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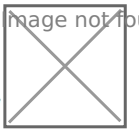
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HOW CAN SPLIT BENEFIT FROM HOSTING SPORT EVENTS?

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Abstract

Major sports events are a double edge sword as they produce large revenues, but can become a liability, if the built venues are not properly used and maintained. This content analysis study shows that Split, Croatia achieved a great success by hosting Mediterranean games in 1979 through the building of the sports and accompanying infrastructure, which has fallen into neglect in the last few decades. The current opportunities of larger scale sports events in Split fall mainly in the area of those relatively smaller in size (marathons, duathlons, etc.), accompanied by hallmark events of other nature which all should serve as a chance for building capacities for hosting major sport events in the more distant future.

Keywords: *sport events, sports infrastructure, infrastructure sustainability, hallmark events, Split*

Introduction

From all different kind of events, sport events are still in the leading position when it comes to enthusiasm and passion. International competition between individuals, trying to be the best in what they do, can hardly be compared to any other event in terms of drama and appeal, which makes this type of event quite unique. The next question is what makes an international sport event a real successful global sports sensation? There are two answers to that question: single sport and multi-sport attributes, and they are similar although different in scope. At a single sport event like master tennis tournament where the ultimate goal is to win the most prestigious trophy (i.e. Wimbledon, Roland Garros, etc.), athletes sometimes start to think about retirement after they have achieved their ultimate goal. On the other side, a multi-sport event such as the FIFA World Cup or the Summer- and Winter- Olympics are on a completely different level. In those cases, it is not only about individual athletes, because they represent

their native countries, which makes it even more entertaining and enchanting for the public. (Clark, 2008)

The distinction between single- and multi-sport events is made for a valid reason. These events do not face the same challenges, risks and benefits. It is reasonable that hosting a multi-sport event such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games is more expensive and that there are more complications involved than hosting a single-sport event. (Clark, 2008) Therefore, it would be advisable to shed some light on the challenges, risks and benefits for countries and/or cities hosting sport events.

It is evident that hosting major sport events can bring the hosting countries many benefits in the short term. That is why hosting countries need to plan ahead and use that opportunity to make such an event profitable in the long run. Events such as the FIFA World Cup are improving the infrastructure of the hosting countries, promote international exposure and increase business partnerships and tourism. (Hall, 2018)

We have seen it many times. Every four years when the FIFA World Cup takes place, many things must be done in the hosting countries in order to stage such an event. Many stadiums must be built from scratch or refurbished in order to meet the FIFA standards. There is no doubt that new stadiums will be a huge assistance for all professional athletes in the host country or city, but we should not forget that infrastructure presents durable and fixed assets which need long-term planning and management with sustainability being one of the first priorities. (Clark, 2008)

1) **Infrastructure**

A crucial point is the high opportunity cost in the sense that large sums of money invested into the sport facilities and related infrastructure bring reductions in other public services.

Another aspect would be larger amounts of governments borrowing, higher taxation or both, which are necessary to finance the investments. (Aragao, 2015)

In 2014, when Brazil was the hosting country of the World Cup, some very controversial decisions were made by the Brazilian government. According to the FIFA standards, a hosting country must provide ten or twelve stadiums. The government decided to go with twelve stadiums apparently because of the famous saying: "Brazil is a football country". Besides that, they reconstructed one stadium in their capital Brasilia and increased its capacity to 71.000 people. None of the city teams in Brasilia are a part of the country's highest league, which means that the stadium will not be used as much as it is needed. This causes sustainability problems, because the costs of maintaining the stadium cannot be covered just by one or two concerts that will take place. These are not isolated cases, as other Brazilian cities, such as Manaus and Cuiaba, are facing the same problems. (Aragao, 2015)

2) Economic impact

According to De Aragao (2015), the FIFA World Cup 2014 injected USD 13.43 billion in the entire Brazilian economy. The estimated amount that was put only into the tourism sector was approximately USD 3 billion, generated by 3.7 million local and foreign tourists during the FIFA World Cup. Besides that, the World Cup created a lot of new job opportunities. One million of new jobs and 710.000 of those permanent and 200.000 on a temporary basis.

