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THE IMPACT OF A MEGA SPORT EVENT ON TOURISM OF THE HOST CITY: CASE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP IN MARRAKECH

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Abstract

Introduction. Nowadays, sport and tourism constitute basic activities of well-being in the society that characterizes us. However, despite this parallelism in the history of the two activities, their interrelation and joint study is relatively recent. The primary objective of sports tourism is to attract a considerable number of visitors to participate or attend as spectators, constituting a great opportunity to increase the economic impact of the destination.

Aim. This paper examines the effect of the organization of sporting events on the development of the nation's brand image, while identifying the existing relationship between sport and tourism. Then, we present a study of a concrete case about is the experience of the ocher city Marrakech when it hosted the African Nations Championship in 2018, and its impact on the development of the city's tourism sector.

Material and methods. The research methodology is descriptive analysis. For this purpose, literature is obtained through the collection, classification, analysis of articles, and related resources on sports tourism and the link that may exist between mega events and tourism.

Results. In recent years, the demand for this tourist modality has increased considerably all over the world due to the greater importance given to health and fitness, as well as the growing celebration of sporting events by cities to attract tourists. Sportsmen (Herstein and Jaffe, 2008: 36). Thus, according to Latiesa et al. (2000), the first time they associated sport and tourism meet the winter sports of the Alps at the beginning of the 20th century. Sports tourism has become the subject of an increasing level of academic and governmental interest. It is seen as important because of its economic contribution as well as other influences such as its impact on the well-being of the community. It is obviously valued since it causes a flow of national or international tourists who will come to consume in the territory concerned. Sporting events have been used more and more by the marketers of the destination country or city over the last decades to improve the brand image of the host destination. These mega events are important in that they help advertise the welcoming city worldwide; attracting the attention of different nations by word of mouth before, during and after the event has taken place. Socioeconomically, it allows an increase in the level of income and employment, which minimizes inflation (Homafar, Honari, Heidary,

Emami, 2011), and allows an increase in the brand image of the city and therefore of its tourist sector (Bullcamp; Lovell, 2007).

Conclusions. The impact of tourism generated by the celebration of major sporting events has led to the creation of a research field called event tourism, focused on the study of tourist impacts arising from their organization.

Key words: mega sporting event, sport tourism, tourism impact.

Introduction

To date, sport is considered the biggest social phenomenon in the world, while tourism is expected to become the biggest industry in the world (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 2010). As a result, the points of contact between sport and tourism have increased dramatically. These elements led to the combination of these two industries to create sports tourism.

When we discuss the sports tourism, we are referring to sports activities or competitions that are likely to attract a considerable number of visitors to participate or attend as spectators (Delpy, 2003).

H. Gibson, for example, defined sport tourism as "leisure trips that take individuals temporarily outside their home community to play, watch physical activities or worship attractions associated with these activities" [9, p. 10]. H. Gibson suggests that sports tourism incorporates three main behaviors, namely, participate, watch and visit.

Sports tourism is an important market niche for various destinations. Sport events are a unique opportunity to attract a large number of visitors, including spectators, participants, judges and media representatives, without forgetting the ability to improve or consolidate the image of the destination through the presence of media mentioned above.

Proper planning of a sporting event can bring countless benefits to the destination, such as urban improvements, improvements in infrastructure and services.

It is a fundamental component of sports tourism and perhaps the most important in terms of the number of tourists and its economic impact [7].

In this way, it has become an important development factor for the different local economies seeking to gain economic benefits and contribute to the development of the community. In addition, thanks to its characteristics, it is beginning to represent a key element in territorial marketing policies.

The decision to travel to participate in a sporting event depends fundamentally on the reputation and quality of the participants, the international character of the events or the presence of celebrities. Identified as an opportunity and a unique event for the participants but also for the spectators. Sharing time and place with a crowd from all over the world and the atmosphere that is breathed during the celebration is a fundamental reason that justifies the trip.

In the context of sporting events, the African Nations Championship is considered one of the landmark events in tourism. It is an event of great dimension and impact.

One tool used by emerging or developing countries to position them



adequately at the international level is to embark on the adventure of organizing world sporting events (Cornelissen, 2004).

