

EVENT TOURISM ANALYSIS AND STATE OF THE ART

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ABSTRACT: In the last decades, the effect of globalization on world tourism has led to increased competition between destinations in search for the optimal positioning. In this scenario, events have become an essential element in the tourism development of destinations, attract visitors, encourage investment, improve image and boost the local economy. This article's main objective is to expand the knowledge of this phenomenon from a theoretical and conceptual viewpoint based on an extensive review of the literature. The findings help to strengthen and synthesize the basic knowledge on events, the influence on destination image and positioning strategies, being valid for both researchers and destination managers. **Keywords:** Tourism Events, Competitiveness, Marketing tourism, Destination image.

RESUMEN: En las últimas décadas, el efecto de la globalización sobre el turismo mundial ha conducido al aumento de la competencia entre los destinos en búsqueda del posicionamiento ideal. En este escenario los eventos se vuelven en un elemento esencial para el desarrollo del turismo de destinos, una vez que atraen visitantes, incentivan al investimento, mejoran la imagen e impulsan la economía local. El principal objetivo de este artículo es el de ampliar el conocimiento de ese fenómeno a partir de un punto de vista teórico y conceptual basado en una extensa revisión de la literatura. Los resultados ayudan a reforzar y sintetizar los conocimientos básicos sobre los acontecimientos, la influencia en la imagen de destino y en las estrategias de posicionamiento, siendo válido para investigadores y gestores de destinos. **Palabras clave:** Eventos Turísticos, Competitividad, Marketing Turístico, imagen de destino.

RESUMO: Nas últimas décadas, o efeito da globalização sobre o turismo mundial tem levado ao aumento da concorrência entre os destinos em busca do posicionamento ideal. Neste cenário os eventos tornaram-se um elemento essencial para o desenvolvimento do turismo de destinos, pois atraem visitantes, incentivam o investimento, melhoram a imagem e impulsionam a economia local. O principal objetivo deste artigo é o de ampliar o conhecimento desse fenómeno a partir de um ponto de vista teórico e conceptual baseado numa extensa revisão

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da literatura. Os resultados ajudam a fortalecer e sintetizar os conhecimentos básicos sobre os acontecimentos, a influência na imagem de destino e nas estratégias de posicionamento, sendo válido para pesquisadores e gestores de destinos. **Palavras-chave:** Eventos Turísticos, Competitividade, Marketing Turístico, imagem de destino.

INTRODUCTION

Hosting special events has become an important element in cities and regions' strategy in order to attract visitors and investments, provide a major boost to the tourism sector and turn into a major contributor to improve the destination competitiveness (Getz, 2008).

Events are special celebrations that are planned and organized in a place by different public institutions or private organizations and may contain a number of activities. Events may be a form of tourism offer in which the content of the events is associated with the specific resources of the place where it is held to attract potential visitors and where a range of tourism programs is planned related to natural and other tourist resources and values. Events can be classified according to content, location, scope, size and importance (Getz, 1997).

The organization of tourist events has a positive impact on a place or a region by generating economic profit based on the income from the sale of products and services of different activities connected to the event, by increasing the tourist turnover which improves the quality of restaurants and infrastructure

This article analyses the theoretical frameworks of events management through a thoughtful review of the literature on the nature, classification, main variables and implications of events on the image of the hosting place. As event tourism emerges as a key area to destinations' image and economy, we understand that the value of this work can be twofold:

- On one hand, through the identification and discussion of central concepts, it contributes to the progress of scientific knowledge in an area with great potential for research development.
- Alternatively, it may be important for professionals and destination managers, as it allows a better understanding of the importance of hosting unique events to the formation of the image of a destination and to the development of a sustainable tourism-based economy.

Thus, this article has three basic objectives: (1) develop a comprehensive view of the concept and importance of "events" within the tourism sector, (2) to compare the events with other destination-based attractions and (3) to theoretically analyse the influence of events on destination image.

The article is divided into five sections. After the introduction, the main findings from the literature review on the focal concept and its theoretical contextualization within attractive destination are presented. The third section describes the development of events and the implications on the image of the destination. In the fourth section, the major types of events are reviewed, with emphasis on those with a strong relationship with the territory where they are held to finally present the final thoughts and main conclusions.

