camping	2,500	45.7%	3,656	9,140,000
Hotel	15,000	7.8%	624	9,360,000
Rented house	8,500	21.67%	1,733.6	14,735,600
B&B	10,000	4.12%	329.6	3,296,000
Friends and relatives	0	9.00%	720	
Private house	0	2.50%	200	
Other	0	9.20%	736	
			Total	**36,531,600**

Table 12.4. Summarizing economic impact (in million ISK).

Total spending during the event	**159.7**
Total within Landsmót event area	*71.1*
Total outside Landsmót event area + lodging	*88.6*
Less: spending by locals/ Icelandic residents	**–20.9**
Total spending generated by the Landsmót event	**138.8**

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Note that all spending on lodging is included, since it has already taken into account the zero/low costs for visitors staying with friends and relatives, private houses or other lodging types. Note also that both the estimation of total spending and costs for lodging are done with cautious principles in mind, implying that the total results of economic impact are likely an underestimate of the 'true' value.

As Table 12.4 shows, the total new direct spending generated by Landsmót was estimated to be ISK138.8 million, which was the equivalent of 1,016,016 euros, i.e. roughly 1 million euros. This result can further be used in a more detailed regional EIA to calculate how much of spending within the event area stays in the region. With more detailed information on origin of imported goods and origin of vendors within the area, it would be possible to estimate and deduct the leakages from the total value.

12.7 Concluding Remarks: Economic Impact of Events

This case has illustrated and discussed how EIA can be carried out for a special event. By using segmentation of visitors into different types (locals versus tourists) and also by lodging type, it can be shown that the new expenditure generated thanks to the event has benefited different stakeholder groups. The event organizer receives the money from entrance tickets and the sales within the event area (mostly via renting sale space to sellers of products and services). A fraction of the money that visitors spend within the area leaks out from the region as goods are imported and not all vendors within the arena have their businesses resident within the region. The local region service sector, including hotels, B&Bs, restaurants and grocery stores, benefit from the event thanks to the spending of visitors outside the Landsmót event arena. Also, local private lodging rentals are positively impacted economically thanks to the special event of Landsmót.

Of policy relevance, the results in this chapter show a separation of money flows so that the total volume of economic activity within the event area is summarized for use by future organizers of Landsmót. Especially relevant is the new knowledge of differences in spending volumes by locals versus international tourists. Furthermore, the EIA results are a source of policy relevance for local and regional planning. A better understanding of visitor preferences can help to package experiences and offers to encourage the visitor to stay an extra night within the region. Also, the Icelandic Tourism Board can use the fact that Landsmót is seen as a homecoming event for Icelanders living abroad, and can then possibly also attach other homecoming events to the same timeframe of the summer.

The case also highlighted the challenges in putting theory into practice. In particular, the discussions on setting the boundaries for the event and how to separate new expenditure from spending by locals when designing survey instruments and collecting data was seen as challenging.

12.8 Implications

- A proper understanding of principles and practice for how to conduct an economic impact analysis is needed to make results serve as a basis for decision making related to hosting future events.

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- Dividing spending between within and outside the event arena, as well as segmenting visitors into relevant groups based on their lodging type, gives enriched information to stakeholders that can be used in, for example, destination planning and marketing campaigns.

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13 Community Impacts of Events: Resident Expectations and Experiences

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Abstract

Horse events are common in rural areas but their effects on local communities is an under-researched field. Research indicates that events can have economic and social effects on communities. Skagafjörður in North Iceland was the host community of the event analysed in this chapter. The region has about 4000 inhabitants. The event in this case is Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse, in 2016. The event attracted about 8000 human visitors and 800 horses and lasted for a whole week, so the event was quite extensive compared with the size of the host community. The expectations and experiences of local residents were researched through interviews before the event and an online survey following the event. Findings indicated high expectations and positive experiences expressed by the locals of this rural community. The respondents seemed to be committed to the event and cared that the event was successful. A high number of local residents welcomed human and/or equine visitors during the event and participated in the event, in the roles of spectators, competitors and volunteers. It is suggested that such horse events can impact the image of the host community and social cohesion of the local community.

Key words

horse events; rural; community; local residents; experience

13.1 Introduction

Different kinds of events are a break from daily life and the structure of most communities. Events affect direct stakeholders and others who do not have direct relations to the event. Such impacts can be both positive and negative (Bowdin *et al*., 2009; Helgadóttir, 2019). Positive impacts include, for example, stronger or more positive images of destinations and communities, increased local pride and increased flow of revenue to the location. Negative impacts can include noise and disturbance of everyday life for local residents, also damaged reputation of communities, pollution of sites and financial risk (Shone and Parry, 2010). In order to ensure events are beneficial for host communities and local residents, it is important to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts. To be able to do so, more extensive knowledge of the nature of events and how and why they affect local communities and residents is needed.

Research on event impacts has been increasing in recent years, particularly research on major sport events (Bowdin *et al*., 2009) such as the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup (football) (Bull and Lovell, 2007). Smaller sports events, such as horse events, have not gained as much attention from researchers. Economic effects of sports events are widely assessed but 'it is becoming increasingly important to address the social and cultural

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impacts of sport events' (Perić *et al*., 2016, p. 1). Most commonly events are researched from the perspective of impacts, so the research is conducted following the event. Researching 'views and perceptions of residents in the run up to the event' has gained less attention (Bull and Lovell, 2007, p. 229). The importance of analysing events from different perspectives has been emphasized by other researchers as well. 'To understand social impacts and leveraging holistically, it is important to observe communities before, during and after the event, as well as the role of the community as a primary stakeholder in the organizational process – this is especially important in cases that are deemed peripheral, smaller in scale, or have the potential to deliver sustainable events that are inclusive' (Perić *et al*., 2016, p. 1). The importance of events and festivals for development of entrepreneurship in rural areas has been noted as 'there is a growing interest in researching how festivals in rural areas are staged and how they contribute to the wider revitalization of host areas' (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018, p. 218).

The research presented here combines two approaches to data collection among residents of the municipality hosting the event: open-ended interviews conducted before the event and a web-survey following the event. Schulenkorf (2012, p. 2) pointed out that 'a lot more qualitative and quantitative research is needed' to analyse the contribution of events to community development regarding mega-events, smaller events and sport projects. Analysing the benefits and drawbacks of such events for host communities and residents is of importance for future development of various events, including horse events. The challenges of hosting an event of 8000 guests and 800 horses in a community of 4000 inhabitants are considerable. The case of Landsmót 2016 in Hólar, in the Skagafjörður region in North Iceland, is used in this chapter to analyse such a situation. This case provides an insight into the impacts of such an event on the host community, particularly its inhabitants, outlining the different kinds of positive and negative outcomes by dealing with the following questions:

- What were the expectations of residents in Skagafjörður before Landsmót 2016?
- What was the experience of residents in Skagafjörður of hosting Landsmót 2016?
- What are the lessons learned from Landsmót 2016, based on the local residents' experiences of hosting an extensive horse event in a small rural community?

The first two questions are dealt with in the Findings section where the expectations of locals are analysed from semi-structured interviews conducted before the event and the experience is analysed through a web-survey conducted following the event. The third research question is dealt with in the Conclusions, based on the theoretical framework of the chapter and the findings.

13.2 Values and Impacts of Events

The value of events and festivals is, to some extent, a well-established subject of research. However, 'value perspectives on festivals vary over time and through space, and this is a rather neglected area of research' (Getz *et al*., 2019, p. 24). Analysing those aspects is not simple, particularly the non-economic ones. 'We can identify three basic types of evaluation: formative (pre-event assessment), process (monitoring and outcome) or summative evaluations (post event), with the latter being the most common' (Dwyer and Jago, 2019, p. 44). The value of events is of importance for a number of stakeholders. Those stakeholders can have variable roles and relations to the event. Getz *et al*. (2019) emphasize

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that value of events can accrue to individuals who do not attend the event. Those 'non-use' individuals can be residents of the host community who value the event for providing choices and for community-based advantages. A positive attitude and experience of all stakeholders and collaborative structures is of importance (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018), not least as it has been pointed out that events can be affected by distrust among stakeholders (Perić *et al*., 2016).

The impacts of events on the host communities are variable (Gianna, 2007; Sharples *et al*., 2014). Those impacts can be economic, social, cultural, environmental, political and psychological (Gursoy *et al*., 2004; Gianna, 2007; Perić *et al*., 2016). The social impacts and social value of events have been discussed, e.g. regarding sport events. The importance of further analysing the social importance of sport events has been pointed out (Chalip, 2006; Zhou and Kaplanidou, 2018) and has in recent years been increasingly researched. Positive social impacts of sports events have been shown to be a surprise to the local population (Schulenkorf, 2012).

The role of events in the marketing of locations/destinations has been considerable in recent years (Alves *et al*., 2010). Unfortunately, not all events and festivals affect host communities in a positive way. The importance of understanding the host community's needs and wants is considerable (Sharples *et al*., 2014). 'The impact [of events/festivals] depends a great deal on the size and structure of the local economy, the composition of festival attendees and how well-rooted the festival is in the local economy' (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018, p. 218).

When looking in more detail into the needs of host communities, different issues are raised. As pointed out by Helgadóttir (2019, p. 336), 'the resident has a long-term, even lifelong and transgenerational investment in the destination culture' while a visitor has a transient relationship with the destination. Therefore, the effects of events on the host community and the local culture are of great importance. When planning an event, it must be borne in mind that communities are variable: 'It is difficult to generalize impacts in rural communities; when identifying common patterns, authors must always take into account that each community has its own unique mixture of social cohesion/division, inward- and outward-looking tendencies, continuity and change – and these can significantly differ (even between neighbouring rural communities)' (Perić *et al*., 2016, p. 3).

Events can cause disruption and inconvenience to local residents, as was the case with the Australian Open as traffic congestion, parking difficulties and excessive noise increased during the event (Bowdin *et al*., 2009). Events are particularly likely to affect the host community when the event is extensive compared with the size of the community hosting the event. This needs to be considered but researchers have suggested that 'smaller events typically achieve comparatively higher levels of impact (in terms of economic, social and environmental indicators) for the hosting community than mega-events' (Perić *et al*., 2016, p. 2).

13.3 Small Rural Communities

Despite the different extent and nature of mega-events such as the Football World Cup compared with small events hosted by rural communities, several similarities exist. It has been noted that all events, large and small, do in one way or another affect development of the communities where they are hosted (Schulenkorf, 2012). Even very small tourism events have enough impact on rural places to justify the investment made in them. Events can also help address some of the difficulties facing rural areas. 'Small and rural communities are

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using festivals and events to get on the bandwagon and reap the same benefits that large communities do' (Alves *et al*., 2010, p. 23).

Events commonly extend the tourism high season and thus increase the earnings prospects for local businesses. This has been the case with the horse gatherings in north Iceland, where the tourism high season used to be June–August but those events attract a high number of visitors in late September and early October (Helgadóttir, 2015, 2019) which is (or at least used to be) the beginning of the tourism low season. It has also been noted in rural Denmark that events and festivals can be important 'means for driving entrepreneurial activity' (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018, p. 217).

Events can affect the image and image development of places and are likely to strengthen the relations within and between stakeholder groups, including horse enthusiasts, trainers, breeders and others related to the horse industry such as sellers of horse-related services and products (Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2018). By participating in an event like this, stakeholders more strongly feel that they belong to the event community (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). Events and sport projects have been used to increase 'intergroup togetherness, social cohesion and community empowerment' (Schulenkorf, 2012, p. 1).

When discussing benefits from events in small communities, there has commonly been a strong focus on the importance of economic benefits. However, it is suggested that in some cases social benefits outweigh the economic benefits of events. It was noted by Dwyer and Jago (2019, p. 44) that in the case of events/festivals with a strong community dimension 'the non-economic impacts are likely to be more important than the economic impact'. The Cherry Festival in the municipality of Fundão (Portugal) is an example of this as, despite considerable economic benefits such as doubling capacity of hotels and restaurants during the festival, the positive social benefit is perceived as higher than the economic impact. 'The residents (taverna owners) and the suppliers also note that the greater impact is on "building community pride" and on "enhanced community image"' (Alves *et al*., 2010, p. 33). This was further emphasized by Hjalager and Kwiatkowski (2018) in their research on 315 rural festivals in Denmark, but they concluded (p. 217) that:

> Festivals play an important role in rural communities, and they are typically embedded in the local ecosystems of sports, culture, business and other types of associations, where they might deliver elements of coherence, commitment and meaning, as well as occasional economic benefits.

Norms and customs within communities affect the willingness of people to participate in events and community projects. Expected gains and positive outcomes for individuals and the community affect how willing people are to participate and to contribute to the development of events (Schulenkorf, 2012). Perić *et al*. (2016, p. 3) stated:

> When events are organized within the community and with local resources (as opposed to events that are organized by external organizations), it is important to note that rural communities have certain specific characteristics that might significantly influence the management and delivery of an event and its outcomes (such as scarce resources, empowerment issues, overlapping of stakeholder categories, existing social networks and trust level).

As with other events, the host community for Landsmót 2016 – Skagafjörður – played an important role in the event. The municipality, businesses, a number of

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associations and the inhabitants in general were important stakeholders and actors regarding preparation and running of the event.

13.4 The Host Community and Background Information

Skagafjörður in northwest Iceland is located about 4 h driving distance from the capital city, Reykjavík, and 5 h from the international airport in Keflavik. The region can be defined as rural and agriculture is an important pillar of the local economy. Education is available up to university level, including higher education in equine science, events management, hospitality management and rural tourism at Hólar University (Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2017, 2018). The northwest region is sparsely populated. For example, 6972 persons lived there in 2012 (a total of 7322 in July 2020), equalling 2.3% of Iceland's population. At the same time, the total number of horses was 18,500, which is about 24% of the Icelandic horse stock (Statistics Iceland, 2016, 2020). The northwest region has a much higher number of horses per person than other regions of the country as there are 2600 horses per 1000 persons in this region; that is, 2.6 horses per person (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015). About 15% of residents in northwest Iceland were members of equestrian associations at that time, while the national average was 3.25% (Sigurðardóttir, 2011).

Skagafjörður has a strong horse-related image and an active horse industry which has been developing for a long period of time. Horse-based activities have been identified at all levels of the value chain in the region, including core activities such as horse breeding, training and selling and different related services such as horse transport, stable building, equestrian tourism, veterinary services and horse shoeing (Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2017, 2018).

Since the first Landsmót was held in Þingvellir in 1950, the event has taken place 23 times, including eight times in Skagafjörður. In 1966 and in 2016 the event took place at Hólar in Hjaltadalur, the campus of Hólar University and the Hólar horse breeding farm. Different kinds of horse events are held on a regular basis in the region. This includes diverse competitions, breeding shows, horse shows for tourists and horse gatherings (Helgadóttir, 2015, 2019; Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015; Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2018). Other kinds of events, including sports events and town festivals, are quite common but Landsmót is among the most extensive ones. Only the national competitions of the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland (ÍSÍ) are as extensive, but these are not held on a regular basis in the region (Íþrótta- og ólympíusamband Íslands, 2019). The development of facilities and infrastructure for such extensive sport events receives financial support from the municipality to some extent. Other constructions of facilities are funded by other sponsors and organizers of the event.