The President of Embratur (Brazilian Tourism Institute), Vincente Neto, subsequently pointed out that Brazil became a prominent venue for global events and that the FIFA World Cup was crucial for their nation's tourism. Brazil was able to position themselves ten positions higher in raking of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) in 2013 relative to the 2003 position. They are ranked number nine among all other countries hosting the largest conferences and conventions in the world, which is a major achievement especially

thinking in the long run. The numbers that they achieved are quite incredible, as the number of hosted events rose 62 to 315. (eTN - Global Travel Industry News, 2014)

What happened in Brazil was very similar to what happened four years earlier in South Africa. Both are developing countries and facing very similar problems in development and civil governance. The endemic and rampant corruption is certainly not making things easier, nor are the revolving issues of underdeveloped health care and education. The huge amount of money invested into the sport and accompanying infrastructure could have been rerouted in those sectors, and probably the effects would have been much greater. Generally speaking, we can say that such major sport events bring major benefits, but also challenges and controversies in terms of long-term sustainability and wealth distribution. In order to make the investments sustainable and successful in the long run, one of the key aspects and goals should be to build a legacy, image and content that will increase the number of return tourism and thus provide a revenue stream ensuring sustainability and development. (Aragao, 2015) In that way, the new infrastructure would become the engine of development, rather than an underused, collapsing liability, only symbolizing the bleak socio-economic picture through the “ruin porn” meme.

After showing some examples of mega sport events, like the FIFA World Cup and revealing some benefits, challenges and risks of those mega events, we want to shift our focus toward the small and medium scale events. They are facing similar problems as mega sport events, but also differ in several aspects, as they bring less people, smaller profits, limited media exposure, fewer sponsors, more limited budget, etc. In the following paragraphs, we will investigate the positive aspects for cities hosting small and medium scale events but will also shed light to the challenging elements.

There are several things that must be considered before hosting an event in order to improve its financial benefits. If there is a possibility (and normally there is) to host more than one event with the same infrastructure at precisely the same time, this opportunity should be exploited. These events would not necessarily share the same content, i.e. a sport event could be accompanied by a trade fair, but would share the same infrastructure, logistics and momentum, and would add energy to one another thus boosting the end results. Some would think that such organizational maneuver would be complicated, expensive and risky, but in reality, it could make a lot of sense. It is possible to use the same venue, hotels, transportation lines, etc. including the mobilized logistics for both events, which means the initial costs can be shared. This approach is very attractive to hosting cities at first, but is very challenging to accomplish, because it involves a lot of complex planning. However, if handled correctly, it does bring crucial benefits and is very important to mention. (Clark, 2008)

Whatever our dilemmas may be, it is crucial to understand that large scale event organization must be properly prepared because its success or failure will define the city's image in the global public eye and, consequently, is very important for the city to attract new travelers and have the long-lasting return tourism in the future.

In order to address this issue, we should take a look at the cities that host the same event every year and ask ourselves if small or mid-scale sport events can profit from those events which are already globally known and established?

There are the so called "hallmark-events", which essentially are brands in themselves and thus contributing to the local economy and brand of the host city, by attracting the massive tourist revenues and a strong sense of local pride and international recognition. One out of many events would be the Carnival in Rio, Oktoberfest in Munich or Wimbledon tennis tournament in London, etc. These events are hosted every year and bring in large numbers of visitors,

serve as the engine of local development and bring international recognition. For example, many people world-wide would immediately associate Rio with carnival, Munich with beer festival and London with the green grass of the Wimbledon tennis courts. Those cities succeeded in creating a legacy and image that cannot be taken away that easily or copied by other cities. These cities positioned themselves in the sector of "hallmark-events" and when we think about this certain event we also think about the hosting-city. Such truly successful events create the impression that this event could not be organized or hosted in another city, which makes it so unique and special. (Getz, 2007)

In such cases the infrastructural and management challenges do not play the most significant role anymore primarily because the infrastructure and the know-how have long been in existence due to tradition.

Because of the international profile and high-status legacy, the issues of development of infrastructure and even brand recognition, or the know how become secondary. In these cases, cities can create other smaller "satellite" events, which can get a boost from the "hallmark" event, thus create enough traction so they can successfully grow and become established brand on their own in the future. Those cities which have such potential have a big head start, especially in saving costs in marketing, advertising and drawing attention.