Research into the repercussions and effects of this type of event on host destinations has continued developed, no doubt because of the importance they represent for host countries at all socio-economic levels. For Ritchie (1984), the brand image is created through these events which take place, in a single edition or are repeated over time, to improve the knowledge, attractiveness and profitability of a short tourist destination.

This subject has been debated by several researchers, some today speak of the positive relationship existing between the two variables "mega sports event and tourism", and others are not from the same point of view. From this emerges our question:

How can a mega-sporting event contribute to the development of the tourism sector?

Aim of the study

The history of taking responsibility for hosting a mega-event, or more specifically a mega-sporting event, has grown significantly over the past two decades. The reason is not only the professionalization of the sport, but it is also combined by the increase in per capita income diffused around the world and the evolution of technology, which makes the adoption of a sporting event an wonderful experience for countries and regions [3, 15].

Over time, researchers and economists alike have taken into account the positive effect of hosting these events not only on the image and notoriety of the country but also on the lucrative side and the enormous gains

made by these events. Mega events, and which allow a growth of the tourism sector of the country and the region in a more particular way.

Various studies have also focused on the costs to be borne by the host countries, and here we are talking about the costs of infrastructure, stadiums, security and marketing. Empirical results vary considerably.

Preuss (2004; 2007) studied the economic benefits of hosting the Summer Olympics, on the other hand Baade and Matheson (2003) focused on the gains generated by ticketing. The benefits of hosting the FIFA World Cup are unclear (Szymanski 2002; Baade and Matheson, 2004; Lee and Taylor 2005; Allmers and Maennig, 2009).

Authors (Matheson, 2002; Solberg and Preuss 2006; Fourie, Siebrits et al. 2010) have tried to measure tourist behavior from a comparative perspective, while some tourists may be attracted to a sporting event, others are only on site.

To visit the region, in this case and over this period, the region sees a significant increase in these overnight stays and therefore an enrichment of its tourism sector, which directly affects the law of supply and demand, and affects treats including rising prices, accommodation and transportation supply constraints, security concerns, or visitor preferences (Fourie, Siebrits et al., 2010).

Clark (2008), on behalf of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the benefits of hosting a mega sporting event include the following forms:

- ✚ Economic, social and environmental improvements;
- ✚ Physical structures and infrastructure;

- ✚ Brand, image, reputation and identity;
- ✚ Positive outcomes that occur before, during and after the event, or simply by participating in the application process for the event;
- ✚ Wider multiplier effects, which are verified as a consequence of direct benefits;
- ✚ Evolution of civic, institutional, governance, self-confidence and other related progress this can be verified.

a- Mega sporting event

According to the literature on the economics of sport (Roche, 1994; Llopis-Goig, 2012), mega sporting events are characterized by the fact that:

- (-) they are large-scale events of deep international importance, of short duration and perfectly limited;
- (-) are organized by a country or city that generally competes to host the event;
- (-) attract a large number of participants (athletes) and spectators, local and foreign;
- (-) are covered by a large number of international media;
- (-) require significant investments including infrastructure, logistics and security;
- (-) and are led by a local organizing committee made up of national and local government authorities and international sports federations.

Two of the largest and most popular events in the world have been chosen to exemplify the concept of a mega sporting event: the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup. If there are sporting events with a marked impact on the economy and development of the host country, it is the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup.

b- Tourism

When defining an event, the authors often emphasize the importance of tourism or the capacity to attract the tourist flows that these events have for the host cities or towns. The events of this typology are framed in the Anglo-Saxon literature called event tourism.

The difference or the peculiarity of tourist events lies in the objectives to which a tourist event responds, that is to say "the creation of tourist attractions, capable of generating tourist demand or meeting the needs of visitors" [7, p. 44]. The other roles for tourism purposes that events develop also have the capacity to be "creators of images", "catalysts of development" and "mechanisms of control" [7, p. 45].

Sports tourism refers to all sports-related activities that take place outside the usual place of residence, either in man-made facilities or in a natural environment to observe or practice physical activity, whether or not there are competitive goals. (Latiesa and Paniza, 2006:6).