At Landsmót 2016, the estimated number of guests was 8000 and about 800 horses were registered for participation (Ásgeirsson, 2017). The number of participating horses is limited according to the rules of the organizers (see Chapter 3, this volume). A week-long event of this size can be defined as a big event for a small community like Skagafjörður, with about 4000 inhabitants out of nearly 7000 inhabitants in the northwest region (Statistics Iceland, 2017). Therefore, it is an interesting case to analyse according to the expectations and experiences of the residents and its effects on the host community: Skagafjörður in North Iceland.

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13.5 Research Methods

Analysis of the expectations and experiences of local residents at Landsmót 2016 was done by using mixed-method research where a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was applied. In May 2016, before the event, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven local residents. All of them were in one way or another involved in horse-related activities. They were asked about their opinion and expectations regarding the event. The sampling of this research can be described as purposive sampling, as it was a non-probability sample that conforms to certain criteria (Blumberg *et al.*, 2005). At the same time, it was a 'key informant survey': the individuals targeted were knowledgeable about the subject of the research (Schutt, 2006) as they were all highly involved in the horse industry and many of them were regular visitors at the event.

Following the 2016 event held in June–July, a web-survey was conducted in October among local residents in Skagafjörður. All those aged 18 years and older who had registered legal residence in the region at the time the event took place were defined as the population of the study. Despite the fact that a list of legal residents existed, a comprehensive list of email addresses of individuals living in Skagafjörður at the time the event took place was not available. Email addresses of registered inhabitants were collected by internet search. The lack of availability of a comprehensive email list meant that the probability of inclusion in the sample was not known. A total of 344 email addresses were collected and 160 inhabitants participated in the survey, so the respondent rate was 46.5%, which is a high rate for such a web-survey (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2002). The average age of respondents was 51 years. About 58% of the respondents were female but at this time about 49% of the local residents were female (Statistics Iceland, 2016), so the survey was slightly more successful in reaching information on the experience of female residents than male. Only 117 out of 160 respondents provided information on their year of birth but those who did were on average somewhat older than the average age of the local residents.

In the survey part of this study the aim was to approach a good cross-section of the total group of local residents in Skagafjörður. Horse people and other stakeholders of the event were not of special interest but were included in the sample in the same way as any other residents. The aim was to research the attitudes of local residents towards hosting such an event in their region as well as researching the experiences of the locals, whether or not they participated in the event. In an open question at the end of the survey, several respondents mentioned that they were surprised by receiving this survey as they were not 'horse people'. This was seen as a positive sign in the way that not only horse enthusiasts had received and answered the questionnaire.

13.6 Findings

In this section the findings from the interviews conducted before the event and the survey conducted following the event are introduced. By using this mixed-method approach, information on the expectations and experience of individuals in the host community are analysed.

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13.6.1 Residents' expectations

All seven interviewees were familiar with the event and aware that the event was going to take place in their region within two months. The interviewees were involved with horses or horse-based activities in one way or another and many of them had participated in Landsmót previously. Both benefits and drawbacks of hosting the event were mentioned and discussed by the interviewees.

Some interviewees raised concerns regarding hosting the event in their region and whether it would be successful or not. Two of the interviewees said that the event would benefit the region and its horse industry if it was successful. Another interviewee explained this view in more detail, emphasizing the risk that if the events management was not successful it would harm the image of the region and in that case this event could cause damage to the possibility of hosting the event in the future. It has, however, to be borne in mind that there has been a longstanding debate about where in Iceland the event should be hosted, as many destinations and horse clubs have been keen to host the event (see Chapter 14, this volume).

Another interviewee pointed out that the event was going to take place at the high season of the tourism industry, which meant that the tourism industry would not benefit as much as if the event took place during the low tourism season. In this regard it should be noted that the event has for decades been held around the same time, i.e. late June or early July. It is timed and organized by the horse community in relation to the other horse events and to training periods of the horses as well as breeding seasons and weather conditions, so planning regarding the high tourism season is probably not a priority for the event organizers.

In general, interviewees were positive towards the event taking place in their region. All of them believed that the event would be beneficial for the horse industry in the region. Further benefits for the host community, including residents and businesses, were mentioned. A female resident who is not a business owner said:

> *… this of course attracts people to the region, and connects, connects the region and strengthens the image of the region as a horse region.*

Operators of horse breeding and horse tourism businesses mentioned that welcoming Landsmót guests to their farms was of importance for their businesses as an opportunity for selling both horses and horse-riding services. It was pointed out that it is not all about selling something on the spot or at the time the visitors are in the region; it is also important for developing long-term relationships for the benefit of the local businesses. A male horse breeder said:

> *A lot of people come to the region, and that is what we need. We need to attract the people to our region. Then relations are made with some of those visitors which we hope to be able to do business with later.*

It was pointed out that local residents recognized opportunities for renting houses and apartments for accommodation of Landsmót guests. This was encouraged by the event organizers, who advertised for private accommodation as they had identified a lack of accommodation opportunities in the neighbourhood. Examples were found of families who rented their homes during the event and managed to pay for a family holiday abroad with the rental revenue.

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Development of infrastructure is an important issue for such events (see Chapter 14, this volume). Residents emphasized the usefulness of those facilities for the local community following the event. So, hosting the event means that the horse community gains by having better facilities for horse-related activities following the event, which is seen as important by the local residents. Interviewees also pointed out that local authorities contributed significantly to the build-up of the venue.

Asked if the interviewees felt like the event would be an encumbrance for the local community, participants in general did not think so, whether or not they had their total income from horse-related activities. Some of them mentioned that of course hosting such an event meant additional work but that was not seen as a prohibitive factor for hosting the event. A male horse farmer said:

Ahh, I mean, this is a task, an extra task but not a problem.

13.6.2 Residents' experiences

As mentioned earlier, the intention was not to focus on horse people specifically when conducting the survey. However, the high number of horses per person in the region and the massive focus on horses and horse-based activities within the region must be borne in mind when analysing the outcomes of the survey. About 62% of respondents did not have any income from horses or horse-related activities but 7% owned a horse-based business. A substantial number, 33% of respondents, did not spend any of their leisure time on horse-related activities but 4.2% spent all their leisure time on horses.

Hosting a high number of horses and people in a small community means that visiting friends and relatives becomes common, so 65% of the respondents did have guests in their private homes during the event. The total number of guests per private home (including stays in tent trailers) was up to 19 guests for up to 10 nights. The total overnight stays at 82 homes of the respondents was 1702 nights. During the event, visitors commonly dropped by at local homes for a visit and 62% of respondents' homes did have 'drop by' visitors during the event. The average number of such visitors was seven persons per home. A common number was 10–30 guests but up to 50 guests were reported.

Not only human visitors were welcomed by local residents during the event. As it was not possible to host all 800 horses in stables at the event venue, local stable owners were asked to provide facilities for horses during the event. The event organizers and the local horse club asked for collaboration from local stable owners to be able to offer those facilities for free. At this time of the year most horses are kept outdoors, so many stables are in limited use by their owners. The event organizers supported the stable owners by providing free bedding during the event for the competition horses. According to the respondents of this survey, individual farms hosted up to 21 horses each for 7–10 days. It should be noted that the event was 7 days long but most of the competitors stayed for about 10 days, as the weekend before the event was used to introduce the horses to the venue and to practise for the competition.

Following the event, the respondents to this survey were positive towards hosting such an event, despite the above-described intensity of welcoming such a high number of humans and nonhuman visitors at private homes and stables. A total of 94% of the respondents were supportive of the idea of hosting such an event on a regular basis, every fourth year or so, in their local region. However, only 58% agreed that the event organizers

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conducted good consultation with local inhabitants regarding the organization of the event. About 89% agreed that the event was beneficial for the local horse industry. Further, 85% believed that local businesses had benefited from the event and 60% said that some kind of an association or partnership they were part of had benefited from the event. A large majority (92%) of the respondents disagreed or very much disagreed that their businesses or homes had experienced intrusions or inconvenience because of the event taking place in their region.

About 67% of the respondents who attended the event were satisfied with their experience. Factors such as facilities for guests, the competition programme, evening programme, competing venues and sanitary facilities ranked high regarding the satisfaction of local inhabitants participating in the event. About 75% were satisfied with the planning and management of the event. The local residents in Skagafjörður were in general positive towards the event when asked about their experience three months after the event. They also reported a strong will for hosting this or similar events on a regular basis.

13.7 Conclusions

Following analysis of data on the expectations and experiences of local residents in Skagafjörður region regarding Landsmót 2016, it is worth considering what lessons can be learned from this study. The relatively small rural community hosting this extensive event in regard to the number of human and equine participants is the main focus here, particularly the local residents.

The high expectations and positive experiences described by local inhabitants in Skagafjörður in relation to Landsmót 2016 is in fact an interesting conclusion, as the event was quite extensive compared with the size of the host community. The findings indicate that a high portion of the local inhabitants (and their homes) contributed highly to welcoming the visitors (both human and equine) for the event, commonly without concrete financial gain.

Skagafjörður has had a strong horse-related image for decades and used to be known for its horse breeding and horsemanship. In recent years, areas in the south of the country have also become strong in this sense so competition has been increasing in most fields of the Icelandic horse industry (Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2017, 2018). This research indicates that hosting such an extensive horse event in this small rural community is seen by the locals as very important for strengthening the horse-related image of the region and for its horse activities and businesses. The interviews indicated high ambition amongst the locals for creating a successful event that was seen by them as important for keeping the area as a possible future venue for extensive horse-based events. This might partly be rooted in the long-standing debate about the location of the event in different places in Iceland, which is further addressed in Chapters 4 and 6, this volume.

It is worth considering if the debate on the venue selection for the Landsmót event has increased social cohesion and empowerment of the host community, which in 2016 seemed to unify to make the event successful. Increased intergroup togetherness and strengthening of the feeling to belong to the event community by participating in events and event planning has been described in earlier research (Schulenkorf, 2012; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016). Examples from Denmark indicate that 'Local business actors are less likely to withdraw their participation from a festival, arguing that they need to demonstrate their commitment to the local endeavour no matter what' (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2018, p. 224).

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Despite the fact that some local inhabitants claimed that either their businesses or associations they were involved in had benefited from the event, it seems quite clear that financial gain is not the only or main reason for the positive attitudes of the local stakeholders and inhabitants. As pointed out by Dwyer and Jago (2019), the most important benefits of events in small communities are more likely to be other than economic ones. Some of the interviewees emphasized the importance of attracting visitors to the region to be able to welcome them to their farms, which is, according to them, not necessarily likely to result in selling of horses or services at that point but could be important for development or strengthening of long-term (business) relationships. Those comments indicate long-term thinking rather than a focus on quick financial gain, which might be explained partly by the nature of the horse-based businesses in Iceland being identified as lifestyle businesses, where economic benefit often does not have higher priority than other kinds of benefits (Helgadóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2008; Sigurðardóttir, 2015, 2016; Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2018). The long-term relationship of residents to their home region and their transgenerational investment in the destination's culture (Helgadóttir, 2019) can also be important affecting factors in this case, as the development of the region and its industries is a long-term process rather than a one-time fix.

The different nature of communities is an important factor regarding how events affect those communities (Perić *et al*., 2016). The strong culture of horsemanship, longstanding development of the horse industry (Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2018) and the high number of horses in the region (Sigurðardóttir and Helgadóttir, 2015) suggest existing awareness and acceptance within the local community towards horses and horsemanship. This might positively affect the attitude of the locals towards hosting horse-based events. The importance of maintaining the horse-related image of the region is mentioned in the interviews and this is in line with the findings of Hjalager and Kwiatkowski (2018) where they concluded that festivals and events are significant for local identity and the quality of life of local residents.

It is interesting that only 58% of the respondents to the survey felt that the event organizers conducted good consultation with the local inhabitants regarding the organization of the event. This could be a subject for improvement for the event organizers, as close collaboration and consultation with the host community is likely to increase intergroup togetherness and social cohesion in relation to the event (Schulenkorf, 2012). However, it should be noted that the preparation time for this event was unusually short, as the final decision on locating the event in Hólar was made only a year and a half before the event (see Chapter 14, this volume). Earlier plans were to host the event in Vindheimamelar, which is also located in Skagafjörður.

As the horse industry is highly related to the tourism industry (Sigurðardóttir and Steinþórsson, 2018), it would be interesting to further investigate the view of local tourism operators towards such events. This research suggests that the timing of the event is not ideal for the tourism industry, as it takes place during the high season. However, the impacts of such events on the tourism industry of this small community still remain unresearched. This research indicates that the local residents of Skagafjörður see this event as important, but further research on the economic and social impacts of such events in this rural community is required.

Local inhabitants are stakeholders of events. Their roles and involvement can be variable and multifarious, and they can be stakeholders from many perspectives at one event. 'Community members often make up several existing stakeholder groups (involved as volunteers, sponsors, local providers of services, or act as visitors during events)' (Perić

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et al., 2016, p. 14). According to the findings of this research, some of the participants in this study did not participate in any way in the event and did not receive visitors in relation to the event. The findings indicate that a high proportion of the local community were involved in the event in one way or another. This included being visitors or competitors at the event, welcoming humans and/or horses to private homes or farms, volunteering for local associations or clubs (e.g. in on-site custody or cleaning; see Chapter 8, this volume) and so on. The roles of the locals are more multifarious than is outlined in this chapter but the importance of the local community and a positive attitude among local residents towards events, particularly in small rural communities, should not be underestimated when planning events of different nature and size.

13.8 Implications

- Horse events are of considerable social and economic importance for small rural communities.
- The host communities of horse events tend to play an active part in creating the event and locals have many different roles before, during and after the event.
- The social and economic impacts of events in rural communities still remain an under-researched field.

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14 Event Legacies

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Abstract

Event legacies include, but also go beyond, the long-term impacts of an event. While the majority of research on sports events legacies has focused on mega-events hosted in urban cities, the concept is shown here to be equally applicable to smaller sports events and those hosted in rural areas. In the case of a biennial sports event held at different sites in different years – like the Icelandic horse championships, Landsmót – legacies build over time, related to various aspects such as infrastructure, environment, culture, sport and event policies. In this chapter the legacies of Landsmót 2016 are explored, focusing on infrastructure, rurality as a cultural aspect of the event and the affective or emotional impacts as important in legacy building. Data for this chapter were collected through semi-structured retrospective interviews with five individuals engaged in planning and running Landsmót 2016 in Hólar, Iceland.

