

## Sport and Tourism in Contemporary Society

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One of the main Urry's lessons is that the tourist experience, with the advent of postmodernism, have started to contribute more to the formation of the identity of people, thanks to the proliferation of information channels and means of transport that have made possible, in fact, a series of practices and dynamics until a few years ago unimaginable (Urry, 2000; Urry & Sheller, 2004, 2006). Today tourism is set up as a cultural experience that is characterized as a time when people, objects, symbols, images and cultures meet, merge and mutually condition.

Motivate the tourist experience and the desire of people to travel are "attractive elements", i.e. the resources – natural and cultural – that are present in the destinations, able to feed the imagination of tourists, creating in the social actors the expectations of what they may have direct experience once they reach their destination. In *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), MacCannell has developed a tourist attraction semiotic theory, explaining how objects, monuments, but also rites and ceremonies can assume the status of "attractor" following a value of attribution process. This mechanism is engaged both by the tourist industry and by tourists themselves, when they recognize in one or more elements a quality that makes tourism worthwhile.

The pluralization of tourist paths that characterizes the contemporary and the reasons underlying the various forms of mobility has been accompanied and supported by a multiplication of the attractive elements (Urry, 1995; Rifkin, 2000). Starting from specific personal curiosity and identity needs, every natural and cultural element becomes a potential tourist attraction. The so-called "long tail" of preferences (Anderson, 2006) today expands even more, characterized by a set of niche of tourism.

Those that are traditionally called tourist attractions are in fact socially constructed, through the activation of sponsorship recognitions and global mechanisms, propagated by the actors, public and private, in charge of promoting tourism.

In this scenario fits the tourism associated with major sporting events, which in recent years has attracted a huge global interest (Pigeassou, 1997; Romiti, 2011; Cannizzaro, 2011). More and more people, in the role of tourists, use their free time devoted to the holidays, moving to new destinations, motivated by the intention to be witnesses on the spot of this kind of events in different sports (Standeven & De Knop, 1999).

It is a steadily growing trend that is becoming increasingly important in the tourism industry, surpassing other more traditional journey types, such as beach, cultural or rural tourism. It is useful to note that there is a large segment of the population that

is very interested in sport, either as players or spectators, who when looking for a destination for their holiday try to combine it with sporting events or finding the opportunity to practice some kind of sport (Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Ritchie & Adair, 2004).

In this context, about social studies, tourism linked to sports events allows us to analyze the potential for tourism development of various holiday destinations in order to assess the level of satisfaction, identify the visits of the athletes, know the perception of social actors and point out potentials and limitations with the purpose of properly promoting sports events in a specific area.

At the same time, being able to host a major sports event requires an exceptional juncture, useful for building the future of the tourism sector in that given area – country, region or city. Outlined above are the reasons why researchers believe that sports events can easily become levers for development, influencing a variety of economic sectors (Walo, Bull, & Breen, 1996; Bowdin, Allen, O' Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011).

It is proven that supporters, athletes and events' venue staff become tourists by making use of accommodation, transport and restaurant services, as well as other infrastructures (Sanchez Lima, 2018).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization criteria (UNWTO, 2002) major sports events should be thought and arranged as important leisure events, because the main national competitions give rise to a huge number of travels and local development plans, promoting that destination all over the world and contributing to the strategic marketing of the given city.

Thanks to the promotion of tourism in Western countries, it is undeniable that major sports events are becoming a form of touristic attraction which highly contributes to the growth of local economies (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 1995). These are huge sports events setting up high level competitions in spectacular architectonic venues. Which is why, from the economic point of view, tourism of major sporting events is often a formula designed to try to cover the low season in the tourism sector, supporting the economic structure of the hotel business and leisure when there is a recession of the demand, such as in winter.

However, the sustainability of these events provokes debates because sometimes they are not held regularly and, in addition, need infrastructural resources suitable for mass events that require huge public investments, raising concerns about the long-term benefits of the investments themselves.