EVENTS AND TOURISM

Hosting events has, among others, the purpose of fully using the events' capabilities to foster tourism development of the host destinations (Getz, 1997, p.16). The evolution of the events management sector in recent decades has led to the emergence of a strong industry favoured by the rapid globalization of markets and communication (Allen et al., 2002).

Event concept and key features

Events are special happenings that are held infrequently and have a fixed term, providing participants with opportunities for social interaction beyond the everyday life (Jago and Shaw, 1998). Its special attractiveness is due to the desire of living the experience attached to the uniqueness of the event, which differentiates it from other places with permanent attractions of interest (Getz, 1989). Janiskee (1980) defined tourism events as short time periods full of attractive and interesting activities, commonly concentrated in a limited geographic area to celebrate a current or an historical fact. Thus, events are exclusive celebrations held at a particular location at one particular moment in time in order to meet specific needs (Goldblatt, 2007).

Through previous literature reviews, the main areas of research and publication within tourism events have been identified, pointing the economic impact as the main study area, followed by the marketing of the different types of events, sponsorship, events management and the emerging trends in events practice (Formica, 1998; Getz, 2000). Briefly we can say that the various studies attempt to define the events from two different approaches: from the characteristics of the event itself, and from the perspective of tourists as an opportunity to enjoy a leisure, social or cultural experience (Getz, 1991a).

Regarding the key features of events, Getz (1989) lists five basic characteristics that they must have: the need to be open to the public, having as a main objective the celebration of a fact that occurs only once a

year or less frequently, be held on predetermined dates, possess an organized program of activities and being held in a tourist area. For Jago and Shaw (1998), special events are also basically characterized by seven elements: its strong ability to attract tourists, the ability to promote the local development, have limited duration, held infrequently, increase the awareness of the citizens and the image of the destination, offer a social experience, and being considered extraordinary and unusual.

Tourism resources and events

Providing a complete analysis on a tourism destination requires the study of varied interrelated factors such as natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, services, institutional image, promotional materials, travel reviews and available events, among others (Tyrrell and Johnston, 2001). The existing literature establishes that the attractions at a destination are formed by the combination of the various resources offered by the site, such as physical (architecture, parks, monuments and transportation), geographical (location and morphology), cultural (sport events, festivals, exhibitions, theatre, dance and concerts) and lastly heritage assets (castles, churches, historic districts). The combination of all these elements constitute the tourist experience and should be considered in the formulation of the positioning strategy of the destination (Kolb, 2006).

A crucial question to be addressed by researchers is to understand and differentiate the structural or enduring elements of the destination from temporary elements, such as events. Following Getz (1991a), we have opted to address these issues from the perspective of the attractiveness of the site, proposing a typology of destination claims based on three parameters: (1) environmental resources, (2) enduring resources built by man, but not specifically for the purpose of attracting visitors and (3) events. Swarbrooke (1995) suggested that attractions are essential resources for the tourism industry by providing a motive of interest to visit the site. His classification includes four types of attractions: (1) natural surroundings, (2) structures not built specifically to attract visitors, (3) the permanent structures specially designed to act as tourist attractions and (4) events. In the same line of thought, Alhemoud and Armstrong (1996) classified the attractions of a destination equally into four categories largely based in the tourist assessment: (1) natural, (2) historical, (3) cultural, and (4) artificial. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) propose a model where they include elements called "resources and destination main attractions" which they grouped into six categories: (1) physiography (landscape, climate), (2) culture and historic (historic heritage, monuments), (3) market ties (ethnic, business, family and friends), (4) leisure activities, (5) tourism superstructure (lodgings, restaurants, transportation) and (6) special events.

A decade later Ritchie and Crouch (2010) later reviewed the model based on a study addressing the Brazilian market, keeping the above cited categories and incorporating a new one based on the entertainment at the destination. They refer to these as the basic factors that make potential tourists choose a specific destination over another (Figure 1).