Key words

impacts; legacy; rural; affective impact

14.1 Introduction

Within events management, research on event impacts has focused heavily on economic impacts and short-term impacts, and mega-events have enjoyed more attention than other types of sports events (Shipway and Kirkup, 2012; Kassens-Noor *et al*., 2015). Mega- and major events often promise to deliver a legacy to their host community, in part in order to justify the investment of significant sums of public money to deliver the event. Although a contested term, legacy refers to the 'planned and unplanned, positive and negative, intangible or tangible structures created through a sports event that remain after the event' (Preuss, 2007, p. 211). These outcomes can include economic, tourism, social, environmental, infrastructure, sport and/or political factors. Identifying and measuring sports event legacies is complicated: it is difficult to pinpoint event-related aspects of development for host communities, as the development often affects a wide range of stakeholders and areas (Preuss, 2015). Despite these difficulties, there is increased recognition of the need for research on sport event legacies, as Shipway and Kirkup (2012, p. 219) argued:

> It is a substantial step forward that there is now recognition of the longer-term impacts and legacies of sports events and agreement that such impacts and legacies are generally more substantial than the immediate economic impact that was so much the focus of attention in the past.

The term 'legacy' is usually reserved for large-scale events that require significant investment in infrastructure and urban development and that attract international media attention and large numbers of tourists (Thomson *et al*., 2019). The sporting event Landsmót,

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the case under discussion in this chapter, does not fit these criteria in a traditional sense. However, we argue that it is a significant event within the locality of Skagafjörður and the national context of Iceland, not to mention the larger imagined community of the Icelandic horse. This community is often referred to as 'the world of the Icelandic horse' or 'friends of the Icelandic horse' (Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016) and is partly organized through national and international federations such as the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations (FEIF) (see Chapter 2A, this volume). The event required investment of significant money, both public and private, to support infrastructure development that has potential to have lasting impacts – legacy – for the community. It produced economic impacts (see Chapter 12, this volume) and attracted large numbers of domestic and international tourists (see Chapter 7, this volume). It also led to more intangible benefits, such as the enhancement of the volunteer community (see Chapter 8, this volume) and development of knowledge and expertise amongst the event's management team (see Chapter 5, this volume). Therefore, we suggest that it is appropriate to consider issues of legacy in relation to this event, even if it is of a smaller scale than those usually considered in the research on event legacies. There has been very little attention in the wider literature to ideas of legacy beyond mega and large events held in urban centres. Yet events also play important roles in many rural communities and a smaller scale event can have a significant impact on a sparsely populated area. This chapter thus proposes the importance of extending discussions of legacy to include mid-size events hosted in rural communities.

14.2 Event Legacies

There has been increased focus placed on event legacy, both in academic circles and by state bodies, as public scrutiny requires councils and governments to justify the investment of public resources in events, rather than other projects. The political need to show a return on investment has driven many efforts to develop frameworks to try to measure and evidence event legacies. However, the complexity of defining and measuring legacy remains a challenge (Thomson *et al*., 2013). In a review of the literature on event legacies, Thomson *et al*. (2019) showed an increase in academic publications on this topic since 2007, representing the increased attention paid to this issue by researchers, rights holders, in bid documents, and by local and national governments. They found that the most common type of legacy studied was in relation to 'public life, politics and culture', followed by sports participation and then the economy. In synthesizing key findings, Thomson *et al*. (2019) identified the importance of planning for maximizing benefits and minimizing any possible negative aspects of legacy. Positive legacies do not just emerge automatically from hosting major events; they have to be deliberately planned, managed and invested in.

Preuss (2015) proposed a framework for identifying the legacy of a mega sports event, where the definition of legacy rests on whether the opportunities that open up lead to value creation and new impacts. Further, he argued that identifying legacies includes asking what legacy really is, who the affected stakeholders are, whether they benefit or not, when the impacts are realized and for how long. Kassens-Noor *et al*. (2015) illustrated the importance of a temporal dimension to understanding legacy, focusing on the element of development over time, including the whole period from bid to hosting to long-term impacts. This temporal dimension and the notion that legacy can also include delayed or cancelled effects is an important addition to the definitions used

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in event documentation, such as the International Olympic Committee's (2009) five legacies: sporting; social, cultural and political; environmental; economic; and urban.

Another major challenge in relation to legacy and major events that relates to the temporal dimension of events is that media and public attention often disappear as soon as the event finishes, as do key personnel within the event team who might have been involved with earlier efforts related to impact and legacy (Toohey, 2008). To maximize legacy outcomes, ongoing investment is needed and this is often hard to secure and justify. With this in mind, Rogerson (2016) highlighted the importance of pre-event activities to maximise legacy and to achieve some outcomes prior to the end of the event and the moving on of resources, personnel and public interest. However, the idea of legacy also implies some post-event impact and Cornelissen *et al*. (2011) suggested that legacies should be measured for as long as 20 years after a major event. Too often neither event organizing committees, regional or national governments nor event rights holders are prepared to invest the resources needed to really evaluate event legacy over this longer time period (Gratton and Preus, 2008). Leopkey and Parent (2012) pointed out further difficulties with evidencing legacy in relation to the Olympic Games, as event organizing committees self-report and may be keen to showcase positive outcomes for political reasons. Thus Chappelet (2012, p. 76) suggested that legacy is a complex concept, one that is even more difficult to deliver and measure in practice, concluding that 'legacy essentially is a dream to be pursued rather than a certainty to be achieved'.

In part in response to some of the difficulties of defining, delivering and measuring legacy, there has been a move away from legacy and towards talking about leveraging events for social, economic and/or environmental purposes. Chalip (2017) argued that the more strategic approach of leveraging can help solve some of the issues to do with legacy, as outlined briefly above, by taking responsibility for delivering legacy out of the hands of event organizers and into the remit of cities and regions. Event leverage can then be incorporated into a portfolio of events, planned around strategic goals (Chalip, 2014). A portfolio approach shifts focus away from the impacts and legacy of any single event towards maximizing benefits across a portfolio of events in a given city or region (Ziakas, 2014). This may be a suitable approach for rural regions to consolidate assets and achieve strategic benefits from the investment of limited resources. However, Ziakas (2015) cautioned that issues of power need to be considered in any leveraging activities to try to ensure that all stakeholders benefit – and not only the most visible or powerful.

Although a portfolio approach holds potential for rural regions, such locations also sometimes host large-scale one-off events that have potential to produce impacts and legacies in themselves. The case study discussed in this chapter, Landsmót 2016, is one such event, located in the rural region of Skagarfjörður in northern Iceland. As with any large event, Landsmót had potential to result in legacy on a number of measures, including sport, economics, tourism, social and cultural, and environmental measures.

The social and cultural legacy of Landsmót for equestrianism in Iceland and the wider international community around the Icelandic horse has been discussed previously by Helgadóttir and Dashper (2016). The political legacy is important for local stakeholders and this is addressed below. Additionally, while the infrastructure development for mega sports events is on a scale that is hardly comparable with national and regional events, infrastructure development is certainly an important legacy for Landsmót. On a smaller scale, bids to host such events include planned infrastructure development which is integral to the successful bid and, if executed, offer great potential for a lasting legacy for the community. This was a focus in the research for this chapter.

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In this chapter we refer to two main stakeholder groups that we call 'event' and 'local'. These groups have somewhat different goals, which may at times be conflicting. The event stakeholders focused more on short-term impacts and the success of the individual event, as is often the case in the delivery of large events (Koutrou *et al*., 2016). In contrast, the local stakeholders needed to focus more on the long-term legacy that might produce more far-reaching impacts for the community (Kassens-Noor *et al*., 2015). For this study, we chose to focus on these two main stakeholder groups to begin to draw the contours of the Landsmót legacy, beginning with the 2016 event.

14.3 Method

Data collection was through semi-structured interviews with five individuals representing two stakeholder groups in relation to Landsmót 2016 held at Hólar. The first stakeholder group was the equestrian community, including business owners, associations and equestrian specialists (representing the 'event' stakeholder group), and the second stakeholder was Hólar University (representing the 'local' stakeholder group), as the owner of the venue of Landsmót in 2016. Hólar University is the only higher education institution in Iceland offering a degree in equine science and riding instruction. The interviews took place three years after the event, in the summer of 2019, which gave the interviewees some time perspective to reflect on the event's impacts and potential legacy.

The authors prepared an interview schedule and informed-consent letter and identified the sample for interviewing. A research assistant contacted the sample, conducted the interviews, recorded and transcribed them. The authors analysed the transcripts based on thematic content, which included predefined themes drawn from the literature and new themes that emerged from the data.

The interview participants represented the two groups of stakeholders: Group A was the equestrian community, the 'event' stakeholder group (respondents A1, A2 and A3), and Group B was representatives of the local venue, Hólar University (respondents B1 and B2), the 'local' stakeholder group. Whilst not providing further contextual information about participants and their involvement in the event is a limitation of the study, it is necessary to fulfil ethical obligations to honour the private nature of personal information and safeguard participants' anonymity, especially given the small community related to this rural event. The event stakeholders (Group A) had several roles in the equestrian sports and breeding associations in Iceland, from local to national levels, and different roles in the event itself, from management to more limited tasks. The local venue stakeholders (Group B) included management and staff at Hólar University, on whose land the Landsmót venue is located.

The interview frame consisted of open questions about the role these individuals had in the event, how they perceived the short-term impact of the event, what they saw as the lasting legacy of the event and what factors they saw as enabling or disabling this legacy.

14.4 Findings

While legacy generally refers to the long term, it is important also to address the short-term impacts and hence we present the findings in those two perspectives. We have further categorized the findings into the themes of event success, affective aspect or ethos, infrastructure, political and knowledge transfer aspects.

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14.4.1 Short-term impacts

To address the short-term impact or success of the 2016 event the respondents were asked two questions: (i) 'From your perspective, how did the event go and what have been the impacts since the event?'; and (ii) 'Was there anything that, in hindsight, you feel could have been done better?'

On the theme of event success, all the stakeholders interviewed agreed that the event went very well. The programme ran smoothly, facilities worked well, the municipality and local people were supportive and the visitors were happy. In the words of Respondent A3 (Event):

> *There were many things that I felt went well, generally speaking it worked to produce a beautiful and impressive event and it was really a positive ethos and feeling at the event, even if the weather was not kind to us ... The service for visitors was very good and the facilities were used efficiently. The venue is in itself good and there are many positive aspects with it, of course it's a very beautiful place, enough space and lots of stable space that was well used.*

Respondent B1 (Local) agreed that the event was successful and a real community effort:

> *This was of course a very fun event where the collective power of people was evident. Many have a part in how well it went, you know; the rescue squad, the women's association, the staff here – everybody pitched in. Everybody did their best in the tasks they took on. It was amazing to see this ethos.*

Most of the respondents from both stakeholder groups mentioned that in the case of the 2016 event the timeframe for preparations was unusually tight as the venue selection was delayed, as Respondent A2 (Event) explained:

> *The preparations went well even though they started very late. It was decided late to move the event [venue] from Vindheimamelar to Hólar. There was a need for major upgrading in Vindheimamelar and in Hólar and given the timeframe we had it went astonishingly well, in my opinion. Of course, there was a moment when one thought it is impossible, we won't be ready – but we made it.*

Respondent B2 (Local) also acknowledged the challenges of the tight timescale for planning for the event and developing associated infrastructure:

> *It was of course very short notice for preparing for this event. So, it takes simply much more time to plan and manage such an event than this one had. Just 18 months was the timeframe for building new tracks and hills and all. So it was a very tight timeframe.*

Several improvements to the venue had to be made in preparation for hosting the event, including developing the main footpath that would run between the food stalls, market place and stables, the crossing areas, and the warm up and access track for horses and riders to enter the main sports competition area.

On the theme of ethos, rurality was important as the 2016 event was held in a rural area which has limited accommodation provision for tourists. Many of the visitors camped or stayed on the Hólar campus and in the immediate vicinity. This helped create a feeling of community within the event, as Respondent B1 (Local) explained:

> *And that is maybe the special thing about Landsmót here compared to what I have experienced elsewhere in that you are in an environment here and people didn't leave, they stayed for the whole event. So, a kind of a cosy feeling developed, that is what stands out in my experience and it made this one different from other Landsmót events.*

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The 2016 iteration was in one of the more rural locations of Iceland, which helped create a sense of collective community on the event site. This happened in a way that is often not achieved when the event is held in a more urban area, such as Reykjavik, where there are more diverse accommodation options available to guests, meaning that people stay in locations beyond the event site.

The event stakeholders mentioned some innovations that they thought had worked well and should be incorporated in the event in future. One related to the programme and timing of the event. Previously, Landsmót had lasted for seven days, from Monday to Sunday. The early days are relatively quiet in terms of spectators, with focus being more on breeding, early competition heats and the business side of the horse event. In 2016 the decision was made to reduce this by one day, ending with a final celebration on the Saturday evening. This was seen as a positive development that enabled spectators to return home on Sunday without missing any of the programme, meaning that the event remained vibrant and well attended right to the end. In terms of the venue, the improvements at Hólar included a new design for the spectator area, which afforded good visibility to both competition areas, the breeding and sports tracks. The availability of showers and ample and clean toilet facilities were also greatly appreciated by the event community.

14.4.2 Long-term impacts

Three questions addressed longer-term impacts and possible legacy. In the longer-term perspective, what would be the legacy of Landsmót 2016 in Hólar? What factors would enhance this legacy and what factors might reduce it? Each respondent was also asked a question specifically regarding the legacy for their institution, association or business.

All of the respondents thought of the infrastructure of the venue and facilities as a lasting legacy that opened up the opportunity for hosting Landsmót and other equestrian events at Hólar in future. The physical infrastructure was uppermost in their minds, as Respondent A1 (Event) explained:

> *There will be a Landsmót in the north in the future. The venue and facilities, if it is maintained properly, are such that it is ready for a Landsmót every x years. So, I think that this will ensure that there will be Landsmót in the north, which is important for equestrianism in North Iceland, although the majority of equestrians are based in South Iceland.*

As a biennial event that moves venues every time, there is fierce competition within the equestrian community to host the event in their local area. Hosting Landsmót is beneficial for the local equestrian community and important for businesses as well. As the most sparsely populated area of Iceland, albeit one with a rich history and culture in relation to horses, the northern region struggles to attract large events. Hosting Landsmót may be particularly important to the equestrian community in this region which may otherwise become somewhat isolated from the rest of the equestrian world in the country, and the success of the 2016 event – and the legacy of high-quality infrastructure – made it more likely that the region would be seen as a credible host for future events, as Respondent A2 (Event) explained:

> *I think this event had a good impact for the future. I hope it will be held in Hólar again. A lot was done and much spent on the facilities. It benefits the school [Hólar University, the venue], the fibre optic cable and so many things that are now in place so the costs for next time should be lower. I just thought it was a fantastic venue and location. To have this big stable,*

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there were so many things there that fit so well with hosting a Landsmót … Of course, it was also a good promotion for the school [Hólar University] and the entire municipality.

Respondent A3 (Event) framed this in terms of political and sporting legacies by emphasizing the importance for equestrianism in Iceland, the presence of a strong educational programme at Hólar University and placing the venue selection for Landsmót in this context:

I think it has had very positive impacts and if people play their cards right, they can use it to benefit the school [Hólar University]. That was also the thought behind the decision, to strengthen the school. If we want to strengthen Icelandic equestrianism in the world, we need a good, solid education and there is no better way to achieve this than to strengthen Hólar University.