Sports tourists are those who participate in sports activities while on vacation, which can be classified into three categories (Herstein and Jaffe, 2008:36):

- Participants in an event: are people who travel to participate in an organized sporting event.
- The spectators of the event: these are those who attend an organized sporting event.
- Sports enthusiasts, who travel to participate in "self-organized sports".

As for scientific studies, they started in the 1990s with the publication of numerous articles in magazines such



as Journal of Tourism Recreation Research⁵ or Annals of Research. The year 1999 marked a landmark with the publication of the book "Sport Tourism" by Standeven and De Knop.

Authors such as Gammon and Robinson (1997) or Ritchie and Adair (2004) recall that the concept of sport linked to tourism has become a field of research of considerable importance for many researchers.

In this sense, it is worth noting different actions promoted in various fields. For example, the World Tourism Organization and the International Olympic Games Committee signed a cooperation agreement for the celebration of the World Sports and Tourism Congress in Barcelona in 2001, (UNWTO, 2001).

From a legislative point of view, the White Paper on Sport recognizes that "sport has synergies with tourism and can stimulate the improvement of infrastructure and the establishment of new partnerships to finance sports and leisure facilities." (European Commission, 2007).

Likewise, the European Union in its report on a new tourism policy (European Commission, 2006) urges Member States to recognize the emerging role of sporting events in the tourism sector and to develop sport tourism.

As stated by Henderson et al (2010: 60), some events have the capacity to attract large numbers of tourists, as well as the expenses they incur, which contribute to the development of tourism in the destination hence the interest public officials.

In addition, sport is considered "an important economic sector at the individual, organizational and national

level, being important in its contribution to economic activity and in the creation of wealth" (Goldman and Johns, 2009: 125).

Material and methods

The research methodology is descriptive analysis. For this purpose, literature is obtained through the collection, classification, analysis of articles, and related resources on sports tourism and the link that may exist between mega events and tourism.

We conducted an in-depth review of the literature on the mega event and tourism in order to understand each concept apart, and then we looked for studies done on the relationship that may exist between the two concepts. This allowed us to understand this effect relationship between the two variables.

In order to concretize our work, we carried out a documentary study on a concrete case which is the city of Marrakech of the kingdom Morocco during its organization of the sporting event "CHAN: African Championship of the nations of football". We studied the effect of hosting a mega event on the city's tourism sector.

Results

Case study: African Nations Championship in Marrakech

In recent years, Morocco has been on the world sports scene. This country hosted the African Nations Football Championship in 2018. CHAN is one of the biggest sporting events in Africa, and countries are vying to host it.

Morocco was very fortunate to have been chosen to host this event, something that is a testament to the natural beauty, economic and social potential, and the growing importance of Morocco, more specifically the other

city of Marrakech.

Despite this seemingly happy turn of events, Morocco could be cursed to relive the plight of many countries – comrade hosting massive investments in the years leading up to the event, embezzlement, waste, fraud and misuse of funds. And physical structures before, during and after the events took place.

There are recent examples of host cities, which testify that all of the investments made to host these events with stadiums, dormitories, training rooms and other structures were no longer used after completion of these events. Many of these cities have lost billions of dollars in their quest to host these events.

Marrakech – the ocher city of Morocco

The water flows from the eternal snows of the High Atlas to cool the city with its pools and fountains. Gold, it enhances the delicate arabesques of the courtyards and rooms of its centuries-old medersas. The roses deliciously perfume the lush gardens, before doing the same with the sweet pastries of the street vendors of the Jemaa el-Fna square.

This is the magical trilogy under which Marrakech, a beautiful seductress of the South, is placed. A major symbol of the city, the four copper balls of the Koutoubia minaret sparkle in the sunset. Its elegance of pink bricks has watched over the “booksellers” mosque since the 12th century. Marrakech is also a kind of miracle that of a city located in a semi-desert plain with improbable assets. Marrakech is a city located in central Morocco, in the interior, at the foot of the Atlas Mountains. The red city's nickname refers to the red color of

many of its buildings and houses.

