

SPORTS EVENTS TOURIST IMPACT: A CASE STUDY

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In recent years, the importance acquired by sport across the population has increased considerably due to higher relevance of the health and fitness in daily life as well as to a greater number of sporting events held by cities to attract sports tourists (Herstein and Jaffe, 2008:36). Sports tourists are those who participate in sports activities during their holidays, and can be classified into three categories (Herstein and Jaffe, 2008:36):

- a) Participants of the event: those people who travel to participate in organized sporting event.
- b) Attendance of the event: they are attending an organised sporting event.
- c) Sports lovers who travel in order to participate in sports “self-organised”.

Specifically, the impact generated by the holding of major sporting events in the tourism sector, has led to the creation of a true subject of study called event tourism, which refers to “those activities or sporting events capable of attracting significant numbers of visitors in order to participate or to attend as spectators “(Delpy, 2003) (in Revuelta, 2006:2).

In fact, sporting events have become a major attraction for thousands of fans, being at present a great opportunity for destinations seeking to increase their attractiveness, in terms of both the number of tourists they attract as for their economic impact (Getz, 2003).

As an example we can mention the World Cup (South Africa 2010 and Germany 2006), the Olympics (London 2012, Beijing 2008 and Athens 2004), the Dakar Rally, the world of handball, tennis tournaments (Australian Open, Roland Garros or Wimbledon), the Formula 1 world, the RBS Six Nations Rugby, the final of the Champions League football, the FIFA Confederations Cup, the Tour de France and the Tour of Spain, Swimming World Championships or the Eurobasket 2013. Although, with these great events we should mention many smaller-scale sports events held around the world and throughout the year around motorsports, sailing, windsurfing and triathlon, amongst other sports.

All these events, of greater or lesser importance, are a great opportunity for tourist development of cities, regions or countries to the extent that they encourage local socio-economic development, contributing to job creation and the construction and improvement of infrastructure (roads, lighting, hotels, restaurants, shops, etc.), benefiting not only tourists, but also locals. Moreover, sometimes, holding them in times of lower tourist influx can contribute to seasonally adjust the tourist demand, one of the great weaknesses

of the tourism industry, generating, as has happened on numerous occasions, a direct impact on the image and visibility of the cities hosting them, promoting them as tourist destination.

The sport event tourism has taken a leading role in Spain and especially in Andalusia, a region that has become a world leader in their hosting, including the International Horse Fair (SICAB), Volvo Masters Andalusia Golf or the final of the Davis Cup, highlighting among them the MotoGP Spanish Grand Prix.

This motorcycling championship, which is held annually in the city of Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz) in the months of April or May for 26 years, is part of the MotoGP World Championship, which is composed of 18 prizes held in 13 countries across 5 continents and is considered one of the most important in the world both for pilots, for the track layout, as for the fans, for the circuit and the atmosphere created there for the celebration of same.

After conducting a review of the scientific literature, this research has focused on analysing the impact of tourism and media of this important sporting event, given the lack of studies on the subject, trying to highlight its relevance for the significant benefits generated by both city to host it, and to nearby towns and the Andalusia Autonomous Community as a whole.

The analysis of data from various sources and literature, as well as information gathered from interviews with key public and private stakeholders involved in the celebration of this great sporting event, has led to the following conclusions obtained in about the economic impact, tourism and media of the celebration of the Grand Prix in Spain to Andalusia, in general, and to the town and the county seat of it in particular.

First, its influence on the tourism sector is evident because each year attracts more than 250,000 fans that houses circuit, a figure to which it must be added the volume of tourists and visitors, not attending to the circuit, who go to the region attracted by the complementary offer and entertainment surrounding the celebration of this important sporting event (parties, concerts, etc..) (Consejería de Turismo, Comercio y Deporte, Junta de Andalucía, 2013).

They fill the hotels, apartments and campsites, restaurants, bars, etc..., Not only in the same host city and the nearby towns of the Sierra Cadiz, the Northwest Coast, the Bay of Cadiz and coastal villages, but other provinces of Andalusia, such as Seville, and not just the three days of the championship, but all week, having contributed in this way to seasonally adjusted demand for tourism in the area, one of the main weaknesses of its tourism sector, with consequent benefits generated employment and local business.

Specifically, the hotel industry is one of the big winners, having recorded in the 2013 edition an occupancy rate in hotels in Jerez de la Frontera was about 98.8% and the average rate on Cádiz province was nearly 94% occupancy (Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Sport, 2013).

Second, with an investment by the Government of Andalusia 2.7 million, significantly less than the 4.4 million euros invested in previous editions, the economic impact for Andalusia, according to estimates by the Board of Andalusia amounted to 100 million euros in the edition held in 2013, reaching spending generated 51.5 million euros, 18.5% more than the 2012 (Consejería de Turismo, Comercio y Deporte, Junta de Andalucía,

2013). Although the impact generated for the town of Jerez in the last issue, the data offered by the city of Jerez estimated at € 43.5 million profit generated in 2012.

Third, the efforts made by the organizers of the Grand Prix, staff Jerez, Jerez City Council, the media and the travel industry in general (bars, restaurants, hotels, etc..) has contributed to create a tourist offer according to the high demand generated by the celebration of this great prize, achieving a high level of satisfaction in people who have come to Jerez de la Frontera for the races or to enjoy the atmosphere created around them.

In fact, according to the survey conducted annually by the Consejería de Turismo, Comercio y Deporte (Junta de Andalucía) done to those attending the circuit, each year is better appreciated both the sporting event itself and the other activities around it. Specifically, in the edition of 2013, the average rating given to the target stood at 7.6 out of 10, while the event amounted to 8.1 points, with the top rated activities enclosure circuit (8.5 points), leisure activities and entertainment, as well as care and treatment received (about 8.5 points) (Consejería de Turismo, Comercio y Deporte, Junta de Andalucía, 2013).

Fourth, it should be noted the national and international projection of the Grand Prix in Spain thanks to its diffusion through mass media of international impact as television. The broadcast of the championship in 120 channels from 180 countries around the world has led to an audience of millions. Specifically in Spain are over 3 million people who follow the three races that make up the Grand Prix Championship held in Jerez (MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3), reaching 300 million viewers in the audience worldwide. This international projection has contributed so much to make known the destination as to improve its image worldwide.

Fifth, the global relevance and impact of motorcycling Grand Prix have contributed to the renovation of a tourist destination considered mature, through initiatives that have attracted new market segments, satisfying the needs and motivations of its members. In fact, it has helped to improve the image of the city in which it is celebrated, Jerez de la Frontera, as a tourist destination in the tourism market repositioning, still known today not only for its wines and for its equestrian heritage, but for hosting the motorcycling championship in Spain, considered as one of the most internationally relevant ones in terms of tourism, due to its ability to attract tourists and the benefits it generates.

All these benefits have made this motorcycling championship a major attraction for Andalusia, in general, and for Jerez de la Frontera, in particular, that justifies the investment made by the public administration, as well as the efforts of the Jerez circuit and all area businesses that have contributed to a high-level tourism bid.