Respondent A3 (Event) elaborated on the knowledge transfer aspect by pointing out how unique it is to have a university degree in equine science and riding, how much resource this type of course requires and the potential that lies in building this legacy:

This is of course a very special programme of study and is very expensive, you are not only talking of textbooks and computers: you are talking horses, stables, riding halls so we need to get more use, more return on the investment you have there and try to grow the school really. Attract more foreign students, do more research and start a master's degree. That is my big picture.

The respondents were clear that a Landsmót venue in the north of Iceland is needed to support the equestrian community in the region and that Hólar is attractive in this regard. To realize this legacy, Respondent A3 (Event) called for an active dialogue between Hólar University, the equestrian sector and the municipality.

The local respondents also commented on the legacy for Hólar and agreed with the event stakeholders that the infrastructure development and success of Landsmót 2016 is an important legacy for the whole region of North Iceland.

Some of the respondents were quite outspoken in promoting the rurality aspect of the venue and the event, highlighting that Landsmót is a rural experience, as Respondent A3 (Event) stated:

… you need to have a vision, because the Landsmót that were hosted in the rural areas were starting to suffer. And that just totally changed with this event because it went so well and because everybody was so satisfied.

Respondent B1 (Local) said:

The impacts of Landsmót are – to host the event here in Hólar was decisive for North Iceland. If the question was more broadly about whether to host the event in a rural area, then it had a great impact to host it here in Hólar. But if it is just a question of what it did for Hólar, I think it was positive. I do not know yet what the impact is for the future, we do not know if and when another Landsmót will be in Hólar. There were improvements made to the facilities in Hólar, which were good to begin with.

Respondent B2 (Local) expressed the view that rural events are important, and Landsmót 2016 helped ensure wider support for continuing to host events outside urban areas:

It will be easy to get Landsmót back here again and to the north. This type of event, the rural one that is not in the city, must be preserved and promoted. I think after this event the rural type of the event has more followers than before.

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Whether the rurality of the event will be a lasting legacy remains to be seen, as this is currently a topic of intense discussion within the equestrian sector in Iceland.

Respondents were also asked to discuss how the long-term impacts could be realized with the question: 'What factors would enhance this legacy and what factors might reduce it?' As the interviews were semi-structured, this topic also came up in the responses to other questions as it was clearly of interest to the respondents.

Respondent A1 (Event) explained how it was important to think of the event in a complete sense, rather than focus on specific occurrences and locations, if Landsmót is to thrive:

> *This is an event that must be cared for, there is so much competition about other things. This big event, in order for it to keep its status, people need to be on their toes and take good care of it. It is simply so important … I think that we – the horse people – need to speak more positively of Landsmót in general rather than just in regard to the location. It is the entire event in itself rather than each specific occasion on which it was held that matters.*

Respondent A3 (Event) discussed issues of collaboration and consensus-building, focusing on the political aspects of legacy-building, and recognized the importance of hosting the event in the north of the country for the wider equestrian community:

> *I just hope with all my heart that Landsmót will be held in Hólar again and that the municipality, the school and equestrians in North Iceland – I mean Húnavatnssýslur, Skagafjörður and Eyjafjörður – pull strongly together for this. That is my view on it … in the context to spread equestrianism, it would have been tragic to cut out the north of Iceland – especially Skagafjörður [the municipality where Hólar is located]. The whole of Skagafjörður, historically speaking of course, is the Mecca of equestrianism. Nowadays it is more in the south. But if the Landsmót events had been permanently moved south I think it would have been negative for the equestrian sector.*

Hólar was named as a place where the realization of the renovated legacies of the venue infrastructure would be guaranteed. Respondent B1 (Local) recognized the need to use the facilities developed for the event beyond just the period of the event. The event site at Hólar was recognized as providing a good opportunity to reuse the facilities, as it is also a university, as well as to host future events, all contributing to a form of legacy:

> *I think that Landsmót should be held in places like Hólar where the facilities will be used on a year-round basis, as in Reykjavík and in Hólar where it is used to educate young equestrians. Hólar must be the best place to build up a good venue and facilities where the future actors in the sector and on future events can get their education.*

Respondent B1 (Local) went on to explain how this could be achieved through hosting more equestrian events at the venue, making further use of the facilities:

> *I can see that possibility in the future. One sees certain opportunities for such development around education and training that is not exactly the studies here but additional products.*

Each respondent was also asked a question specifically regarding the legacy for their institution, association or business. The Event group did not see direct impacts for their businesses, but emphasized that the legacy of Landsmót is beneficial for the whole equestrian sector and therefore indirectly for their operations, as Respondent A2 (Event) explained:

> *The event as such is a display window for the horse sector and it benefits me like other equestrians.*

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Respondent A1 (Event) also explained how being involved with hosting a large event like Landsmót helped develop skills and capacities amongst the equestrian community that would be beneficial for hosting future events:

> *Just to be able to participate in the planning, preparing and running of such a big sports event makes you better prepared for the next one. I will definitely take part in running Landsmót again, the experience and knowledge gained from having the opportunity to participate in this helps one to organize other events in the equestrian associations.*

Respondent A3 (Event) identified a potential long-term positive impact in terms of future of events, in that the lobbying for taking the 2016 event to Hólar at short notice had resulted in a successful event:

> *Not everybody thought this would end well with the short notice, but I was always convinced that this was the right decision and for me personally it had a positive effect. The discourse and the policy changed somewhat, it is not as bounded and the thinking about the future of Landsmót per se for the future. Now you hear voices saying that Hólar is in fact one of the best venues for Landsmót.*

Hólar as a venue and Hólar University as a stakeholder were often named as important for equestrianism in Iceland and part of the legacy building of Landsmót. Respondents had an affective association with the place, people and programmes in Hólar, as this is the place to which professional equestrians in the world of the Icelandic horse look to for higher education and training, as Respondent A3 (Event) explained:

> *Of course, I was at Hólar myself back in the day and I am a Hólar man at heart.*

The local stakeholders were conscious of the enormous publicity opportunity offered by the event and at the same time cautiously optimistic about the long-term legacy of Landsmót 2016 for Hólar. Respondent B2 (Local) acknowledged that the event provided unique promotional opportunities for the venue to communicate with the wider Icelandic horse community, both within Iceland and internationally:

> *It was of course a great promotion for Hólar, I can only speak for Hólar, but it was a fabulous promotion of the place. There were visitors at the event who had never been here, and they loved the venue, the environment, everything. I think it had an enormously positive effect for the studies and the facilities at Hólar and a chance to showcase Hólar. That was great. The eyes of the Icelandic horse world were on Hólar continuously for a week and for months before because of the construction of the venue. The [online] streaming from this event was accessible for Icelanders and people abroad so our position on the world map – the horse world map – was clear.*

Respondent B1 (Local) was hopeful for some positive longer-term benefits of hosting the event, but felt it was still too early to tell if this would be maintained:

> *I think the event drew attention to equestrian studies, at least temporarily. I think it had a positive effect – I don't know if it was more than with other Landsmóts, but it did have a positive effect on the school reputation. Landsmót per se does not change the image of Hólar University. It is an event in history like previous Landsmóts. It is a historical event that will always be remembered. It has generated research projects, if there will be more it will be a foundation for comparison, but I don't know if it has any lasting effect on the attendance to the equestrian program.*

Cornelissen *et al*. (2011) suggested that to measure the legacy of an event it might be necessary to do so over a period of 20 years. The research presented in this chapter was

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conducted just three years after the event took place, which may be too early to evidence significant impact and sustained legacy. However, at this point it was evident that the event had resulted in tangible and intangible impacts that were contributing to the development of a legacy from hosting Landsmót 2016 at Hólar University.

14.5 Discussion

In relation to short-term impacts, the consensus of the respondents in this study was that Landsmót 2016 was successful in terms of the quality of the event, the venue, visitor experience and facilities for horses and riders. They did not discuss the financial situation and they did not dwell on the fact that the event was smaller in scale, with fewer visitors than the previous one held in Hella in southern Iceland in 2014. This is interesting in light of the importance that researchers have accorded economic impact and suggests that the affective aspects are more important than previous studies have identified (Shipway and Kirkup, 2012; Kassens-Noor *et al*., 2015; Preuss, 2015).

These stakeholders all expressed a wish to use Hólar as a venue again, in part for return on the investment made and to ensure the facilities were reused. However, they also spoke of this in affective terms, citing the beauty of the place, the community spirit and the feeling that the event belonged at Hólar. Respondents also stressed that humans and horses were well cared for at the event, in part as a result of the excellent facilities and bank of knowledge and experience present at a venue that the event manager described as 'cradled in the arms of the mountains'. This sentiment of the event as an outdoor rural event rooted in Icelandic nature is, however, somewhat of a controversial issue in the equestrian community of Iceland, where a strong lobby wants the Landsmót venue to be located permanently in the capital region of Reykjavik, where the majority of equestrians, and Icelanders generally, live. There is clearly a tension between the affective elements of staging the event in a historic rural venue that has strong ties to equestrian culture and the more practical and business-friendly option of staging it within a metropolitan region with better tourism facilities, transport connections and a larger pool of potential audience members.

Kassens-Noor *et al*. (2015, p. 5) argued that host communities should focus on turning events into 'efficient development vehicles that serve public purposes' and Landsmót 2016 was successful on these terms, providing the local community with enhanced facilities to support education at the university and to host future events. Without the event, the university may not have been able to justify investment in upgrading the facilities which are of use to the equestrian programme at the institution and not just important for hosting the event. The event also led to the development of expertise and confidence among different stakeholders to bid for and host future events.

Perhaps most importantly was the sense of pride that was expressed by both event and local stakeholders in the successful hosting of the event, especially given the challenging circumstances afforded by the short lead time available for preparations. Whether this leads to a lasting legacy in terms of changing the debate in Iceland about where the most important event in the horse community calendar is held remains to be seen, but the sense of competence felt and displayed by the 2016 team, coupled with infrastructure development, suggests that there is potential to develop a sustainable legacy from hosting this major event at Hólar University campus, in the rural region of Skagafjörður in northern Iceland.

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14.6 Conclusions

The very concept of 'legacy' is contested and difficult to define, yet it remains important as cities and regions need to justify the expense involved in hosting major events. To date, discussions of legacy have tended to focus on mega-events or other large-scale events in cities, and the potential for these events to lead to legacy in terms of urban development. In this chapter we have extended this discussion to include a mid-size event, hosted in a rural and sparsely populated area of northern Iceland. Although Landsmót is certainly not a mega-event, it is significant within the calendar of the Icelandic horse community, on a national and international level. There is a push within certain segments of the horse community in Iceland to host the biennial event in the urban centre of Reykjavik, with its extensive facilities and excellent transport links. However, as the discussion in this chapter has shown, hosting the event in the rural region of Skagafjörður has potential to create a significant legacy for Landsmót and the wider equestrian community. Building on discourses of tradition and associations between horses and Icelandic nature, Landsmót can create positive impacts for the small rural region of Skagafjörður, which in turn can help sustain the horse community beyond the urban towns and centres.

14.7 Implications

- The concept of 'legacy' has application beyond the context of mega-events hosted in urban centres and is also relevant to other types of event hosted in rural regions, where hosting the event has potential to prompt significant investment and lead to tangible and intangible benefits for the local community.
- Events can contribute to the development of transferable knowledge that can contribute to long-term impacts and legacy.
- Affective impacts are also important to event legacy, creating a sense of pride and confidence that can inspire future activities.

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15 Comparing Landsmót 2016 with Other Equestrian Events: the Case of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ 2014 in Normandy

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Abstract

This chapter aims to present the methodology and main results of research focusing on the short-term economic, social and environmental impacts, as well as the long-term legacy, of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ 2014 in Normandy (2014 WEG). This event is then compared with Landsmót 2016 (the National Championships of the Icelandic horse), as they have a lot in common despite their apparent differences. It can be concluded that equestrian events have various impacts for local areas that host them and can contribute to regional development. In order to optimize such impacts, actions have to be implemented with sustainability in mind, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects.

Key words

comparison; impact; legacy; sustainability; World Equestrian Games

15.1 Introduction: The Emergence of New Questions Around Equestrian Events

Worldwide, the horse industry has undergone significant changes since the middle of the 20th century. It has changed from a primarily agricultural and industrial sector activity to one firmly rooted in sports, leisure and consumption. This evolution generates the development of new kinds of activities and the growth of the whole horse industry. Consequently, new questions arise about the role of equines in economic dynamism, culture, social links, regional development, tourism, sustainability and human–horse relationships – questions that reflect major changes in society. Despite this recent growth and associated changes, relatively little is known about the horse industry and its development. Few studies have been conducted and, in most countries, statistical data on the horse sector is lacking or incomplete. However, there has been increasing interest in the horse sector. In the past 20 years, the number of socio-economic studies devoted to this sector has begun to multiply all over the world.

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A subject of growing interest comes from the development of equestrian leisure and sports and their impact on regional development. In this sector, some research is emerging that is devoted to equestrian events, which are multiplying in number. For example, in France, there has been a sixfold increase in the number of equestrian competitions organized each year over the past decade (Haras nationaux, 2005; IFCE, 2015). This growth in equestrian sporting events raises questions about their impact for the local areas that host them.

Impact studies of sporting events focus mainly on the economic consequences of these events (see Chapter 12, this volume). Thus, numerous studies have been dedicated to this theme, for example the work of Noll and Zimbalist (1997). It is only recently that literature became plentiful on the subject (Kesenne, 2005, 2012; Matheson and Baade, 2006; Preuss, 2006, 2015; Barget and Gouguet, 2007, 2010; Porter and Fletcher, 2008; Kasimati and Dawson, 2009; Kurscheidt, 2009; Barget and Ferrand, 2012; Taks, 2013). More recently, some studies have taken into account the social value of sport. We can quote among them the paper of Kavetsos and Szymanski (2008) on the effects on well-being of international sports events, or the work of Barget and Gouguet (2010) on the social utility of the 2007 Rugby World Cup. However, the environmental dimension is often neglected, as well as the long-term impacts. Another fact that deserves to be underlined is that very little interest has so far been shown in the analysis of small events.

In this context, a collaborative research programme has been carried out by the IFCE (French Institute of Horse and Riding), INRAE (National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment) and CDES (Centre for Law and Economics of Sport) of Limoges. Its aim was to develop a methodology for assessing the impact of equestrian sporting events of various sizes and disciplines. The method for studying the short-term economic, social and environmental impacts was progressively created and tested on various small and medium-scale sporting equestrian events in France. It was finally adapted to a large-scale event and applied to the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ 2014 in Normandy (2014 WEG). This was also an opportunity to extend the analysis to the long-term legacy of this event (Vial and Barget, 2018).

This research programme embodies three main innovations. First, the application of these evaluation methods to the field of horse riding. Second, the comprehensive nature of the approach used, which considers the three pillars of sustainable development, studies the short and long-term effects of the event and considers equestrian sporting events of all types. Thirdly, the methodology has been deepened to minimize the classical limitations and errors encountered in impact studies and to build a robust, thorough and comprehensive methodology.