This monograph intends to deepen the state of the issue of sport and tourism in today's society and its positive and negative implications.

More specifically, the volume contains a collection of scientific papers, which investigate different aspects all linked by a desire to emphasize on the relationship between sports practices, events and their overlap with the phenomenon of tourism, which require the participation of many travelers who combine in various ways the tourist experience with the sport.

This monograph starts with a paper (*Modelo para la clasificación del turismo deportivo*) which, given that there are different ways in which tourism can occur in our society, underlines that is essential for the activities under discussion to be identified and analytically classified. Therefore the objective of the article is to present a conceptual model useful to classify assets that fall into the category of sports tourism, offering

an adequate interpretative framework to promote research in this area and facilitate the classification of assets through a series of qualitative variables of particular interest; the second article (*Big Data y Turismo Deportivo: Estado de la cuestión y nuevas aplicaciones*) is moved by the desire to explain how major sporting events transform the host nation in a destination, with the characteristics of the tourism product as the spatial and temporal concentration. This process, supported by the use of a large amount of data gathered through social networks, mobile devices, web pages and sports applications, are able to improve not only the visitors experience, but also to create value for the hosting society. In order to do so, the literature about sports tourism from the point of view of Big Data is analyzed in a comprehensive and systematic way; the third article (*I (non)luoghi del mito. Sulle strade del grande ciclismo*), taking up the theories proposed by Augé about “non-places” focuses its attention on the sport venues (arenas, ski jumping trampolines, sport halls), emphasizing their dual value as cultural heritage facilities and tourist attraction. More specifically, the paper intends to investigate the role of cycling in the transformation of the road from a place without identity to a place fully inserted into the tangible and intangible heritage of European culture; the next article (*Turismo sexual y eventos deportivos*) explores, through a literature review, the issue of sex tourism related to major sporting events and its link with the networks of trafficking in persons, particularly women and children; the fifth article (*Barcelona runner: turismo, ciudad y cuerpos posthumanos*) offers a critical reading of the popular race in Barcelona, based on exploring the various tourist forms of the sport, narrated and practiced by runners, policy makers and business people. The objective of the article is to explain how, through experiences as planning the route of the Barcelona Marathon, practicing running in everyday life and running races, the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of tourism promote the rise of some elements as pleasure, the ideal of health, the sense of belonging, control, solidarity, celebration and activism, constituting, with it, bodies that flow in continuity with the urban context; the sixth article (*Los raids de aventura como motor dinamizador de entornos naturales en Extremadura*) addresses the problem of depopulation in rural areas, with a specific reference to the Spanish region of Extremadura, providing solutions as new opportunities for the development of social, cultural and physical sectors in the natural environment or the active tourism. The article focuses in particular on raids multi-adventure, such as sports competitions, able to bring together a multitude of participants leading a race orientation across a broad area of natural environment, and about the way in which Extremadura has developed for several years a regional league of raids, being the seat of several national tests of these sporting events in which it takes part a large number of participants. In this way, sustainable and respectful of the natural environment activity is presented as an effective tool for the revitalization of natural spaces; the next article (*L’impatto dei ritiri estivi delle squadre di calcio in Trentino-Alto Adige tra vantaggi oggettivi e prospettive*) proposes a review of the affiliate perspective to a football team as a functional engine to other impacts, such as territorial and economic tourism in perspective, forwarding some policy proposals that embrace the scenario of digital social milieus; the volume ends with an article (*Adjusting deficiency to nature tourism: the case of a contemporary experience of expeditions using all-terrain wheelchairs*) that analyzes the relationship between sport and disability, supporting the hypothesis that sport can take inspirational character and promotes social

interaction in extreme environments, helping to overcome the sense of the limits associated with forms of serious disability. The article points out, in particular, how the practice of extreme sports in high mountain environments, even before favoring social interaction, is able to change the way in which sports tourists perceive themselves, their bodies and their relationships with others.

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