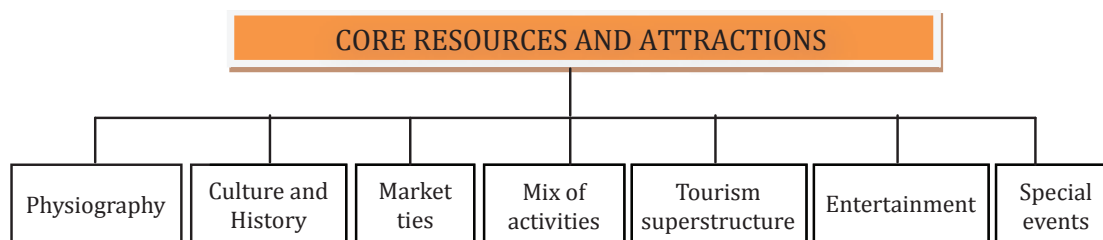


Figure 1: Tourist Attractions

Source: Crouch and Ritchie (1999) and Ritchie and Crouch (2010)

In summary, the review suggests that the main distinguishing feature of events in relation to other types of attractions is the fact that the former have a temporary nature. They can be used as drivers to increase spending and length of stay, motivating both tourists and residents with the advantage of being able to attract visitors who, otherwise, would never visit the destination. It can also encourage visitors' retention through a well-designed program of activities. Lastly, events can also serve to attract investment and improve infrastructure, such as the infrastructures needed for sport events which can be used afterwards by the local community and to attract other competitions or events in the future (Getz, 1997).

THE ROLE OF EVENTS IN DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT AND IMAGE

Existing research on tourism events recognizes that sometimes the promotion of a destination and its image can be greatly enhanced by the organization of a singular event (Laws, 1995; Monga, 2006), with special impact on destination marketing and strategies (Lee and Taylor, 2005).

The literature on destination image starts in the 70s when Hunt (1975) developed a study that seeks to examine the role of destination image in tourism development. Later, Crompton (1979) defines the image of a destination as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a place". The work by Pike (2002), where he identifies 142 studies on destination image published from 1973 to 2000 exploring different subjects such as the influence on consumer behaviour,

image formation and site development, deserves special consideration. Destination image is very important for tourism research, as it reflects the key variable for segmenting the target market, providing insights on the motivation and behaviour of individuals in relation to the process of destination choice (Bigné *et al.*, 2000).

Chon (1990) highlights the close relationship between destination image and tourist expectations and behaviour. After an initial phase of information search, the tourist adapts its perception until reaching an induced image that will weigh (using an internal valuation) against the degree of compliance with the original expectations. After returning from the trip, he can make a judgment of satisfaction to form a complete picture of the place. The representations used in destination marketing are the result of historical, social, economic and political processes and reveal much about the social construction of space, the cultural evolution and identity (Pritchard and Morgan, 2001).

Dann (1996) provides a very individualistic view of each tourist image perception by stating that "no two people see a destination in exactly the same way". After performing a comprehensive review of the literature on this concept, Gallarza *et al.*, (2002) concluded that the image of tourism destinations has a complex, dynamic, multiple and relativist nature. Thus, destination image can be defined as an "expression of all knowledge, pressures, prejudices, imagination and emotions an individual or group has on a particular place" (Jenkins, 1999). Following this line of reasoning, destination image is formed as a multidimensional construct where the attributes can be grouped according to several components aimed at its creation or development as a way that makes it easy for visitors to evaluate the experience and further revisit or recommend it to other tourists (Bigné *et al.*, 2001). Moutinho (1987) suggests that in the process of creating a destination image in the mind of consumers, several different personal motivations interact, namely: (1) Physical, related to the need of amusement, entertainment, relaxation, among others, (2) Cultural, arising from the need to understand other cultures, trends and artistic and historical content, (3) Interpersonal, where tourism is interpreted as a means to generate emotional content, by creating new relationships with locals or visiting friends or relatives, and (4) Social or prestige aims, representing the desire to achieve social goals, such as recognition or convey a good social image.

The development of events

As it has been described, events have become a basic element on distinctive strategies for tourism development in many areas, regions or even countries, being considered in many cases as a major and unique competitive advantage (Getz and Smith, 1994). Thus, the knowledge

on events and on the evaluation of their impact on the tourism destination development are essential in many cases to survive in an increasingly competitive market where the costs of planning and organizing such events are considerable. Hosting events that meet the needs of tourists and promoting them through the most effective media should constitute a primary objective for all organizations involved in destination marketing management in order to maximize the benefits of tourism (Getz, 2008).