After showing above some hopefully interesting general insights, we intend to shift our focus to answering the main research question: How can Split benefit from hosting sport events?

Method

The primary research is going to be based on the content analysis method, which will examine Split and its potential for hosting large sport events. We intend to will investigate major past sport events that created huge positive contributions for the city but will also analyze the

challenges and risks of hosting such events. In this effort, we will predominantly use local newspapers and archives for evaluating Split's hosting sport events potential. Besides that, it will also investigate existing facilities and infrastructure of the city.

In addition, we will conduct a limited look into ethnography, i.e. the practices of culture, behavior, wider functions and outcomes of those events and provide a short interpretation. We will examine how those big events in Split, particularly the MIS 1979, contributed to the redefinition of the local identity, what cultural memes, achievements, etc., made an imprint of on the mentality.

This paper will also identify the crucial points of the interview that has been done with one of the best and most successful event management companies in Split, Karaman Koncert d.o.o. Damir Karaman is without a doubt the number one event planner in Split. His company has been working very successfully for the last 19 years. Due to his experience and knowledge his input offered a lot of useful information and insights about the city of Split, its strengths and also limitations, which will be explained and analyzed later in this paper.

Results

1) ***MIS 1979 – and its major success story***

At the 8th Mediterranean games in Split, 2.698 athletes (out of them 420 women) from 15 countries participated actively in Split. Besides that, 500 referees, 800 administration staff and 1.400 journalists were also involved. In order to accommodate everybody, many facilities had to be built from scratch to be able to host this major event in Split. The Poljud stadium was built in less than 20 months, where approximately 56,000 spectators could fit, according to the original design. Next to the stadium a swimming pool complex with indoor and outdoor pools for athletes was also built in less than 20 months, which is already a huge

accomplishment for the city of Split. The pool complex's capacity is around 2.180 people. In addition, a completely new Sports Center-Gripe was built, which includes several sport halls for basketball, handball, boxing, weight lifting and other sports, mainly martial arts. As the main sport hall was built in a very flexible manner, for every sport, a different number of visitors can be accommodated because each sport playground is of a different size. For example, a basketball game can accommodate around 5.600 people, a handball game around 4.200, while a boxing fight can be watched by as many as 9.000 people. Gripe sports-center was the first of the three main sports facilities that was built for the MIS-1979. It was a 270 million Yugoslav dinar investment (around 52 million USD in today's currency). The whole complex, including the Koteks shopping center, underground parking and reconstruction of the adjacent sport facilities were tagged at 240 million USD in total.

It is important to point out that 100 million out of the 270 million dinars only for the sport hall were secured from the "MIS source". It is not entirely clear what that source is, but our interpretation is that those could be various revenues from the games, including tickets, TV rights, sponsorships, advertising, etc. An old sport hall in the neighborhood was refurbished and made adequate for basketball games. A new scoreboard for that hall was purchased, along with a completely new ventilation system, speakers and dressing rooms for the athletes. (P., 1979)

Another sports facility was refurbished in 1979 for the MIS. It was the stadium of RNK Split, a local second-division soccer club. It was necessary to rebuilt and refurbish the old stadium and provide more seating capacity for visitors. (Pupacic, 1979) In the neighborhood of Firule, the city built eight completely new tennis courts. Besides the eight tennis courts a new 300 square meters building was constructed and grandstands with 1.500 spectator seats.

Besides the sports facilities, other amenities were also built for the MIS. For example, the above mentioned Koteks Shopping Mall, one of the first modern shopping mall in Europe, the passenger terminal in the Split port, new commercial terminal and airport building. The theater building was completely reconstructed, as well as Hotels Bellevue, and Marjan. (Reić, 2019) Hotel Zagreb in Duilovo was constructed in many phases. The construction of the first section of the hotel began in 1968 and the facility was used and managed by the Yugoslav National Army at the time. New sections were added and completed in 1979 for the Mediterranean games in Split, because of the needed additional accommodation for athletes. The hotel covers over 60,000 square meters of space, has a beautiful park next to the facility and easy access to the beach. (Rogulj, 2017) Other facilities that were built are for example; in Spinut neighborhood – Dom Gusara (a rowing race track, training ground and accompanying facilities), Trstenik- Split 3 which was in that period during and after the events the most prestigious part of the city of Split. This huge accomplishment needed 341 hectares of space, which resulted in a space for 50,000 people. The whole concept that was already created in the early 1960's was finalized and accomplished because of the MIS 1979. (Zivkovic, n.d.) Another important building that was constructed is FESB, college of electric engineering, mechanical engineering and shipbuilding, which was the embryo of the new university campus that was completed only recently. Another very important contribution of the MIS was the new RTV-Center, which is the main radio and television station in Split. ZERC, which is a Joint electronic Computer Center was constructed with 150 terminals which was also the biggest one in Yugoslavia at the time. (Pupacic, 1979)