The economy of Marrakech is mainly based on tourism, trade and crafts. Hotel infrastructure has grown rapidly in recent years. The turnover brought by tourism is growing exponentially with an increase of 5.2% each year. The city is a tourist hotspot, with more than two million tourists each year. It is also the starting point for many excursions for hikers wishing to explore the Atlas or the desert further south.

The city is now moving towards luxury tourism. Marrakech has indeed become one of the favorite destinations for French celebrities who love its unspoiled charm which knows how to combine luxury, refinement and authenticity.

The city has thus been described as a "dream of a thousand and one nights" by Arielle Dombasle, who is involved in France to raise awareness of this city. Many French stars have already bought their private riad in the heart of the Medina, even more, during the last years and with the construction of infrastructures with world standards, knew how to orient themselves as African capital of sports tourism, we have been hosting several mega event in recent years, we mention the club world cup in its double edition 2013 and 2014, the Marathon, the African football nations championship in 2018.

Tourism in Marrakech

(1) Tourism a lever for growth

Tourism occupies a prominent place in the country's economic and financial structure and represents a considerable lever for accelerating socio-economic growth. A real engine of growth, tourism impacts practically



all areas of Morocco's economic activity and thus exerts a great influence on the other sectors of the economy.

Marrakech maintains its leadership as the locomotive of national tourism. It is the first destination in Africa and one of the main destinations in the Mediterranean basin. In 2018, the bar of 2 million arrivals and 7 million overnight stays was crossed.

The activity in 2018 recorded a double-digit growth rate (+20% for arrivals, and +18% for overnight stays)

and an occupancy rate of 56% (see *Table 1*). This result is due to the mobilization of public and private partners, for the promotion of the destination (ONMT, CRT, authorities, Region, city and operators) on the one hand, the remarkable presence of tourism professionals of the city to important tourism events on different markets, as well as their increasingly aggressive presence, on the web on the other hand.

Table 1

Litter capacity			
<i>Year</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
Hotel capacity in rooms	31.000	35.000	38.000
Hotel capacity in beds	65.000	66.640	67.920
Nights spent	6.300.000	6.640.000	6.780.000
Arrivals realized	1.890.000	1.936.000	2.086.000
Occupancy rate	47%	48%	50%

Source: Regional council of tourism of Marrakech

(2) Second contributor to the national GDP and second creator of jobs and important contributor to the balance of payments

Tourism contributes largely to the creation of wealth and the reduction of unemployment and poverty with an overall tourism demand representing about 12% of GDP. The sector is also an excellent provider of employment with 507,000 direct jobs, which correspond to nearly 5% of employment in the economy as a whole.

Tourism holds an important place as a source of foreign currency for the Kingdom, in addition to the transfers of Moroccans living abroad. Indeed, the revenue generated by non-residents who stayed in Morocco was nearly 38.6 billion dirham's in 2018 (excluding international transport). These foreign currency receipts represent nearly 18%*

of exports of goods and services and the travel balance covered 32%* of the trade balance deficit in 2018.

(3) The African Nations Championship in Marrakech

Marrakech, the most beautiful city in Morocco and tourist capital must have hosted one of the most important events "the 2018 African Nations Championship in Marrakech", was chosen for its sports facilities, but also for hotels. Indeed, the success of this edition was of great importance for the tourist and economic image of the city. This craze for games has spilled over into hotels, which recorded unexpected gains during this period.

The advantage was therefore twofold: in addition to the expenses incurred on the spot by the teams, the organization staff and the fans, the Club



World Cup offers visibility for Marrakech. The reports covering this football meeting made large-scale publicity of the Marrakech showcase.

According to the organizing committee, nearly 200 media outlets from around the world, representing TV stations, radio stations, news agencies, magazines and electronic media, covered this world.

A free promotion that allowed an upgrade of the brand image of the other city and a circulation of its notoriety in the world. As much as city dwellers of the city, we were able to notice the significant effect of the organization of this event on the local economy, the promotion of tourism, and the brand image of the city all over the world and this during and well after the event.

For real, the economic impact was measured in millions of dollars as tourists flocked to catch a glimpse of the

two great teams; 350 million dirham's was the total gross revenue. These revenues came mainly from the expenses of the 60,000 foreign spectators, expected in the kingdom during the edition. We had 120 million dirham's of revenue from fan spending, 20 million dirham's from ticketing, 90 million dirham's from merchandising and 2 million dirham's from sponsors.