Hall (1992) identified a variety of advantages to the destination that hosts an event, which included: improved infrastructure, increased sense of pride for residents, increased trade relations, higher levels of external recognition, increased experience in the management of masses and increased development in the area of influence. Later studies (Getz, 2007; Kim and Petrick, 2005; Presbury and Edwards, 2005) addressing tourism events suggest that they can be very helpful for the destination mainly for three interrelated reasons: (1) their capacity to attract tourists and generate economic benefits, (2) the development of infrastructure and services, and (3) the creation or strengthening of a brand image for the site (Figure 2).

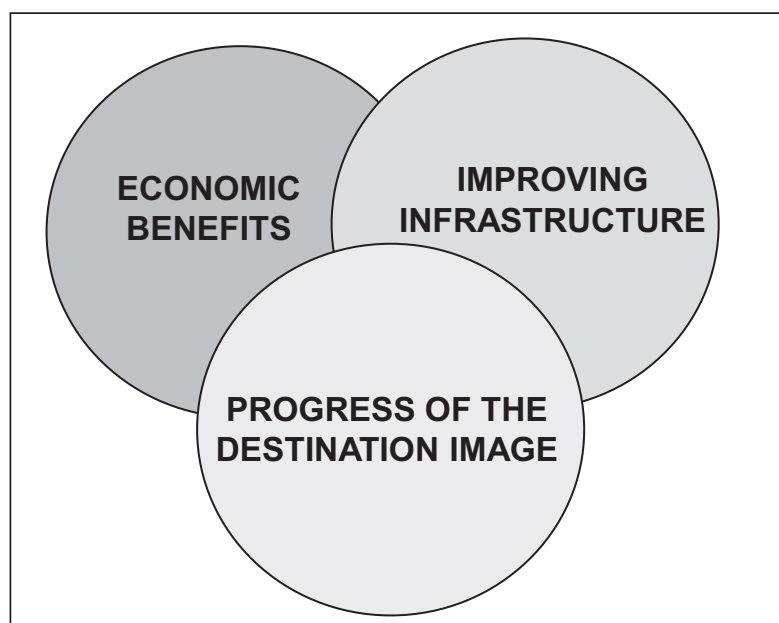


Figure 2: Advantages of events

Source: Getz (2008), Kim and Petrick (2005); Presbury and Edwards (2005)

The success of a tourism event depends largely on the quality of the integration of different agents in order to achieve good results. To Sherwood *et al.* (2005), an event has different effects on the economic, social and environmental areas of the place where it is carried out. Simeon and Buonincontri (2011) consider the event-based tourism as a stimulus with strong economic impact not only due to direct in-

vestments in the event but also through the increase in the number of visitors to the area where this event is held. Thrane (2002) and Ponce (2007) support this view by stating that the positive economic impact can be witnessed in public investments in convention centers and in fresh cultural activities at the destination site resulting from hosting special events.

To summarize, it can be concluded that events have both economic and social advantages for tourism if they are well planned and organized to provide a temporarily unique and enjoyable experience to the people who decide to attend them. A more detailed information can be found in the reviews by Formica (1998), Getz (2000) and Harris *et al.* (2001). For the period 1990-2002, a special mention should be granted to the review provided by Hede *et al.* (2002, 2003).

Events and destination image

The image of a destination is valued on the basis of a set of attributes that attract visitors voluntarily, such as activities, experiences and landscapes (Lew, 1987). In this context, events can act as image makers due to the attention devoted by the media, and the marketing and promotional campaigns set up by the organization to attract visitors (Getz, 1997) and thus become a long-term strategic option for destination managers (Taylor and Shanka, 2008; Stokes, 2005).