This chapter reports on the methodology and main results of this research before comparing 2014 WEG with Landsmót 2016 and underlying wider lessons to be learned.

15.2 The Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ 2014 in Normandy and Its Impact Study Methodology

From 23 August to 7 September 2014, France hosted the 7th World Equestrian Games, in Normandy – the first time France had hosted the event. The World Equestrian Games (WEG) takes place every four years (two years after each Olympic Games) and includes the world championships for many equestrian sport disciplines. The 2014 WEG incorporated eight official disciplines (combined driving, dressage, endurance riding, eventing, para-equestrianism, reining, show jumping and vaulting), and two non-official ones

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(horseball and polo). The number of nations registered hit a record, with 64 countries represented. The show took place at several venues: the main events were hosted in Caen (La Prairie Racetrack, Exhibition Centre, Zénith and Ornano Stadium) but some events (sports or demonstrations) took place in other locations in Normandy: Haras National du Pin, Sartilly and Bay of the Mont Saint Michel, Pôle Hippique de Saint-Lô and Deauville Racetrack. The Games were accompanied by a Territorial Project carried out by the organizing committee and local authorities, which aimed to transform a specific economic activity into a long-term dynamic for Normandy and which represents a real innovation in the organization of large-scale sporting events. The organizational budget of the Games and the associated Territorial Project raised 78 million euros, of which around 50% came from public sources. A sum of €4 million was devoted to the financing of more than 300 projects, which aimed to ensure that the Norman population would benefit from the event and support it. These projects were divided into three timeframes: '15 months' representing the 15 months preceding the event, '15 days' for the 15 days of the Games and '15 years' for the 15 years following the event.

Short-term economic impact calculation consists of measuring the net economic benefits of the 2014 WEG for the hosting area in comparison with a reference situation, i.e. the state of the local economy in the absence of the event. This evaluation relies on Wilson's multipliers, combining an approach through economic base theory and the Keynesian model. It enables analysts to take into account the direct spending (expenses for the organization and profits generated by the show) and indirect spending (intermediate expenses made by companies to meet the needs of the show) of the event. From this, we deduce the outflows (local agents' expenditure outside the area for the event). Finally, we add the induced effects (multiplier effect or snowball effect) and reuse of the money injected into the area thanks to the event (that is to say, the money re-spent by actors in the area during several waves following the event) (Barget, 2012). This evaluation was implemented on two geographical scales: the Normandy region and Caen la Mer conurbation.

The study of short-term social profitability was based on quantitative and qualitative analysis. First, social utility is estimated through a cost–benefit analysis, based on the theory of welfare economics. It allows us to measure individuals' additional wellbeing by using money as a unit of measure. This monetization concerns the use value (utility perceived by spectators for attending the event) and the non-use value (value of the event for local inhabitants who did not attend the Games). Secondly, these quantitative results were complemented by a qualitative analysis. This analysed the reasons why individuals value the event and consequently what are the social benefits, as well as what actions organizers took regarding social aspects of the event.

Environmental impacts were assessed in the short term through various quantitative and qualitative indicators grouped in items (governance, partnerships and awareness raising; consumption of resources and emissions; natural environment and biodiversity). The objective was to estimate these various items impacting the environment through a specific unit for each item and to analyse these results considering the carrying capacity of the natural environment. Basically, the analysis was centred on the actions set by the organizers to limit the environmental damage and negative impacts on each of these items. These elements were studied during the event and also during the preparation and restoration phases.

These three short-term approaches are complementary. They allow an overall study of the impact of the event by assessing the variation of activity, the variation of wellbeing and the state of the environment.

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In the long term, the analysis allows us to formulate assumptions about the legacy of the event that are more about the medium term than the long term. This analysis took place only two-and-a-half years after the event and would have to be confirmed 15 years after the event (in line with the objectives of the Territorial Project) to obtain a longer-term perspective.

In this context, we were interested in the legacy of the 2014 WEG for the Normandy area. The event represents in particular: cultural openness, image, local reputation, regional identity, synergies between actors, skills development, innovation, effect on local associations, integration and social ties, citizenship, education, development and popularization of horse riding (discovering of the world of horses and equestrian activities, initiation, equestrian shows). The assumption is that a more dynamic regional socio-economic environment has been created. The analysis also concerns variations in population welfare, as well as the long-term impact on two sectors particularly concerned with this event: the equine and tourism sectors.

Data collection was mainly based on:

- qualitative interviews among local experts (organizing committee, local authorities, etc.) conducted in 2014 before and after the event;
- 1946 surveys completed during the event, distributed among all stakeholders attending the event (spectators, participants, accompanying people, employees, volunteers, exhibitors, food services, media);
- 358 interviews conducted face to face or by phone in 2014 before or after the event, with local inhabitants who did not attend the event;
- field data collection before, during, and after the event;
- 51 interviews conducted in 2015 by phone among local experts (20 from the equine industry and 31 from the tourist industry);
- email and phone exchanges at the beginning of 2017 with other local experts; and
- a thorough literature review (statistics resources on the internet, reports, articles, etc.).

Data have been analysed through quantitative and/or qualitative methods. It is important to note that these results relate to a precise moment (things will continue to evolve) and are based on data that we were able to collect at that moment, which is non-exhaustive.

15.3 Main Results of the 2014 WEG Impact Study

15.3.1 Spectator profiles

We estimated that 313,556 spectators attended the 2014 WEG. Half of these are local residents (21% lived in Caen la Mer conurbation and 29% in the rest of Normandy). The event also attracted French people from other regions (39%) and international visitors (11%). Among the 50% of spectators who came from outside Normandy, 39% travelled specifically due to the Games, 3% would have come to Normandy on the same date anyway and 8% would have come to Normandy on another date. Women (61%) are more represented than men (39%). Respondents are 44 years old on average, with 21% being retirees. Concerning socio-professional categories (Fig. 15.1), in comparison with national averages, the Games attracted more farmers, craftsmen, businesses managers, higher managerial and professional occupations than workers and intermediate occupations. Household net monthly income of spectators was less than €1000 for 11%, €1000–€1999 for

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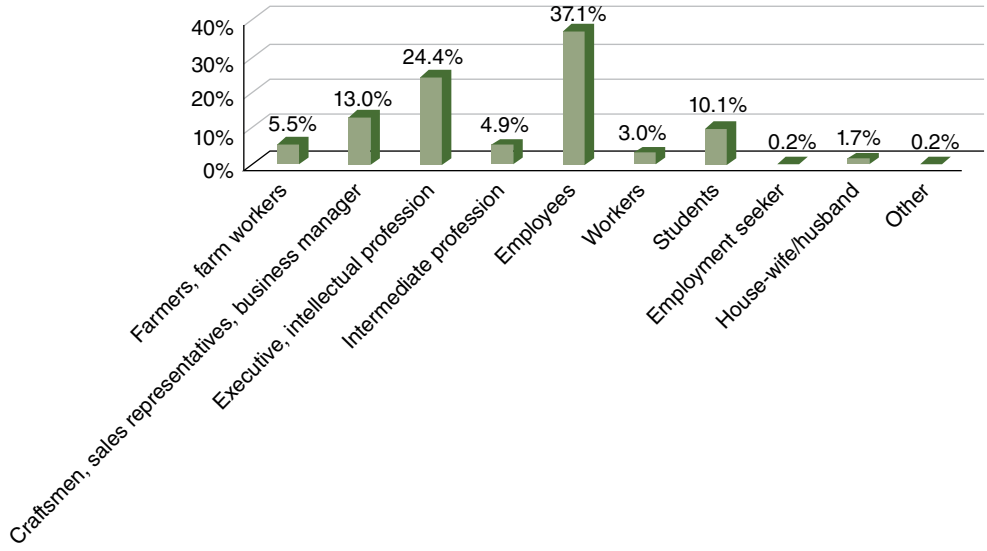


Fig. 15.1. Socio-professional categories of 2014 WEG spectators.

19%, €2000–€3999 for 32%, €4000–€5999 for 16% and over €6000 for 8% (14% of respondents refused to answer this question). Spectators may or may not have had links with horses: 10.8% were equine industry professionals, 46.6% were amateur riders and/or horse experts, and the others were novice (25.6% with at least one rider in the family and 16.9% without).

Coming to the 2014 WEG was a family trip for 80% of spectators. They travelled on average 456.9 km from their main residence, mainly using cars (83.1%). They stayed on average 3 days and 2.3 nights out-of-home, using firstly hotels (22.9% 1 or 2 stars, 10.5% 3 or more stars), then friend/family houses (24.0%), bed-and-breakfasts (19.5%), campsites (12.0%), renting (8.8%) or secondary residences (3.4%).

The average expenditure for the whole stay was €170 per spectator. These expenses were related to accommodation (29%), food (26%), purchases in the Games' Village (15%), other expenses outside Normandy (13%), transport (9%), purchases outside the Games' Village (5%) and tourism (2%).

15.3.2 Other stakeholders

In addition to spectators, the 2014 WEG gathered together 1688 horses, 1060 competitors, 2968 accompanying people, 3416 exhibitors, 1224 people working in food services, 7200 employees, 3722 volunteers and 1751 media workers.

Competitors and their accompanying teams were largely international visitors (76%); 5% came from Normandy and 19% from other parts of France. We estimated 2.8 accompanying people per participant and they came with 1235 competing horses. Their average expenditure for the whole stay was estimated at €901 per participant or accompanying person.

Exhibitors and food service providers were only French people, 45% coming from Normandy. Among the 55% that came from outside Normandy, 46% travelled specifically

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due to the Games, 4% would have come to Normandy on the same date anyway and 5% would have come to Normandy on another date. Their average expenditure for the whole stay was estimated at €2168 per person.

Employees and volunteers mainly came from Normandy (59%), then from other parts of France (38%) and only 3% were international visitors. Among the 41% that came from outside Normandy, 37% travelled specifically due to the Games, 2% would have come to Normandy on the same date anyway and 2% would have come to Normandy on another date. Their average age was 36 years old, 59% were women and they spent on average 13 days on site. Their average expenditure for the whole stay was estimated at €201 per person.

Media workers were mainly international (89%), then locals from Normandy (11%). Among the 89% international, 78% travelled specifically due to the Games and 11% would have come to Normandy on another date. They spent on average 11 days on site.

Through this short description of the different stakeholders of the event, we can notice the diversity of the event actors and we understand the importance of taking all their behaviours into account in the evaluation of economic, social and environmental impacts of the event.

15.3.3 Local economic impact

According to our evaluations, the 2014 WEG generated gross spending of €39 million for the Can la Mer conurbation and €81 million for the Normandy region. After deducting the outflows, €27 million remained in the Can la Mer conurbation and €46 million in Normandy. Adding the multiplier effect, the 2014 WEG total impact reached €55 million for the Can la Mer conurbation and €102 million for Normandy (Table 15.1).

Table 15.1 presents the gross spending, net spending and total impact for the two studied areas.

Spectators were the main source of spending (74% of the gross spending) and of economic impacts (76% of total economic impact), followed by organizational spending (15% and 13%). If we compare the total economic impact of the event with its organizational budget, we can see that €1 injected into the organization of the event (by governmental and private partners) corresponds to a creation of €1.25 of added value in the Normandy area.

Table 15.1. Economic impact of the 2014 WEG.

Studied area	Gross spending[a]	Net spending[b]	Total impact[c]
Caen la Mer conurbation	€39,137,833	€27,546,257	**€50,803,897** (to which we might add **€4 million** for the Territorial Project funds)
Normandy region	€81,122,672	€46,038,308	**€102,255,177**

[a]Gross spending = direct and indirect effects of the event.
[b]Net spending = Gross spending – outflows (money which goes out of the area).
[c]Total impact = Net spending + Induced effects (multiplier effect of the money injected in the area thanks to the event).

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15.3.4 Social profitability

The social utility of the Games was estimated at €45 million, including €31 million of use value and €14 million of non-use value.

According to the qualitative analysis, the contributions of the 2014 WEG for the various stakeholders and the local population are mainly related to the following factors:

- pleasure of attending or welcoming the event;
- economic and tourist benefits;
- media exposure; effect of visibility and attractiveness for the area; and
- incentive for the development of the local or even national equine sector.

With regard to the negative aspects of the Games, respondents only rarely mentioned organizational problems (12–17% of respondents, according to the type of stakeholder) and nuisances for local inhabitants (5–13%).

Finally, several actions were implemented by the organizers on the social aspect for:

- diversification of the audience (through a large diversity of price tickets offered, schools' involvement in the event organization, numerous activities offered in the Games' village, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, etc.);
- promotion of the local area and horse riding (through various stands, inclusion of Norman products in restaurants, promotion of local horse breeds and activities etc.).
- improvement of social aspects in partnerships and contractual aspects (local partnerships were favoured, qualifying internships were offered to regional students, employees were accompanied in their professional project after the Games, a club of Games' supporters was created for economic actors, etc.);
- safety and animal wellbeing (sufficient size of stables, appropriate horse food, animal controls and access to healthcare if necessary, disinfection of the stables in case of successive passage of different horses, help of the RESPE (Network of Epidemio-surveillance in Equine Pathology) on aspects of sanitary safety, etc.); and
- sharing and skills (creation of a platform dedicated to the volunteers' accommodation, sharing between volunteers, skill improvement, etc.).

15.3.5 Environmental impacts

Concerning governance, partnerships and raising awareness, several actions were carried out by organizers: creation of working groups, EquuRES Event labelling of five stables (environmental label), stands and visits on sustainable development themes, working horses (exhibitions), raising awareness posters, etc. When asking the various Games' stakeholders about the environmental measures set up by the organizers, nearly half were not able to mention any example. Only 1.5% of the individuals mentioned more than four measures.

In relation to consumption of resources and emissions, we measured:

- 231,405 m^3 of consumed water;
- 30,246,573 kWh of electricity;
- 787,727,107 km travelled (i.e. 100,526 t of CO_2 released);
- 100 t of straw, 22 t of hay, 135 t of shavings;
- 2,038,970 meals eaten in Normandy;

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- 1,062,338 nights spent in Normandy (included 45% in Caen la Mer conurbation);
- 534 t of manure produced;
- 278 t of waste;
- 159 t of sewage handled separately (bilge water off-grid, routed to water treatment centre);
- no impact on sewage treatment plants;
- no impact on air quality; and
- 7% Norman inhabitants (and 15% Caen's citizens) bothered by nuisances.

Actions carried out by the organizers on this theme included:

- permanent infrastructures and rental of such preferred
- composting and chemical toilets;
- no warm or cool air-conditioning;
- incentives offered for carpooling/public transport/green types of travel;
- shuttle system;
- use of horse-drawn mobility (hippomobility) to collect waste;
- incentives to use local products for human food and various materials;
- 100% of manure locally composted;
- 100% of straw and hay from local providers;
- part of waste locally recovered;
- recycling bins; and
- use of Ecocups.