It is always crucial that all the facilities have the needed support of a good infrastructure. In this case Split had to improve the infrastructure to make the event possible and successful. This is also why the metro railway was built in the way that the existing railway line was buried in an underground tunnel, and the Marjan tunnel (1050 meters long) connecting the

western part of the city center with the city stadium and other modern complexes were constructed for the games. Both projects it took them approximately 18 months to complete, which was one month faster than it was expected. For the railway the investment was 140 million Yugoslav dinars (27.5 million USD) and for the Marjan tunnel 60 million Yugoslav dinars (11.5 million USD). Very interesting was also the ticketing. The amount expected of tickets sold should result in 7.8 million Yugoslav dinars (1.5 million USD).

The prices for a ticket vary from 10 (1.92 USD) to 100 dinars (19.2 USD) depending on the sport and if those are qualification games or finals. At the first day when the tickets were available for the public already 200,000 tickets were sold out of the 760.000 that were printed. The most printed are the tickets for the athletics (158,772) followed by football (125,413 tickets) and then basketball (70,656). The tickets for the opening and ending ceremonies were sold out already on the first day of sales. The football and basketball finals were also all sold out immediately. All sport facilities that were constructed for the MIS-79 were worth around 2.6 billion Yugoslav dinars (500 million USD). It is important to point out that 44% of that amount was contributed and invested from the city of Split. The government of the Socialist Republic of Croatia participated with 31% and other neighboring republics 15% of the total amount and 10% came from the MIS generated revenues. (Reić, 2019) The supporting infrastructure was worth 2.5 times than the sports facilities, which in itself speaks a great deal how much the city of Split benefited from the games.

All of the facilities that are mentioned are still present and still from great importance for the people in Split. It is not only from huge importance for the athletes who are using the facilities on a daily basis, it is also important for the locals, but especially for the football fanatics and supporters of the most prestigious club Hajduk Split. The stadium Poljud is not just a stadium, it is one of the main attractions in Split besides the old town. The Hajduk Split fans and their

group of supporters called “Torcida” are known worldwide for their commitment and endless support and love for their club. A lot of people are visiting this stadium because of its huge history and unique atmosphere. This is just one example of the things that have been done and are still used and visited today. Sadly, most of the facilities are not refurbished since 1979. This is a problem that Split is facing nowadays. The beautiful stadium which was one of the most prestigious in Europe at that time, is today a very old building falling apart. Because of the fact that the stadium is considered to be a protected cultural good the football fans, athletes and other Split city dwellers hope that the Croatian government will act accordingly and finance the renovation that is definitely needed. (Smolcic, 2016)

The people in Split, especially after the MIS 1979, were really proud of what they achieved during the games and how the games shaped the whole community. Back then in the whole of former Yugoslavia, the people from Split enjoyed distinct privileges and pride; unlike today it was an honor to be from Split, dubbed as “the prettiest and best city in the world”. The city’s sport societies enjoyed remarkable successes in the years to follow. For instance, the basketball club “Jugoplastika” was three times European champion and later pronounced the best basketball club of the 20th century in Europe. Hajduk Football Club was one of the best in the Yugoslav national league and frequently came close to winning European cups. Rowers, Celent and Mrduljaš, won the bronze medal on the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980. Goran Ivanišević, who grew up on the MIS 1979 tennis courts, won the Wimbledon tournament in 2001. The list goes on in water polo, sailing, handball, weight lifting, martial arts, etc. These remarkable successes would hardly be possible without the sport facilities and infrastructure of the MIS 1979.