The role of events and destination image is increasingly important for organizations that are provided with the opportunity to communicate the attributes, values and personality of the event, as well as strategically market it (Dibb *et al.*, 2006). For Dwyer and Forsyth (2009), events can improve the image of a city or region, facilitate business networking and improve the pride of its citizens and at the same time provide social and cultural benefits, creating forums for education and facilitate technology transfer. In fact, hosting events can enrich the image of the area and of its host community, and increase the number of visitors both at short-term and long-term (Lee *et al.*, 2005). Boo and Busser (2006) recognize the importance of events to the destination image, and propose a line of research in this emerging field through empirical studies aimed at confirming this relationship. It should be remembered as stated by Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001) that destinations currently compete primarily through the image perceived by consumers, meaning that the communication and promotion of events are key elements in the development of any competitive strategy. Despite having a strong economic impact (Simeon and Buonincontri, 2011), event-based tourism is also increasingly important within the context of destination branding. Destination managers have in events an important resource and tool that can be clearly associated with a place,

becoming a fundamental part of their marketing strategy (Jago *et al.*, 2003; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001). Branding can contribute to the enhancement of the image of the area and community hosting the event and concurrently increase the number of visitors at short and long term (Lee *et al.*, 2005).

In summary the literature recognizes the value of events for the hosting area as it helps to improve the local economy, reinforces place image and brand promotion and strengthen cultural heritage and the preservation of facilities and infrastructures (Getz, 1991, Sherwood *et al.*, 2005; Lim and Lee, 2006; Simeon and Buonincontri, 2011). Events have likely become a very useful tool to use in the field of place marketing, contributing decisively to the development of destination image.

MAJOR TYPES OF TOURISM EVENTS

As we have observed, different events provide potential revenues resulting from those attending it and also offer an opportunity for leisure, social interaction and entertainment for the community and visitors. Usually, events managers aim mainly to boost tourism in order to obtain economic returns for the region, arguing that these events produce monetary benefits as visitors spend money in local businesses, thus supporting the town's economy. However it should also be taken into account the revenues resulting from the investment required to set up the event (Taylor and Shanka, 2008; Stokes, 2005).

Recognizing the importance of categorising events, Hall (1992), following Ritchie (1984), provides a classification of tourism events grounded in five major building blocks: (1) religious and sacred celebrations (2) carnivals and cultural events, (3) commercial events, (4) sports competitions, and (5) political meetings.

Getz (1997) further extends the spectrum of the different types of events and classified them as: (1) Special (2) "hallmark" (3) mega events, (4) festivals, fairs and exhibitions, (5) meetings and other business events, (6) educational events, (7) sporting events and (8) art events. As for the term "hallmark", this refers to a symbol of quality and authenticity that distinguishes some events or involves a distinctive characteristic and uniqueness of which its success depends. Typically, these events represent a hallmark for the destination increasing its competitive advantage and boosting the positive image projected to the public (Ritchie, 1984; Getz, 1997).

Later, Getz (2008) proposed a more complete set of events categories with eight types: (1) cultural, (2) political, (3) art and entertainment (4) business (5) science and education (6) sporting events, (7) recreational activities and (8) private occasions (Figure 3)

<p>CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS</p> <p>Festivals Carnivals Commemorations Religious events</p>	<p>ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENTS</p> <p>Concerts Award ceremonies</p>	<p>PRIVATE EVENTS</p> <p>Weddings Parties Socials</p>	<p>SPORT COMPETITIONS</p> <p>Amateur / Professional Spectator / Participant</p>
<p>POLITICAL AND STATE</p> <p>Summits Royal occasions Political events VIP visits</p>	<p>EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC</p> <p>Conferences Seminars Clinics</p>	<p>BUSINESS AND TRADE</p> <p>Meetings, Conventions, Consumer and Trade Shows, Fairs, Markets</p>	<p>RECREATIONAL</p> <p>Sport and Games for fun</p>

Figure 3: Ranking event by type

Source: Getz (2008)

Simeon and Buonincontri (2011) consider the development of the place's intrinsic resources as a key issue for successful hosting events and not just the ability to create new resources. Next, the six most important types of events will be deeply analysed with particular emphasis on those based on endogenous resources (Hernández *et al.*, 2011) like: **religious, nature, food, music festivals and cultural** events.

Religious events

Travel to attend religious events has increased worldwide, however the literature on this subject is still limited in terms of deep knowledge of travellers' motivations, interests and needs (Timothy and Conover, 2006). Currently, different types of religious celebrations each year attract a growing number of people around events related to pilgrimages, coronations, beatification, shrines, temples, churches, chapels or Easter celebrations.