In relation to the natural environment and biodiversity, it is important to underline that the event occupied 500 ha of surface, among which more than 90% was in sensitive areas (wetlands, flood-risk areas, conservation areas). Organizers paid attention to these aspects in carrying out relevant actions: environmental studies were conducted before the event to locate infrastructure in the least sensitive zones, compensatory measures were applied on certain sites, long-term monitoring was used on some sites, no big construction or surface sealing was done, etc.

15.3.6 Local impact on the horse industry

Although equine breeding seems to have benefited from a certain relaunching since 2014 in France, including in Normandy, no other major transformation of the equine industry seems to have resulted from the 2014 WEG. Nevertheless, numerous projects were launched on this occasion, illustrating a will for development of the sector at the local and international levels. Some effects can be observed, some were very limited in size and duration, but others were longer-lasting.

Actions to popularize horses and horse riding, organized before and during the Games at a regional level, benefited for the greater part only from one-off financing. Nevertheless, they encouraged some increased knowledge and openness about the horse world amongst the Norman population and favoured a degree of opening of the Norman population to the horse world, including in equestrian shows and horse riding, but the elitist image associated with this sport does not seem to have disappeared.

The mediatization of the event and athletes, although notable, is far from being comparable to that of the World Cups of the most popular sports (soccer or rugby), underlining

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the relatively low interest of the general public in equestrian sports. Thus, the consequences hoped for in terms of visibility and growth of federation membership did not occur. Nevertheless, there were some signs that the general public became a little more interested than normal in equestrian sports. Moreover, sports politics in the equestrian domain have been questioned and have evolved further following the 2014 WEG. These two last facts seem to be related to the good performance of French riders in the 2016 Olympic Games, which engendered increased attention to equestrian sports from the media and the general public.

Moreover, the 2014 WEG was an opportunity for Normandy to confirm its image as an 'equestrian area', especially on the international level. The organizing authorities preferred to favour an intangible legacy (financing of the Territorial Project) instead of a tangible legacy (construction of infrastructure), which seems adapted to the Norman context, given that the region already has numerous equestrian sites. Consequently, at the national and regional levels, the exposure of the Norman equine industry allowed a recognition of 'horsey' Norman sites by local authorities and professionals. Finally, the 2014 WEG enabled local actors in the equestrian sector to come together, making them work together more closely. This developed collaborations and improved the organization of this sector.

15.3.7 Local impact on tourism

In Normandy, 2014 was characterized by three major international events: the 2014 WEG, the World Championship of Kayaking and the 70th anniversary of D-Day. The trends and evolution of key figures within the Norman tourist sector in 2014 have to be put into perspective within the framework of these three events and their impacts. D-Day remembrance tourism is an important vector of tourism in Normandy, particularly during the years preceding or following anniversaries. Globally, the peak of tourist attendance observed in Normandy in 2014 continued in 2015. Then it came back to normal levels for international visitors and reduced for national visitors in 2016. This sharp decrease in the presence of international customers in 2016 resulted from the reduction in the effect of remembrance tourism two years after the anniversary of D-Day, combined with the (perceived) unsafe climate in France in 2016 that resulted from terrorist attacks.

In Normandy, the 2014 WEG was an opportunity to diversify the tourist offer, for example by opening up to products of equestrian tourism. So, the event represented a catalyst to create or accelerate the creation of new products. A mismatch between the demand of high-end tourism and the offer during the event was noticed but it allowed reflection to start on the evolution needed on this matter. Despite some challenges being noted in sustaining certain projects and collaborations formed during the 2014 WEG, various innovations and actor networks were reused in new projects. However, lack of collaboration with the organizing authorities is regretted by the tourist actors.

15.4 Comparison Between the 2014 WEG and Landsmót 2016

15.4.1 Two apparently very different events

At first glance, the 2014 WEG and Landsmót 2016 appear as very different events.

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Focused on different objects

The 2014 WEG focused on sport performance. The event grouped together in one place and over a given period the championships of the eight equestrian disciplines that are recognized by the International Equestrian Federation (FEI). They replace the world championships in each discipline in the year they take place. They gather spectators coming to attend a sporting show with human and horse athletes.

Landsmót has the top human and horse athletes of this field in Iceland, but it is not only an elite sports competition. It is also a breeding show that focuses on a specific horse breed – the Icelandic horse. The image of this event is largely attached to Iceland as a country and is embedded in national equestrian traditions and national culture. The event is associated with a social and cultural festival, celebrating aspects of Icelandic culture and heritage. Consequently, it contributes to (re)constructing national identity and supports inbound tourism. Landsmót attendees are looking for authenticity and a common interest in the Icelandic horse. They experience inclusion in the 'world of the Icelandic horse' through the event.

Different geographical scales and regularities

Both Landsmót and the WEG are major events. However, the 2014 WEG involved far more people than Landsmót, with 30 times more spectators. Moreover, Landsmót operates largely on a national scale, touring around different places in Iceland, whereas the WEG is an international event hosted at a different place in the world each time. Consequently, the 2014 WEG was a one-shot event for Normandy. Moreover, one specificity of the 2014 WEG is that it was a multi-site event, organized in several sites around Normandy.

The WEG were first organized in 1990. They are thus more recent than Landsmót, whose first event was in 1950. They are both long-duration events, as the WEG goes on for two weeks and Landsmót for one week. The regularity of these two events is not the same: Landsmót is a biennial event whereas the WEG takes place every 4 years.

15.4.2 Two events that actually have a lot in common

Despite these obvious differences, Landsmót and the 2014 WEG have some major characteristics in common.

Major equestrian events hosted in equestrian areas

These two events have strong identities and are well known. As stated above, on their own geographical scales, they are both major events.

Landsmót and the 2014 WEG are both equestrian events organized in equestrian areas. Consequently, they rely on local communities and values and they benefit from the support of local inhabitants and politics. However, their link to the local area is quite different. The 2014 WEG is not, as Landsmót, a product of the local culture, associated with a local area, a local breed and local traditions. It was nevertheless an opportunity to highlight the equine culture of Normandy.

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Gathering of horse lovers, experts and novices

Both events attracted horse lovers, who were looking for lived experiences with horses and horse people. However, with 30 times fewer spectators but only two times fewer horses than the 2014 WEG, we can see how far Landsmót is organized around the horse. This is also underlined by the high presence of breeders at Landsmót and the focus on a specific breed. There is a historic significance of the venue and links to the horse community. However, these events are both essential, Landsmót for breeders and high-level riders within the Icelandic horse culture and the WEG for international elite riders.

Even if these events attract horse lovers and experts, they are also of interest for novices; among them are local residents who take part in this event as a family outing. Thus, they create an opportunity to spread equine culture.

Actors in regional development

These two events contribute to regional development in different ways. First, they generate monetary injection coming from investment and expenses of the different stakeholders of the event. This money generates added value for the local area and economic dynamism. Secondly, these events attract tourists. Some of them just come for the event and will not come back later but others take advantage of their trip to stay longer and visit the region. For example, Landsmót is important for equestrian tourism in Iceland as many of the international visitors stay longer and go for riding tours of several days during their stay. Moreover, some tourists will even come back later for other occasions. So, these events generate tourism development. Thirdly, both events contribute to constructing the image of the region. As they are equestrian events organized in equestrian areas, they impact the destination image and the promotion of the area. This effect is far more important for Landsmót, because it is a recurrent event in Iceland, highly linked to local culture.

Promotion of horse-related activities

Landsmót and the 2014 WEG promote the local horse industry, but in different ways. The 2014 WEG has not had the anticipated effect on horse riding practice in France or in Normandy. The event has had more impact on Normandy's image, confirming its trait as an 'equestrian area', at local, national and international levels, particularly among local authorities and professionals within the horse industry, and particularly for the high-level sport and breeding sectors. Landsmót also contributes to (re)constructing the image of the region and the country but in a more profound and long-lasting way, as it is a recurrent event associated with local culture, traditions and the horse breed. It is highly influential on the destination image and tourism motivations. It also impacts the local horse industry through the promotion of the local breed, the gathering of professionals and breeders and the highlighting of local equestrian traditions.

15.5 Conclusion

Major equestrian events such as Landsmót and the 2014 WEG have various impacts for the local area and contribute to regional development. First, they generate economic

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impact and monetary influx. Second, they create social utility and wellbeing, through spectator and local resident satisfaction. They contribute to tourism promotion and the image of the region, creating a local identity linked to horses. They do lead to some negative environmental impacts but they also provide the opportunity to take into account the growing environmental issues in order to raise awareness and be an example for good practice.

It is necessary to underline the importance of visitor and inhabitant experience to the success of these events and consequently the major role of events management. Actions have to be implemented with sustainability in mind, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects. When managed effectively, these events can be perceived positively, at national and international levels. They highlight the expertise of the organizers and the innovative character of the event, in the current context of sustainability awareness. Finally, they could be an incentive for politicians to give more support to such events, and to enlighten decision making to welcome equestrian events to regions and countries.

The comparison between Landsmót and the 2014 WEG shows that, although there are some major differences in the two events (particularly in scale), many common aspects of equestrian events can be developed further to contribute to greater sustainability of local and national areas, as well as to the development of equestrian sport.

15.6 Implications

- Promoting how equestrian events are deeply embedded in local cultural and sporting traditions enhances their contribution to regional development.
- The success of equestrian events relies on both visitor and resident experiences, which underlines the importance of taking these target groups into account as much as possible in the event's management.
- Event organizers should focus more on the implementation of good economic, social and environmental practices than on measuring event impacts.

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16 Landsmót: A Short Documentary

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In the year 2016 I had the opportunity to travel, along with a group of academics, to Hólar in Iceland. The aim of the journey was to conduct research on Landsmót, a biennial gathering for horses and humans. Being a photographer and filmmaker, mostly working with documentary film, I saw this as an opportunity to research and film the crowd that gathers for this event, focusing on the special atmosphere, the audience and the volunteers that keep things running. In the film, I follow a couple of volunteers through their core activities: the young woman from the Netherlands who has a passion for the Icelandic horse and therefore travels to Iceland on her own to experience and participate in this event; and the bishop of North Iceland whose official role is to bless the event, dressed in her cassock, but later on appears on 'toilet duty' with fellow members of the Women's Association in Hólar, to clean and tidy up the lavatories.

Those are the main characters in the film, but we also meet the competitors, both first timers and veterans. We pick up on the loaded atmosphere in the stables just before competition and witness the endless training and work that is essential for both horses and humans during the event. And last but not least I try to catch the special bond that exists between the horses and the equestrians.

In my earlier documentary work, I have mostly started with a clear idea and view of how to approach the project, and most often with a loosely written script or guide. But here I decided on a different approach. I had never been to an event like this before, at least not one that included horses, but I had some idea of what I could expect. I decided that the best way to gather my material was to mostly film 'fly-on-the-wall' style, i.e. I am not a participant in the event, I mainly gather information with my camera. But I needed some discussion and dialogue, so this approach or camera style is broken up with some direct interviews. Those interviews were conducted by Dr Kari Jæger and are a part of her fieldwork at Landsmót (see Chapter 8, this volume).

The film runs for around five minutes and is provided as supplementary material with this volume. Filming took place at Landsmót 2016, at Hólar in Skagafjörður, Iceland, on 27 June–3 July 2016.

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17 Conclusions: Planning, Managing and Experiencing Equestrian Events

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Abstract

This volume uses a particular equestrian event – Landsmót, the National Championships of the Icelandic horse – as a case to illustrate various aspects of managing and experiencing sports events, their impacts and their legacies. The single event is used as an example from which to explore the different facets of events management, drawing on a range of disciplinary perspectives including sociology, economics, marketing and equitation science. For international comparison the case of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ 2014 in Normandy is used. This chapter summarizes the key findings and the events management implications presented in this volume, and discusses further avenues of research into multispecies events management and equestrian events.

Key words

equestrian sports; events management; festival; human-animal studies; multispecies; research gaps

17.1 Introduction

This book contributes to two fields: events management and human–animal studies. Through the use of a single case study event, researched from different disciplinary perspectives ranging from economics to veterinary science to sociology, authors illustrate different facets of the planning, managing, experiencing and evaluation of an event, considering the perspectives of different stakeholders including the sport governing bodies, host community, volunteers, audience and participants. The chapters in this book represent the first sustained attempt to consider the complexities of multispecies events. Events and tourism have only recently begun to be considered through a multispecies lens (see Dashper and Buchmann, 2020), so this collection makes an important contribution to the wider field of human–animal studies through illustrating the value of multidisciplinary research to consider both the human and nonhuman aspects of (human) leisure, events and tourism. It is also a contribution to the growing body of knowledge on equestrianism as a sub-field of human–animal relations.

The case study used, Landsmót or the National Championships of the Icelandic horse, is a particularly useful example as it bridges several categories of events. It is a sports

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event, a festival, a hallmark event that is both local, national and international, rural and urban, and it is, of course, a multispecies event. It brings together a distinct human event community that refers to itself as 'the world of the Icelandic horse' and the animals that this community is formed around.

The research on Landsmót shows that it does in many ways conform to the definition of a festival proposed by Mair (2018). It is a biennial, week-long event open to the public where Icelandic equestrian culture is performed and celebrated by the community dedicated to the Icelandic horse. Landsmót includes at least three distinct human communities: that of the host community of each event; the community gathered at each event; and the community of Icelandic equestrian sport and breeding more broadly, represented by the horses and riders competing. Landsmót plays an important role both nationally and internationally in sustaining the community around the Icelandic horse, or the 'world of the Icelandic horse'. As the research on Landsmót illustrates, ideas about 'community' surrounding a given event are complex, and always include multiple groups with different stakes and interest in the event.

The discourses on festival research that Getz (2010) identified offer a framework for analysing the different aspects of Landsmót as a festival: the socio-cultural meaning is generally speaking a celebration of horse–human relations as discussed in the section ***The Meanings of the Event*** in this volume (Chapters 10 and 11) and to some extent in the section ***Experiencing the Event*** (Chapters 7–9). The promotion of the Icelandic horse as a breed and its role in nation building and destination image of Iceland could be seen as part of a more instrumental discourse addressed in the section ***The Making of an Event*** (Chapters 2 and 3) and the events management perspective is taken in the section ***Managing the Event*** (Chapters 4–6).

Importantly, Landsmót is an event where several hundred horses are gathered. While the researchers contributing to this volume cannot but indirectly give them a voice, they are the key attraction and a core group at the event. This volume is part of a larger movement in leisure studies that develops a multispecies perspective, where domestic animals are receiving increasing attention (Young and Carr, 2018). The horse, however, is no longer, and perhaps never was, exclusively definable as a domestic animal (Helgadottir, 2006; Vial and Evans, 2015; Sturød *et al*., 2019).