The repercussions of this cut were also economic and benefited some establishments of the tourist city. Hotels filled up during the period of this mega event. The benefits were also important for the small businesses which benefited from this tourist windfall.

The organization of this mega event has the organization of this mega event has allowed a considerable growth in the tourist sector as we can see on the table 2.

Table 2

Marrakech tourist sector

Year	2016	2017	2018	Var 2018/2017	Var 2019/2018	Var 2018/2017
Marrakech Ménara	2327812	2589652	2985749	11%	15%	28%

CHAN can globally have a positive financial impact both for companies (business opportunities, brands, sponsorship) and for the economy of the country and the city of Marrakech (investments, economy, and governance). On an emotional level, CHAN is an opportunity to strengthen the positive feeling towards the host city, to give great visibility and to spread its good reputation.

After 2018, Marrakech recorded a cumulative 1,020,000 in arrivals (+6% and 3,088,000 overnight stays (+6%)

with the occupancy rate reaching 53% against 52%, said a statement of the CRT Marrakech El Haouz.

These performances are explained by: the growth of the activity related to business tourism of congress and sports. With its international quality sports facilities, Marrakech has confirmed its national and continental leadership in sports tourism, thanks in particular to an offer and know-how that defy all competition.

Marrakech has particularly distinguished itself as a destination



known and recognized in the sports world by hosting a large number of international sports events.

The highlight of 2018 remains the consolidation of the support of the Local Authorities and the support from the Councils of Elected Officials (the Regional Council, the City Council and the Council of the Commune Mechouar Kasbah) and their commitment to the tourism professionals for the improvement of the conditions of reception of the sports professionals and their supporters, the city is also committed to a sustainable committed to a sustainable process of promotion and development of new sports new sports infrastructure responding to the different types of sports thus strengthening this sector.

Conclusions

In this vein, we have confirmed the overall positive effect of the organization of a mega-sporting event on the perceived image of the host city. This result, already established in previous work (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2010) is nevertheless qualified in this study, especially by the need to take into account in more depth the negative impacts of the organization of a mega event on the image perceived by the host city.

This relates, for example, to the risks of pollution and the increase in theft, to prostitution cases or to the additional cost of the event. Over time, the image of the organizing city could deteriorate in the eyes of the public host population (Panic & al, 2012).

The advantages perceived with regard to the organization of the event are firstly linked to the increase in tourism potential, in particular sports tourism, to the enrichment of trade, to the creation of employment

opportunities for young residents.

The development of sports tourism requires investments that counterbalance the negative impacts of these events, particularly economic, environmental and community (Tichawwa, 2015).

The hosting of sporting events favors the emergence of sport tourism, which is nowadays becoming an important segment in the tourism and economic development of every nation.

Thus, the growth of this sector should be encouraged by further developing infrastructure, protecting the environment from the harmful effects of pollution and waste, addressing the social problems generated and involving local residents even more in this process.

The local community is an essential actor, which can lead to the success of the environment as to its failure. It is therefore necessary that the managers of this type of events adapt their future decisions to the perceptions of the residents.

The negative effects of this event can be reduced by ensuring good planning and transparency on the part of the organizers, in particular regarding the respect of the specifications, the budget and the deadlines, without forgetting that the involvement of residents in this process remains also necessary.

Our study, and even more, our experience, as well as city dwellers of the other city, allowed us to conclude that the organization of mega events is in the interest of the country whether it is developed or under development.

This activity generates positive economic and non-economic results, social and commercial development,

and even more, a promotion of the brand image and the notoriety of the organizing city. Tourists and travel sports enthusiasts from all over the globe come to witness these events.

As previously stated, some countries and / or cities use this category of event both to generate short-term income (and therefore profit by hosting the event), which could continuously

benefit from higher levels of the event tourism, foreign direct investment, and greater esteem of peer nations.

Marrakech, the tourist capital of the Moroccan kingdom, has not only managed its accommodation responsibility, but has also been catapulted onto the world stage and has enjoyed a permanent rise in the world of prestige

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