Religious tourism can be defined as those trips that are motivated partly or exclusively on religion factors (Rinschede, 1992), where tourists cater to a diverse typology of religious celebrations in terms of features, values, behaviour, attitudes and spending patterns just to pray or simply to express their cultural values in respect to that specific religious event (Nolan and Nolan, 1992; Vukonić, 1996; Murray and Graham, 1997; Fleischer, 2000). Thus, sometimes religious interests overlap with cultural, recreational and educational motivations becoming strongly connected to cultural and heritage tourism (Vukonić, 1996, Olsen, 2003; Woodward, 2004; Raj and Morpeth, 2007; Smith, 1992). Alongside, religious events have become a major tourist attraction, gradually joining the promotional offer of several major destinations as a way to strengthen the competitiveness of places by highlighting its uniqueness (Francis *et al.*, 2008).

Nature events

The main motivation for travel to visit the natural environment is to be in close contact with nature and wildlife and at the same time to relax and unwind, escaping from the everyday routine to enjoy the natural landscapes, traditions and other resources that as a whole make up the attractiveness of the natural environment. Thus, nature tourism can be defined as travel motivated to be in touch with unpolluted natural areas where travellers expect to admire, study and enjoy the scenery, the flora and/or fauna (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991).

Zeppel and Hall (1992) linked the heritage tourism with a broad scope of special trips based on the desire to experience the diversity of cultural and natural landscapes, including attending events to admire and study the natural environment, among others. Uysal *et al.* (1994) suggest that the level of the environmental assets of a place influences the characteristics of the tourists who visit it, which clearly affect the motivations of travellers to attend a nature-related event. In addition, ecotourism or nature tourism is an area of rapid growth since it promises a model of sustainable rural development for countryside areas with important environmental resources (Li, 2004; Zhuang *et al.*, 2011).

In the specific field of events and nature tourism, visitors can be segmented based on their typology and degree of involvement with environmental values. Lindberg (1991) provides a classification scheme with four groups based into their levels of motivation and behaviour: (1) strong degree of involvement with nature, such as researchers, scientists, educators and people associated with the environment, (2) tourists nature-oriented, referring to people who travel to protected areas of great environmental value or to take part in local customs and rituals or understand the local history, (3) tourists who will be joining nature destinations, visiting famous landscapes and natural wonders and (4) casual nature tourist, defined as people who come in contact with nature in a timely manner while taking a holiday trip.

Gastronomic events

Gastronomic tourism is becoming an area of rapid growth within the tourism literature, as food-related activities add value to places by providing attractions to visitors such as new and unique tasting experiences at the destination. Hall and Mitchell (2001) suggest that gastronomic tourism usually involves visits to food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations where the tasting experience represents the first reason for traveling. In the same research line, Henderson (2009) suggests that gastronomic tourism is typical of places where visitors can consume unique products and where food products can be used to represent the place's image and define its character.

Kivela and Crotts (2006) emphasize that the culinary activity is one of the most solid foundations on which the tourism industry is based, being very important to the study and understanding of tourists' attitudes towards the destination in order to design successful gastronomic routes. For Espeitx (2004), local and artisan food may be related to cultural routes, making it one form of heritage to be integrated as a tourism resource. Meanwhile, Fields (2002) states that the enjoyment of food tourism turns out to be one opportunity to obtain a higher social status and social recognition for a segment of consumers. Hjalager (2003) proposes the existence of two kinds of gastronomic tourists regarding their attitudes and preferences toward the destination: (1) recreation and fun and (2) existential and experimental, suggesting that the first prefer to avoid risks and eat at known restaurants, while the second type actively seeks alternative foods and new experiences at the destination. For Quan and Wang (2004), gastronomy can transmit a unique experience for the enjoyment of visitors, improve the overall experience and be the most memorable part of the trip.

Festivals and musical events

According to Getz (1997), music festivals can be considered as musical thematic parties. Bowen and Daniels (2005) defined music festivals as events in which music is a key part of the event and the values being communicated, and are often accompanied by other activities related to the festival's main theme in addition to music. Andersson and Getz (2008a) studied festivals from the context of tourism marketing, emphasizing its contribution to the global development of a destination.

However, there seems not to be a unique characteristic that can be traced in all festivals, mainly because each of them can maintain a distinctive approach based on their scope, characteristics, charitable or commercial character and goals, among others attributes. In spite of this, most of them share some common characteristics, like the intangibility and periodic nature, fixed length and the same venue in each edition, but especially its orientation to a certain audience that attends and/or participates (Andersson and Getz, 2008b). In fact, public participation or assistance is the key element to help generating income, promote culture and develop the desired destination image.