Horses are and have for a long time been partners in human leisure pursuits, either as a worker such as in hunting, or as a partner in travel, sport and tourism. Equestrian sport is a branch of human leisure where horses and humans compete together. Whether contemporary equestrian sports are based on horse–human partnerships, or whether the horse is a commodity for humans in competition, is an open question posed by Dashper (2014). Henderson (2018, p. 166) went as far as to suggest that the competition horse is a pampered prisoner and claimed that 'the psychological and physiological wellbeing of today's sport horse is compromised', especially due to the confined environment, limited social interaction with other horses and regulated diet, in addition to the rigorous exercise and the stress of competition. Equestrian events can thus be understood as both a celebration of interspecies collaboration and a site with potential for animal exploitation, even abuse. To minimize these negative aspects, animal welfare must be a concern for all event managers in multispecies contexts, and the role of veterinarians is crucial (see Chapter 9B, this volume).

Landsmót is of importance to the Icelandic horse as a breed (see Chapter 3, this volume) and the welfare of the horses participating is of paramount importance, as discussed in Chapters 9A and 9B, this volume. The organized community around the breed is dedicated to keeping the Icelandic horse breed pure, and to developing and standardizing the official

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breeding work and competition rules internationally. Training and competition can be stressful for horse and rider, as the respondents in Chapter 11, this volume, explain. Their experience supports the findings of Henderson (2018) on stress factors for horses in competition. Björnsdóttir (Chapter 9B, this volume) explains how physical health and fitness for competition are evaluated at Landsmót and shows an example of how research has led to identification of problems and mitigation through changes in competition rules. Events management in a multispecies context thus involves all the important facets of events management and sports events management more broadly, as discussed by authors including Bowdin *et al.* (2011) and Masterman (2014), but with the added complexities of managing and safeguarding human and nonhuman wellbeing and welfare and interspecies interactions.

The findings and implications of the study on which this book is based can be categorized in many ways, but for events management purposes it is logical to summarize them into the making, management, experiencing, meaning and lasting of events. 'Making' here includes the concept, the planning, existential questions (why, who, where, when and how) of the event, what are the purposes of the event and stakeholder perspectives on means to achieve these as positive impacts. 'Management' refers more to the execution of the event from marketing and venue selection to strategic, logistical and operational aspects of the event. 'Experiencing' focuses on the immediate experience of participation for visitors, volunteers and horses. 'Meaning' refers to the meanings that participants and stakeholders derive from their participation in the event. 'Lasting' is about the long- and short-term economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts or legacies of the event. In the following sections we consider some of the key issues arising from the research reported in previous chapters for each of these categories, both for Landsmót and for other (equestrian) sports events. This is followed by suggestions on future research fields focusing on multispecies sports and events.

17.2 Making Events

A planned event does not spontaneously occur. It is made; conceptualized, planned and executed by and for a community that comes together in time and space for a particular purpose (Shone and Parry, 2004; Getz and Page, 2016). In this volume we have used the case of Landsmót, a biennial equestrian sports event, to show how a community instigates and develops an event and how the event contributes to strengthening that community and serving its mission, in this case the breeding, training and welfare of the Icelandic horse.

Landsmót is a historically important event in the history of equestrian sports in general and Icelandic equestrianism in particular. Hannesson (Chapter 2B, this volume) claims that the Icelandic Equestrian Association can trace its beginnings to the planning and execution of the first Landsmót. This reminds us that it is not only through attending events that communities form and strengthen; the conceptualization and execution of an event is in itself an investment in building and sustaining a community. While Landsmót is a national event, the event community reaches beyond the national borders of Iceland to the international community around the Icelandic horse, of which the international governing body, FEIF, is a cornerstone, as is the Icelandic Equestrian Association (IEA) in Iceland. Associations such as FEIF and IEA are cornerstones in the community building and development of the competitions and the celebrations at Landsmót. Events are thus integral to the building and sustaining of communities, bringing people together in a specified time and place. Without these opportunities to meet and share interests and activities

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(such as sports competitions), these communities may be weaker and less cohesive (see Chapter 2, this volume).

An important, if often unacknowledged, stakeholder in any equestrian event is the horse. All equestrian events are organized around human–horse interactions, usually through riding but sometimes also driving and handling from the ground. Different equestrian events are organized around different types of human–horse interactions, from the traditional sports competitions of dressage, show jumping and eventing at the Olympic Games (Bryant, 2008), to the local cultural traditions celebrated at different events around the world (Monterrubio and Pérez, 2020). In the case of Landsmót, activities are based around specific interspecies practices that have developed between humans and one horse breed: the Icelandic. The history, ethology and characteristics of this breed are integral to the event, and to the community that has built up around it, as discussed by Stefánsdóttir and Gunnarsson (Chapter 3, this volume). Many equestrian events are sports events, and so share many of the characteristics of other sports events, but with the important addition of the nonhuman stakeholder, the horse. This adds an extra layer of complexity to equestrian events like Landsmót (see Chapter 5, this volume) but provides a strong focus around which the event community gathers.

Before efforts towards planning an event can occur, there needs to be a group or community for whom that event will have some meaning. The making of an event usually starts within this community, whether real or imagined, and this community continues to support the event throughout all subsequent stages.

17.3 Managing Events

Events are about creating memorable experiences, but to do this solid management and operational practices must be in place. Events are rarely one-off occasions, as even if they do not reoccur in the same format, they are frequently part of a portfolio of events for a city or region (Ziakas, 2013). This volume covers Landsmót from its origin in 1950 until the most recent occurrence in 2018, with emphasis on the past 20 years, particularly the 2016 event, to consider how a recurring event develops and progresses over time. Strategic management tools can be useful for organizers to consider if and how an event contributes to wider objectives – be they of the local town, city, region or even nation, or of the community that supports the event, in this case the 'world of the Icelandic horse'. As a biennial event, every Landsmót is part of a series of events, building on previous occurrences and setting a baseline for future iterations of the event. However, it also travels around Iceland and is not held at the same venue, and so the local organizing committee may be different each time, which has potential to cause some problems. In their discussion of knowledge transfer and the Olympic Games, Parent *et al*. (2014) suggested that event knowledge can be placed on a continuum from explicit to tacit. Such knowledge may often be lost as individuals move on to different projects, so it is important that recurring events consider how learning will be transmitted and acted upon. Steinþórsson and Snorradóttir (Chapter 4, this volume) discuss the value of a strategic management approach to recurring events, highlighting the importance of knowledge sharing and learning from previous iterations of an event, as well as the potential that important tacit knowledge may be lost as the event moves on and comes under the remit of a new management team.

Professional staff are key to the success of an event, but there has been relatively little research conducted on their experiences and competencies. Events like Landsmót operate

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on a pulsating staff structure (Hanlon and Cuskelly, 2002), operating with a small core of staff before expanding rapidly (through the use of volunteers and contract workers, as well as paid staff) before the event and then rapidly contracting again afterwards. The lead event manager at Landsmót 2016 and 2018, Áskell Heiðar Ásgeirsson (Chapter 5, this volume), discusses what it takes to manage an event like Landsmót. He reflects on the process of preparing and executing the event and what has to be taken care of following the event. His discussion illustrates the multifarious roles and the challenges of the event manager, as well as the lessons to be learnt from running the events. No event will run completely smoothly and Ásgeirsson's honest account shows how learning can evolve from successes and failures in the management of an event.

Landsmót is in a sense more than one event, occurring simultaneously. It is a breeding show, a top-tier competitive equestrian sports event and a festival celebrating the Icelandic horse and its equestrian culture. It serves the purpose of celebrating and promoting this particular breed, showcasing its qualities and bringing forth the best breeding and training, recognizing achievements. This aspect of Landsmót relates to the agricultural heritage of horse breeding, which may relate to the affinity that a large part of the target market for the event has for a rural event venue, as discussed by Sigurðardóttir (Chapter 6, this volume). Good facilities for humans and horses during the event are essential, which perhaps favours urban venues where accommodation for more visitors is nearer than in most rural settings. Events often provide a focus for communities – be they geographical, or more interest-based – to congregate, maintaining traditions as well as developing new practices. It is important that event managers understand who their target markets are and what they want from the event if that event is to be successful. Looking into an event's competitiveness is also of importance for event managers, as multifarious factors, such as segmentation, marketing, venue selection and service quality, can affect the competitiveness of events. Different target groups should also be considered when planning an event; as in the case of Landsmót, international visitors have different expectations than domestic ones and different target groups may prefer urban versus rural settings for the event (Snorradóttir, 2010; Helgadóttir and Dashper, 2016; see also Chapter 6, this volume).

17.4 Experiencing Events

Berridge (2012, p.274) argued that 'Modern events management is largely about delivery of experiences', yet experience is a complicated concept that is both personal and social, and very difficult to measure. The majority of research on event experiences has focused on customer/attendee experience, coming largely from a marketing perspective, but research on the demand side of events, i.e. visitor expectations, experiences and satisfaction, has been more limited. Sigurðardóttir and Pétursdóttir (Chapter 7, this volume) analyse visitor experience and satisfaction at three Landsmót events: 2014 in Hella, 2016 in Hólar and 2018 in Reykjavík. Visitor experience and satisfaction varied between the three events, indicating that the planning and implementation of the event was improving as the visitors to the last two events reported higher levels of satisfaction than visitors to the earlier event. This illustrates the importance of taking care of service design and delivery at (horse) sports events, where both tangible and intangible factors affect visitor experience.

However, event attendees are not the only important stakeholder to consider in relation to experiences. Many sports events, including Landsmót, could not run without the important contribution of volunteers. Allen and Shaw (2009) suggested that volunteers at

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smaller sports events are motivated largely by intrinsic factors, such as connection to the activity or community, and the same is true for many of the volunteers at Landsmót, as illustrated by Jæger and Helgadóttir (Chapter 8, this volume). Landsmót volunteers can be split into two groups: international volunteers, participating through their love of the Icelandic horse and their involvement in this international community, and local community group volunteers, participating in support of their member organization and with possibly little interest in the event programme (see also Chapter 16, this volume). Research has shown that management of volunteers is often poor, even though they are such a valuable resource (Shone and Parry, 2004; Allen and Bartle, 2014), and Haanpää (2017) illustrated the importance of fun and meaningful experiences to the satisfaction and retention of event volunteers. Understanding why volunteers are involved with an event is important for ensuring that their experiences are meaningful and worthwhile, which will help develop solid plans for volunteer recruitment and retention.

Landsmót is a multispecies event and so any consideration of event experiences should try to account, at least to some extent, for the experiences of the horse. Welfare of horses in leisure and sports activities remains an under-researched field (Danby, 2018). As is suggested by Sigurðardóttir (Chapter 9A, this volume), horse welfare in events, sport and leisure is an issue that relates to different stakeholders such as competitors, horse owners, trainers and event managers. To assess horse welfare at events and sport, a veterinary examination is needed. As is pointed out by Björnsdóttir (Chapter 9B, this volume), veterinary examination of competition horses prior to every entrance to the track at Landsmót is of importance and has provided valuable data for welfare assessment which has been used for improvements of rules within the discipline for the benefit of competition horses. However, despite improvements in horse welfare at Landsmót, further research on welfare of competition horses is needed.

17.5 Meanings of Events

If events are all about experiences, then this is because those experiences are meaningful to different stakeholders within the event community. As Green and Chalip (1998, p. 281) noted in relation to sport event tourism, 'Activities are chosen not merely because they are enjoyable, but because they make a statement about the kind of person the participant is.' Events like Landsmót are fun for participants, and offer opportunities for socializing and relaxing with family and friends, as well as providing business opportunities for some (breeders and competitors). Attending Landsmót is thus a statement of identity and belonging to the 'world of the Icelandic horse'. Helgadottir and Dashper (2016) argued that attendance at Landsmót, and what participants wear and do when they are there, are markers of 'insider' status in the event community. Attending the event is a key way to show this belonging and differentiate 'insiders' from 'outsiders' in the 'world of the Icelandic horse'. Through attending events, wearing specific clothing, using the 'correct' terminology and connecting with others, individuals express their identity. As such, events provide 'a subcultural space in which to instantiate a shared (and valued) identity' (Green and Chalip, 1998, p. 287).

Expressions of identity and meaning are often performed at the event, but also continue outside the confined time and space of any iteration of an event. Hannam and Halewood (2006, p.25) highlighted the importance of the internet for (re)constructing, performing and consuming subcultural identities beyond the event space, as 'Through the

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internet, collective identity and group solidarity is recognised, defined and maintained outside the festival arena itself'. Heldt Cassell (Chapter 10, this volume) illustrates how identity in relation to Landsmót is performed on Instagram. Landsmót lasts for just one week every two years, yet community members can continue to construct their identities in relation to the event and associated community in the in-between times, through interactions on social media. In such ways, the internet helps expand the reach of the event and connects the community. Heldt Cassell argues that Instagram posts illustrate how participants construct meanings in relation to the event, linked to the Icelandic horse, to Iceland as a country, to the outdoors and nature, and in relation to other equestrians who are positioned as strong, capable and independent. Events are thus important opportunities for identity construction and performance.

The event space is complex and not limited just to the physical site and time of the event itself, as analyses of social media use illustrate. However, even within the time and space confines of the event, spaces take on different meanings and provide opportunities for different types of interactions, including, in the case of multispecies events, between humans and animals. Dashper (Chapter 11, this volume) uses Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical concepts of 'front stage', 'backstage' and 'offstage' to consider the different types of interspecies encounters that can occur around a multispecies event site. Equestrian events like Landsmót are all about human–horse interactions, primarily through riding, but opportunities for interspecies encounters are often confined to a limited number of (human) event participants (primarily riders, breeders, owners and grooms) and are highly managed. This is important to maximize safety and wellbeing of both humans and horses, and to ensure that valuable competition horses are protected and able to perform to their best. However, as spectators at equestrian events are usually horse enthusiasts, it is important that event managers think about how to enable some interaction between spectators and horses and to maximize opportunities to showcase the horses and their abilities. The multispecies aspects of equestrian events are meaningful for (human) attendees, and programme and site design can be managed to maximize opportunities for interaction and satisfying experiences.

Ziakas and Costa (2010, p. 9) described a rural event as 'a symbolic social space wherein event participants and attendees embody the shared meanings, ideals and attitudes of the community', blending sport, culture, tradition and entertainment. Ásvaldsdóttir's film of Landsmót 2016 (see Chapter 16, this volume, and additional resources) gives a sense of the richness of the event from a variety of perspectives. This additional resource provides a visual accompaniment to the written discussions throughout this volume, showing the importance of visual methods for events management research.

17.6 Lasting Events

An event not only leaves fleeting impressions among those who have attended the event in time and space, it also affects a larger community over time. The concept of 'legacy' has received scholarly attention in the context of mega-events hosted in urban centres (Thomson *et al*., 2019). Helgadóttir and Dashper (Chapter 14, this volume) argue that the concept is also relevant to other types of event hosted in rural regions, where hosting the event has potential to prompt significant investment and lead to tangible and intangible benefits for the local community.

Landsmót leaves a legacy not only in the equestrian community, as described by Helgadóttir and Dashper (Chapter 14, this volume), but also in the local communities that

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host the event. Immediately apparent are the infrastructure improvements that remain, while other aspects of the legacy include pride of place in hosting a successful event (see Chapter 13, this volume). Affective impacts are also important to event legacy, creating a sense of pride and confidence that can inspire future activities. Another intangible heritage of events is their contribution to the development of transferable knowledge for managers, workers and volunteers (see Chapters 5 and 8, this volume), which can contribute to long-term impacts and legacy.