The successes were not limited only to sports, because Split had phenomenal achievements also in the cultural field. The national theatre, which was fully renovated for the games,

became probably the best in Yugoslavia, with fantastic opera and drama, far surpassing the bigger centers such as Zagreb, Belgrade, Ljubljana, Skoplje, etc. Split became a brand and a TV icon, due to the success of "Velo Misto", an extremely popular TV show, celebrating the 20th century history of Split through the prism of successes and falls of Hajduk Football Club. At that time, "Slobodna Dalmacija", "Nedjeljna Dalmacija" and "Berekin", newspapers from Split gathered the elite of Yugoslav journalism and were among the widest circulated newspapers in the country. These successes also owe a great deal to the impulse received from MIS 1979. Therefore, we can say that the significance of Split far surpassed its size, which vividly shows how a sporting event can catapult a city into an entirely different orbit.

Nowadays all of the cultural goods and sports achievements that Split was really proud of is all almost gone, which indicate a change in the political and institutional climate that has happened since. The sport achievements of the famous football club Hajduk Split are missing, their most beautiful natural sight Marjan is in a critical condition (attacked by bark beetles – trees have to be cut and removed and danger of fire breakout, which is the reason why it is closed at the moment) and these are only a few problems among others that the city of Split is facing. (Lukic, 2012)

2) Spaladium Arena Split - and its problems

A very vivid example of these more recent negative trends is the Spaladium arena, built in 2009, when the Handball World Cup was hosted by Croatia. Because of that huge sport event, Split decided to build and proceed with the "Spaladium Center" – project planned around the the arena with two additional facilities: two large office buildings and a garage. This project failed flat on its face because the two office buildings and the promised garage are still not visible today. (2019) Because of the missing parts of the complex and revenues, the city of Split still struggles with maintaining the arena (Matana, 2016). Every now and then there are

some smaller events and concerts organized in the arena, but this is still not enough for the city of Split from the financial perspective. One side of the arena is still not finished, and it cannot and should not stay any longer that way. Not only that it looks bad it is also not safe for the visitors and the local people who are passing by the arena every day. For the Handball European Cup in 2018, this unfinished side of the arena needed to be covered, as the European Handball Federation (EHF) directed. “Splitski savez sportova”, and quasi-governmental umbrella organization of local sporting societies, had to come up with a solution that the EHF would accept in order to be able to host such an event. They decided to cover the unfinished facade with a special sheathing, which costed around 200,000 kuna. (D., 2018)

The reason why the “Spaladium-Center” project was not completed is because the responsible companies, i.e. TPN Sportski Grad, Dalekovod and IGH that constructed the arena went bankrupt and could not finish what they started. (D., 2018) This is still an open case as no one knows what is going to happen to the arena in the near future. There are private investors interested in the Spaladium arena, among others one from America with an idea to covert the complex into a Hollywood-type film studio. The offer would secure revenue of around 250,000 kn monthly for the city of Split notwithstanding the running costs of the complex. Still there are some smaller problems involved, such as the one with the car park in front of the arena, managed by the Split Parking company, which in turn sublets the space to the Ultra Europe Festival, held every July at the neighboring Poljud stadium. In the event that someone buys the arena, all these complex stakeholder relationships and interests would have to be taken into consideration, which makes it even more difficult and this is one of the reasons why nothing is happening at this point in time. (Zebic, 2019)

The interview with Mr. Damir Karaman exposed that, since the Mediterranean games in 1979, the city of Split practically did not invest into the then built infrastructure. Nowadays things change very quickly, and it is important to keep up with the trends. The Split transportation system is inadequate, since it largely originates from the late 1970s, which is exacerbated with the fact that many more cars on the streets relative to 1979. The hotels, event spaces and other accompanying infrastructure are not suitable for hosting host any major events in Split.

According to him, the infrastructure built for the MIS 1979 games was a huge success and benefit for the city of Split. The problem is that many things have changed since, but the infrastructure remained the same. An example for that would be the previously mentioned Spaladium- Arena, which demonstrates the magnitude of infrastructural, financial and institutional chaos that Split faces today.

In order to be able to financially cover all the costs involved when hosting a major event, such as the Mediterranean games 1979, the tourist board, the city of Split and the Government of Croatia would have to give the needed support and cover the costs in order to create something large and successful, according to Mr. Karaman. For hosting major events, the city of Split needs major upgrades. The lack of five-star hotels in Split is a major obstacle.