Cultural events

In cultural events there is an important and strong relationship between the culture and the place. In these type of events architectural heritage and cultural sites are the main ingredients used to develop tourism strategies aimed to attract tourists by emphasising the cultural

identity of the destination by making use of well-designed and focused promotional campaigns (Evans, 2003; Kunzmann, 2004; Vivant, 2011). Getz (1991) defines a cultural event as a public celebration that may include dance, movies, theatre, music, arts and crafts, among others. Crompton and McKay (1997) emphasize the importance of tourist motivations for cultural events, as they could provide important informations for future developments, such as allowing the program to adapt to the needs of tourists, and thus helping enhancing visitors' satisfaction and increasing the chance to meet or exceed their expectations and in that way ensure loyalty and therefore its future sustainability.

The uniqueness of a cultural event may lie upon several factors, such as the location, the participation of renowned actors in the field, or the feelings that arise from participation. Most often these events bring together different performances and exhibitions throughout its program, such as the best artists in their field, and sometimes including a didactic component for the public (Getz, 1997). There are many references in the literature about the benefits of cultural festivals for destinations (Prentice and Andersen, 2003; Bachleitner and Zins, 1992; Sdrali and Chazapi, 2007; Smith, 2004).

Other events: mega sports events and celebrations.

Sports celebrations

Evidence from literature suggest that hosting small sport tourism events provide an economic value to the area due to tourists' expenditures (Daniels and Norman, 2003; Veltri *et al.*, 2009). In most cases the economic benefits outweigh the costs given the pre-existence of facilities used and because it attracts people who would not have visited the destination if the sports event did not take place (Chalip and O'Brien, 2008). This is a fast growing segment in terms of both individual and collective sports due to its potential to attract visitors, for getting media attention and its economic impact too. For this reason, public managers' strategies are increasingly designed to encourage this type of event with the largest number of participants and spectators as possible (Allen *et al.*, 2002).

Mega events

The mega events can be defined as short-term events, but with long lasting consequences of various types, and attracting a large number of international tourists (Roche, 2006). The size and special nature of this type of event transcends the entire economy of a city or region, or even on a single country. In this category can be included the Olympic Games, World Cup, Tennis Open, Universal Exhibitions or festivals of

great impact as some Carnivals (Getz, 1997; Allen *et al.*, 2002; Proni, 2009; Azevedo and Freitas, 2012). They easily become key elements in tourism development strategies in many regions and countries in the present context of increased competition among geographic destinations who fiercely compete for its organization (Getz, 2007; Canali and D' Angella, 2009).

Such events hold a strong economic impact in the host community, have the potential to attract a large number of visitors, and benefit from the global media coverage. They also provide recognition for the organizers when they have a considerable impact on urban development involving new trends in planning and in long-term strategy to boost tourism through public and private investments and renewed infrastructures (Kim and Chalip, 2004; Magdalinski and Nauright, 2004; Chalip, 2007). Setting up mega events has a very high cost to the host country and the city, so it requires a strong public commitment and public and private financial contributions (Baade and Matheson, 2004).

CONCLUSIONS

The current article addressed the events from the perspective of the tourism sector as they have become an important area for destination managers, who have understood the importance of hosting events to destination image and positioning. The study of these dimensions will generate a better understanding of the process of image formation and the contribution of events to destination image and the development of sustainable tourism offers.

The results of this study analysed the types of events and how they can improve tourism offers and increase demand, and at the same time contribute to changes in the destination image. Events can effectively be a crucial resource to attract different segments of visitors, according to the type and uniqueness of the event being planned and the quality of its promotion. This implies the need to assess the contribution of events not only in terms of direct financial revenues, but also in terms of their contribution to the creation of a positive image for the destination aimed at creating strong and enduring bonds with visitors.

Future research should be directed to the empirical evaluation of the impact of events in the formation of destination image, with special emphasis on the effects of event's branding and positioning strategies on place branding policies. The findings of those studies may be particularly valuable for tourism managers in the development of destination brands supporting marketing and investments plans, carefully designed to compete with other places with similar traits.

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