Alves *et al.* (2010) suggested that events can have significant benefits for small rural communities, with the social impacts often outweighing the economic ones. In the case of Landsmót, hosting an event that attracted about 8000 human and 800 equine guests to Skagafjörður in North Iceland, a municipality with a population of only approximately 4000 residents, had significant impacts for this small rural community. As Sigurðardóttir (Chapter 13, this volume) argues, this made Landsmót a very significant event for the region and most local inhabitants were affected in some way, even if they had no interest in horses and the event, as it was also an opportunity to socialize and welcome friends to their homes. However, as Heldt (Chapter 12, this volume) illustrates, Landsmót also had a significant economic impact on the region and the country, bringing in additional spending of approximately one million euros. Economic impacts of events have been widely researched, as it is necessary for organizers, regions and nations to evidence the economic benefits of hosting events in order to secure investment and support (Dwyer *et al.*, 2006). Heldt (Chapter 12, this volume) explains some of the principles and practices of economic impact analysis (EIA) that can be applied to events like Landsmót to help illustrate the economic contribution that such events make to regions and communities.

The main empirical focus of research in this book is Landsmót, which has been used as a vehicle to explore many aspects of events management and experience. Although Landsmót has many distinct features in terms of focus (it is a multispecies event, but focused on just one breed of horse, the Icelandic horse), history (see Chapters 2 and 3, this volume), ties to Icelandic culture, geography and tourism, among other features, it also has many commonalities with other types of sports events in general, and equestrian sports events specifically, making the discussion presented throughout the volume relevant to the wider field of events management. Vial and Barget (Chapter 15, this volume) make a direct comparison between Landsmót and another major global equestrian event, the World Equestrian Games (WEG). The WEG is a complex multispecies elite sporting event, bringing together eight equestrian disciplines under the remit of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI). Vial and Barget report on impact analyses conducted on the 2014 WEG, which took place in Normandy in France. Their wide-ranging analysis of the 2014 WEG covers economic, social and environmental impacts, and includes consideration of the effects of the event on both the horse and tourism industries. They conclude that although Landsmót and the WEG have some clear differences in terms of focus, location, scale and culture, they have more similarities, showing how research that is focused on one specific event, Landsmót in the case of this book, has wider relevance to other events of different scale and focus.

17.7 Future Research Directions

Research on multispecies events is in its infancy and to date there are only a handful of studies that apply a multispecies lens to events management or consider how human–animal

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interactions manifest in event spaces (e.g. Dashper and Brymer, 2019; Dashper and Buchmann, 2020; Monterrubio and Perez, 2020). This volume thus marks an important step forward in understanding multispecies events, but there are many areas that remain under-researched.

Over recent decades horses have increasingly become workers in the leisure industry, at the same time as they are, to many equestrians, a companion (see Dashper, 2020). Equestrianism and equestrian sports are on the rise and events and festivals have become a major industry. This volume has articulated how multifaceted an equestrian sports event is as a high-pressure working venue for the events management staff, for the riders and last but not least for the horses, at the same time as providing a leisure space for visitors. Veterinary and equine science have indicated that competition and travelling to events can be stressful for horses (e.g. Fazio *et al*., 2008; Bartolomé and Cockram, 2016). Dashper (2016) discussed stress and anxiety in horses and riders at competitive events from a social science perspective, but there is need for more interdisciplinary research to consider how horses and their human companions experience and respond to the sights, sounds, smells and demands of equestrian events, which could then inform events management research on site design, provision of horse facilities and the event programme.

Another key issue that requires more research in relation to multispecies events is the impact of disease. Final editing of this volume took place during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 that brought events around the world to a standstill. From the postponement (and possible cancellation) of the Tokyo Olympic Games, to the banning of large public gatherings in numerous different countries, events proved particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic and associated limitations on travel. Landsmót 2020 suffered the same fate and this became the first time in the event's 70-year history that it was cancelled outright. Only once previously had Landsmót been postponed: the 2010 event was delayed for one year due to an outbreak of a contagious respiratory disease among the horse population in Iceland (Björnsdóttir *et al*., 2017). Disease within both human and animal populations can thus have profound impacts on multispecies events. For example, in 2019 an outbreak of equine influenza brought the UK horse industry – including the lucrative racing sector – to a temporary halt. Disease does not even need to directly affect the species of animal involved in a multispecies event for it to impact those events, as the cancellation of all equestrian events in response to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the UK in 2001 illustrated. Although horses cannot catch foot-and-mouth disease, they can transmit it, and so all movement of horses was halted. Disease – whether that be human or nonhuman – has potential to decimate events. Future research will need to consider how the events industry tries to prepare for outbreaks of human or animal disease and what this might mean for event design, for example in terms of attempting to limit transmission.

Multispecies events are based around some form of human–animal interaction. As the chapters in this volume illustrate, this is often based on human admiration and love for those animals (see Chapter 11, this volume) and animal welfare is a key consideration (see Chapters 9A and 9B, this volume). However, involving animals in events is problematic and raises numerous ethical questions that need to be addressed. Horse racing has received the most attention in this respect, with research considering issues like public perceptions of the use of the whip (Graham and McManus, 2016) and the applicability of the concept of a 'social licence to operate' (Heleski *et al*., 2020). Media analyses have shown the prevalence of public outrage at animal suffering at events like horse and greyhound racing (Markwell *et al*., 2017). However, there is need for more research to consider ethical issues beyond the obviously shocking (and of course unacceptable) injury and death of animals

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at events and to question issues such as if and how events contribute to interspecies understanding and what moral and ethical responsibilities rest with human event stakeholders, from event managers, to riders and grooms/handlers, to audience members and sponsors.

Events are complex logistical operations and in a multispecies context this is made even more challenging by the presence of nonhuman animals with different needs, dispositions and responses to human event attendees. Much more research is needed on the logistical and operational aspects of multispecies events. Dashper and Buchmann's (2020) research on endurance riding events illustrates various ways in which the presence of large numbers of horses and humans together at very basic event sites (often little more than a field) poses logistical challenges in order to manage the space to the benefit of both human and animal guests, especially when environmental factors such as high temperatures or extreme weather cause extra disruption. Dashper and Brymer (2019) proposed the efficacy of an ecological–phenomenological approach to understanding the complex interactions between humans, animals and the environment within event contexts. Greater understanding of how to manage logistical and operational issues of multispecies events is important if such events are to be successful and may be particularly vital in relation to major and mega-events. The equestrian disciplines of dressage, show-jumping and eventing are long-standing sports on the Olympic programme, which brings much-needed media attention and public funding to those sports. However, their future position is not guaranteed. In 2008, the equestrian events took place in Hong Kong, nearly 2000 km away from the heart of the Games in Beijing, due to quarantine and animal health concerns with bringing large numbers of extremely valuable horses to mainland China. This undoubtedly affected the experience of equestrian athletes at the 2008 Games and opened up questions about the role of equestrian sport in the Olympics (Dashper, 2012). As equestrian sports gain in popularity amongst the growing middle class in China, quarantine exclusion zones have been established around Shanghai, permitting the occurrence of major global events like the show-jumping Global Champions Tour, but challenges remain around hosting equestrian events in some regions.

Even when there are no restrictions to travel and entrance of horses to an area, equestrian events still pose complex logistical challenges for events management teams. The World Equestrian Games (WEG) illustrates this (see Chapter 15, this volume). The eighth and most recent occurrence of the WEG was at Tryon in the USA in 2018 and involved 718 human athletes and 686 horses, representing 67 countries, and included eight world championships (FEI, 2020). The event was beset with challenges, including the arrival of hurricane Florence, delays with construction of facilities and the controversial cancellation of the endurance world championships (due to extreme weather and horse welfare concerns, according to the FEI) (Bryant, 2018). Previous iterations of the WEG have also been plagued by problems ranging from poor food, substandard accommodation and parking issues, to high ticket prices and financial unsustainability. President of the organizing committee for the 2018 WEG, Michael Stone, who is highly experienced in running equestrian events, commented: 'I think the WEG is a very, very challenging product. I'm not convinced in its current format anyone can do it. It's a huge undertaking … Everything falls on the organizer. It not only is a financial burden, but it is also an enormous logistical burden' (quoted in Jaffer, 2018). The WEG is a large and complex event, but operational challenges can easily beset smaller events as well, particularly when something goes wrong. All events face multiple risks and have risk assessment and management strategies in place. These apply to equestrian events, but with the added complication of how to manage many, often highly valuable horses in peak physical condition. For example, on New Year's

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Eve 2017, the final day of the Liverpool International Horse Show in the UK was underway when a huge fire broke out in the nearby multistorey car park, leading to the cancellation of the show and the evacuation of about 80 horses from the city centre venue. No horses or humans were hurt, but the incident highlights some of the extra challenges that can occur when crises hit multispecies events – issues that warrant further research.

Our suggestions for areas for future research are by no means exhaustive, and we urge other researchers to explore a variety of issues in relation to equestrian and other types of multispecies events. As a contribution to the field of equestrian sports and equestrian events, this book provides a foundation for further research to inform the development of equestrian events management that is sustainable for horses and humans. This volume provides a substantial contribution to developing knowledge on events management in a multispecies context and we hope it stimulates debate and further scholarship within this emerging field.

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Glossary

Bit - a piece of metal or other material that fits into the horse's mouth and is a means through which the rider or handler communicates with the horse.

BLUP score - Best Linear Unbiased Prediction. E.g. used for prediction of the genetic value of breeding horses, both in regard to riding abilities and conformation.

Breeding show/ breed evaluation field test - an exhibition and evaluation of purebred horses according to the breeding standards.

Breeding track - a 250-300m straight track where the breeding shows take place at Landsmót.

Farmers Association of Iceland - Bændasamtök Íslands is the umbrella organisation representing farmers' professional interests. Under this umbrella are associations and individuals from various sectors within agriculture, such as the Horse Breeders Association of Iceland.

FEIF - the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, representing Icelandic Horse associations in 21 countries. (Icelandic: Alheimssamtök Íslandshestafélaga)

Flying pace - An almost two beat symmetric gait, but more often slightly four-beat, with suspension, where ipsilateral legs move together. The sequence of the legs is left hindleg and left frontleg together, suspension, right hindleg and right frontleg together.

Gæðingakeppni - a special and traditional gait competition for Icelandic horses, where the goal is to find the horse which performs best in the gaits according to special rules. Gæðingakeppni is divided into A-class (five-gaited) and B-class (four-gaited) gæðinga for adults, and classes for children (10-13 years old), teenagers (14-17 years old) and young adults (18-21 years old).

Gait - all breeds of horses display four basic gaits or paces - walk, trot, canter and gallop.

Gaited competition - a competition of four and/or five gaited horses where the emphasis is on evaluating the quality of the gaits (e.g. tölt and flying pace).

Gaited horse - a horse breed that can, in addition to walk, trot and gallop/canter, perform pace and/or one of the ambling gaits, that is 4-beat gait such as tölt.

Gelding - castrated male horse.

Hólar - Hólar in Hjaltadalur is one of the Icelandic nation's principal historical, cultural, and ecclesiastical sites. It is the home to Hólar University main campus, where the Departments of Equine Science and Rural Tourism are located. Hólar lies in the municipality of Skagafjörður in Northern Iceland.

Horse Breeders Association of Iceland - (Icelandic: Félag hrossabænda, FHB). Is a member association of The Farmers' Association of Iceland. The Horse Breeders Association of Iceland consists of 9 local associations open to all those engaged in breeding of the Icelandic horse in that particular area (membership fee applies).

Horse gatherings - in Northern Iceland mares, foals and growing young horses (e.g. geldings) spend late summer in common mountain pastures. They are gathered, sorted at a corral and herded back to the farm in autumn.

Ice tölt - a competition in the gait tölt which takes place on ice, either outdoors or at an indoor ice rink.

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Icelandic Equestrian Association (IEA) - the National Equestrian Association, representing 44 riding-clubs in Iceland. IEA is a member of the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Association (FEIF) and the National Olympic and Sports Association of Iceland (ÍSÍ). (Icelandic: Landssamband hestamannafélaga, LH).

Landsmót - the National Championships of the Icelandic horse. A biennial event that takes place at different locations around Iceland. (Icelandic: Landsmót hestamanna, LM).

Main track - the oval track (see below) where the main competitions take place at Landsmót.

Mare - female horse.

Oval track - most competitions involving the Icelandic horse take place on a 250m or 300m oval track.

Riding clubs - local equestrian clubs, which are members of the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations (FEIF) and the Icelandic Equestrian Association (IEA).

Tölt - a four-beat symmetric gait, preferably with even intervals between hoof placement and with one and two legs always on the ground, i.e. without a suspension. A gait displayed by the Icelandic horse and some other gaited breeds.

Trot - a 2-beat diagonal gait displayed by all horses.

Skagafjörður - a region and municipality in Northern Iceland.

Stallion - male horse.

World Championships of the Icelandic horse - a biennial event that takes place at different locations in Europe, outside Iceland. Competition is according to the FEIF Sport Rules and Regulations (Icelandic: Heimsmeistaramót íslenska hestsins, HM).

World Equestrian Games (WEG) - the FEI World Equestrian Games are a major international championship for equestrianism, and are administered by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI). The games are held every four years.

WorldFengur - the international studbook for the Icelandic horse breed.

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Humans, Horses and Events Management

Edited by Katherine Dashper, Guðrún Helgadóttir, and Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir

Horses are perhaps the most common non-human animal to feature in planned events, but although there is considerable research on equestrian sport, there is virtually none on equestrian events. This book begins to address this gap, using the National Championships of the Icelandic Horse as an extended case study to explain in depth the process of managing an event, as well as the larger theoretical implications of events management.

Drawing on diverse viewpoints and theoretical perspectives, the book draws wider comparisons to connect events management to larger themes in the social sciences, such as human–animal relations; nationalism; place branding; event impacts; event experience; and inclusion and exclusion. The book is a contribution to two fields. In relation to human–animal studies, it focuses on how the Icelandic horse breed is marketed and celebrated through top-tier competition; whereas from an events management perspective, it considers the role of the event in community building, the practical and theoretical aspects of running a sustainable equestrian event, and the issues that arise in multispecies event contexts.

This book:

- Uniquely draws together events management and human–animal studies.
- Is formed from empirical research conducted by a multinational team of events management and tourism researchers.
- Uses a single, extended case study to explore a range of themes and issues, both empirically and theoretically.

A valuable resource for researchers of events management, human–animal studies and tourism, this book also provides an in-depth look at end-to-end events management for industry professionals.

Front cover image: Henk Peterse. Landsmót 2018 in Reykjavík: Sigur from Stóra-Vatnsskarð, rider Árni Björn Pálsson and Lukku-Láki from Stóra-Vatnsskarð, rider Hinrik Bragason.

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