Discussion

So, what should Split really focus on in the future, if it wants to get back on the path of the former glory? Split is internationally known for his incredible athletes, such as Goran Ivanisevic (Wimbledon winner, 2001), Toni Kukoč (3 times European Cup winner, 4 times NBA Champion, etc.), etc. The city of Split is very closely connected with sports and this is something where money should also be invested into. All sport facilities that were built in 1979 were not refurbished. This is sad, because the children and athletes do not have the

needed conditions in order to improve their skills. On the other side, Split has a huge benefit and advantage when it comes to climate and weather conditions. No many cities have such a beautiful seaside, nature, islands, food and quality of life to offer. All these given things should be incorporated and carefully used by the locals in order to create something special for future customers and visitors of the city. Split can easily become one of the top destinations especially for athletes because of the growing trend in a healthy lifestyle. The positive energy of such events is nowadays more effective than ever before.

Because of the modern technology "smaller sports" events can still get huge attention due to the positive energy and environment where the event takes place. One example of such smaller sport events would be a (half-) marathon or duathlon that easily can be organized in Split. Those type of events are the perfect events in terms of size and reputation for the city. Additionally, by attracting this type of customers, there is a high chance of prolonging the season as these sports events can be organized during the low season. Families and athletes can participate in a variety of activities that the city of Split can offer throughout the year. The primary focus should definitely be on these types of guests because they are staying in the hotels, trying local products and eating in restaurants. Split should focus on the quality of guests rather than on the quantity. That is why the Ultra Europe Festival, which is always during July organized in Split at the Poljud stadium, for the locals is not exciting, but rather annoying and problematic. These guests sleep in tents, parks and do not spend a lot of time and money in restaurants.

Nevertheless, the Ultra Festival has still a large number of visitors every year. Last year (2018) the number of participants during the three days in Split were around 120,000 visitors. From those 120,000 participants which came from 140 different countries, there were also around 30,000 participants from Croatia that visited the Ultra Festival. In average the

participants who came for the Ultra Festival spent approximately 6,4 days in Croatia. On a daily basis the visitors of the Ultra Festival spend 143 euros and additional 66 euros on accommodation. Also, 72% of tourists who came for the Ultra Festival are also willing to visit multiple locations during their stay in Croatia. The most attractive destinations for Ultra Festival visitors are Dubrovnik, Krka waterfalls and Zagreb. (Vitas, 2018)

Ultra-Europe Festival is definitely something that Split should not put the main focus on. Nevertheless, this event should be used to promote other smaller local events, which can be organized during that time in the city so that the people who came for the Ultra Festival can experience something new, hopefully enjoy the event and return in the following years for that smaller local event and promote this event internationally. Such special events should also be communicated clearly with the locals because without the support of the community no event will be successful.

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APPENDIX

Instrument

Mediterranean Games 1979	Facilities	Capacity / m2	Time	Investment in Dollars	Refurbishment
Poljud	Football Stadium	40.000 people	less than 20 months		
	Swimming pool complex	2.180 people	less than 20 months		
Sports Center - Gripe	Tennis courts			52 million $	
	Sport hall (1) handball	4.200 people			
	Sport hall (2) basketball	5.600 people			yes 1979
	Sport hall (3) boxing	9.000 people			
HNK Split	Stadium - (renovated)				yes 1979
ACI - Marina		318 Berths + 30 Dry Berths	12 months		
Spinut	Dom Gusara				
Koteks	Shopping center, underground parking			240 million $	
Trstenik	Split 3	341 hectares			
	FESB				
RTV - Center					
ZERC (Joint Electronic Computer Center)		150 terminals			
Firule	Club building +Tennis courts	300 sqaure meters / 1.500 people			
Railway			18 months	27,5 million $	
Marjan	Tunnel		18 months	11,5 million $	

Interview Questions

Renco Buric

Questions for Damir Karaman

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Split, before hosting a sport event or other major events?
2. What kind of events should Split focus on in future and why?
3. To what extend did the MIS 1979 encouraged the economic and cultural development of Split and surrounding area?
4. Does the city of Split have the capacity to host major events? (if not…) what are the areas that need improvement in order to be able to organize such major events in Split?
5. How could the city Split incorporate the local people into the organization and participation of such events?